A $9 million upgrade to Pickanjinnie North Road – an important access road for rural properties and recently established liquefied natural gas sites – was successfully delivered through an innovative partnership between Maranoa Regional Council and RoadTek (the civil works branch of Transport and Main Roads).

The upgrade – which involved road widening, gravel overlay and drainage upgrades – provides a better transport experience and a significant improvement to road safety, but that is only part of the story. The other major success has been in demonstrating the benefits of a partnering approach, using resources from both Maranoa Regional Council and RoadTek for the benefit of both organisations, the project sponsor (Santos GLNG) and the community. In recognition of the partnership’s success, the project took out the top accolade for design and construction of a public works project between $5 million and $10 million at the IPWEAQ Excellence Awards 2016.

RoadTek’s Cally Jackson explains how the partnership exceeded the expectations of both parties and delivered significant savings and transport and road safety improvements to the community:

**Why did we partner?**
Council made the decision to deliver the Pickanjinnie North Road Upgrade Project (Pickanjinnie Project) in collaboration with RoadTek in the hope it would provide more flexibility to implement innovative solutions and generate cost savings. Council also expected that a greater degree of autonomy would mean there would be an even firmer grasp on time, cost and quality of work.

At a strategic level, the partnership was seen as a perfect opportunity to increase capability within both organisations and to bring together all of the right resources from across the region to deliver the project. This collaboration enabled Council, as principal contractor, to successfully deliver a sizeable construction project to specification and well within all of the required parameters.

**How was the partnership created?**
The Pickanjinnie Project was the first project to be delivered under a three-year partnership agreement between Council and RoadTek, with the parties
banding together to deliver a combined works program through a collaborative and resource sharing approach, using project management services, labour, systems and construction plant resources from both organisations.

The agreement was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which states that both organisations commit to:

- mutual respect and cooperation with an emphasis on partnership and recognition of each other’s roles and responsibilities
- cross utilisation of project management services and labour and plant resources to define, develop and deliver the program of work, to maximise utilisation of resources maintained within the region
- efficiency gains in program delivery through creating a competitive environment in infrastructure provision
- flexible, outcome-oriented approaches that allow for innovation
- promotion of resource sharing and technical knowledge transfer.

**How did it work in practice?**

Partnership initiatives are often talked about but rarely accomplished – this being a notable exception. The initiative has challenged both parties to share their programs of work and widen their consideration of how their labour and plant resources can be used most effectively and efficiently.

The governance framework for the MOU includes a program steering committee and project working groups. The steering committee involves senior members from both organisations and performs the strategic management role for the program, dealing with program and project scope, financial matters, key risks and issues, prioritisation of works and integration with other program/project commitments of both parties.

The MOU project working groups oversee and report on all aspects of their assigned project, ensuring the project is delivered in line with project and program objectives, timeframes and scope, quality and financial deliverables.

For the Pickanjinnie Project, the initiative allowed council to act as contract administrator and work as a team with RoadTek as partnered principal contractors.

A more detailed look at the roles of each party is provided below.

**Maranoa Regional Council:**

- Council performed the roles of both principal contractor (in partnership with RoadTek) and asset owner. This saw Council fully accountable for all facets of the project, in all capacities.
- The arrangement required ongoing intensive engagement between various departments across council. The lead department for the project was Infrastructure Contracts, who undertook the role of contract administrator/supervisor during construction and overarching project manager (“client side”) from concept through to finalisation.
- The Strategic Project Planning and Asset Management Department was integral during the preconstruction phase and took a lead role in the design review process. The Roads, Drainage and Parks Department provided resources
(plant, systems and labour) and constructed the project in the capacity of partnered principal contractor.

Council’s Communications Department kept the community and media well informed about the project’s progress throughout the work. The team also worked with the region’s elected Councillors to derive best-for-project outcomes in instances where project decisions had the potential to impact the community or create any form of political contention.

RoadTek

Council supplied a resource to the project team that would serve a dual purpose (“two-hat role”) for the life of the project. This individual performed the duties of both ‘site engineer’ (“construction hat”) as well as ‘superintendent’s representative’ (“administrator hat”). This facilitated continuous valuable engagement between Council and RoadTek and at the site interface.

RoadTek senior representatives (Operations Manager and Project Manager) and Council senior representatives (Director Infrastructure Services, Infrastructure Contracts Manager, and Roads, Drainage & Parks Manager) formed the Project Leadership Team, in order to:

- provide strategic direction to the project team
- adjudicate disputes/issues not able to be resolved on site
- facilitate and encourage continued collaboration between Council and RoadTek during the life of the project.

The project manager from RoadTek was fully embedded, both functionally and operationally, into Council for the life of the project. In addition to his workspace on the project site, a workspace was also made available at Maranoa’s Infrastructure Depot. This ‘physical and organisational embedment’ promoted first-rate communication between Maranoa Regional Council and RoadTek, streamlined stakeholder engagement, and promoted resource integration across the organisations.

Construction crews working on all fronts of the project were combination crews, comprised of employees from both Maranoa Regional Council and RoadTek. This approach was chosen to mitigate the risk of the “silo effect”. It proved to work very well and generated considerable benefits for both organisations in terms of knowledge sharing. It also appeared to boost morale on site and create a happy and productive workplace.

Was it successful?
The partnership approach delivered significant savings in both time and cost while also providing employees from both organisations with upskilling opportunities. Some of the outcomes made possible include:

- The ability to draw from both Council’s and RoadTek’s systems provided extra flexibility, allowing best-for-project outcomes to be achieved. For example, using local suppliers was always a high priority, but RoadTek’s standing offer arrangements (such as wet hire) were able to be drawn upon where necessary to expedite project delivery.
- A single project team administered and managed the project for both council and RoadTek, which reduced indirect job costs significantly.
- The combined Council/RoadTek construction crew established a working quarry at a Maranoa Regional Council gravel pit, which enabled them to produce more than 100,000 tonnes of
material in-house. This saved in excess of $1 million just in material costs. It also generated significant time savings as the working quarry was only 20 kilometres from site and the nearest established alternative was a significant distance away.

A large number of RoadTek construction plant was in the area for use on the project (graders, prime movers, road trains and so on). Typically, plant such as this can sit idle when not needed for the project, causing significant downtime costs. However, because of the relationship, the equipment was able to be used in many other locations throughout the region, maximising plant productivity for RoadTek while improving the quality of other local roads in the region.

Employees from both Council and RoadTek received upskilling opportunities. For example, a Council grader operator had previously only worked on rural backroads but this arrangement allowed him to gain substantial experience on a large-scale project, while receiving support and mentoring from more experienced operators from RoadTek working within the same crew.

Similarly, several team members completing their Certificate 4 in Civil Supervision were able to satisfy numerous competencies on this one project. This was made possible by rotating them around various aspects of the site (such as concreting or drainage) to give them exposure to different work types. Additionally, smaller aspects of the project were able to be sectioned off (such as driveway upgrades) for different employees to supervise, which fast-tracked their acquisition of supervisory competencies.

None of these outcomes would have been possible had a more traditional contractual relationship been in place.

**Any learnings?**

The Pickanjinnie Project has generated several learnings about how to best structure and manage a partnership approach between different tiers of government for construction projects. It has served as an excellent test case, demonstrating that such an approach can yield impressive benefits for both organisations as well as the project sponsor and the community. Learnings on how to further improve the partnership approach include:

- establish and integrate policies and procedures early
- develop and implement clear communications lines early
- ensure allowances for period rate reviews
- gain an early understanding of procurement thresholds for each organisation and establish clear plans for implementation.

Council and RoadTek are now working in partnership to deliver another project – the Fairview Road Upgrade – and look forward to the partnership’s continued success.

For more information on the success of this partnership, please contact Cameron Castles, Infrastructure Services Director, Maranoa Regional Council on 1300 007 662 or cameron.castles@maranoa.qld.gov.au.
The Pickanjinnie Project involved road widening, gravel overlay and drainage upgrades along approx 15.4km of the Pickanjinnie North Road, located approx 35km east from Roma off the Warrego Highway. It included:

- undertaking roadworks with multiple treatment types, predominantly consisting of widening, removing, replacing, mechanical mixing, granular overlays and cement treated stabilisation
- sealing more than 125,000 square metres of bitumen
- establishing a mobile crushing plant operation at a Maranoa Regional Council gravel pit, which extracted, crushed and hauled an estimated 100,000 tonnes of material
- delivering improved drainage using a combination of reinforced concrete box culverts and reinforced concrete pipes with various treatments including extensions, full remove and replace, precast and cast in situ components, and reinforced concrete margins and batters
- providing consistent employment for about 26 Council and RoadTek employees over the project duration with personnel on site (including subcontractors) peaking in excess of 50 individuals during critical periods.

The project took 184 calendar days to complete, including 40 days of approved extensions of time due to extensive wet weather events as well as scope amendments and variations. Upon completion, the project delivered an eight-metre-wide road, which provides a better transport experience and a significant improvement to road safety.

Welcome to our new Partner, SuperSealing!

SuperSealing is a market leader in the Road Maintenance & Construction industry and specialises in Crack Sealing, Civil Works, Line Marking and Traffic Management with over 120 employees throughout Australia and New Zealand.

SuperSealing has established long term relationships with Councils, Civil Contractors and leading Road Maintenance Organisations since 2003 with a reputation built on reliability, quality of work, value for money and high levels of service.

SuperSealing aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of constructing and maintaining roads and services by utilising high quality products, systems, services and solutions that are based on client’s needs; provide safe work environments; optimise traffic flows through worksites; are environmentally sensitive; and save lives.

IPWEAQ is proud of its long association with SuperSealing and is very pleased to welcome them as a Partner!