



## ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

# 2020

Our priorities for a stronger **South Burnett**



**SOUTH BURNETT**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



## AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Queensland's outer regional Councils are falling behind. Job growth is stagnant and population is centred in larger, often coastal, urban cities which are already struggling under the pressure of over crowding and infrastructure backlogs.

Whilst major cities are increasing in size and wealth, there is a real risk that our rural centres will continue to fall further behind. Employment opportunities are often limited and when opportunities arise, it is difficult to attract skilled staff. This could be due to quality of life services that are lacking and limited infrastructure to support the population.

Our regional areas are well placed to not only take population but to reduce the load on our cities. The widening inequity between different communities within Queensland isn't going to go away by itself. Urgent investment is required to give rural and regional communities a fair go and to give all of our communities the same opportunities and living standards as those living in our cities.

By previously working together on a range of capital and social projects, South Burnett Regional Council has clearly demonstrated its capacity to deliver value and quality outcomes with all other levels of Government.

Our Council has produced 6 priority areas that would not only assist our local area, but would assist Queensland. Our region is an area that can deliver great growth and more jobs. We are committed to delivering better outcomes for our community and our State.



Advocacy issues will change with community needs, being a cyclic process including: the identification of needs, action, evaluation, and reformulation. Therefore community will be at the heart of Council's advocacy.



“The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage for South Burnett Regional Council in 2016 was 908. The South Burnett Regional Council Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics.”

CEO MARK PITT

## OUR ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES:

1. The priorities within this document have also been identified in South Burnett Regional Council's Corporate Plan 2018/19 - 2022/23, Council's Capital Works Plan and other relevant policies, plans and strategies adopted by Council
2. The priorities are realistic and attainable, in the short to medium term. We will stage or breakdown larger and longer-term priority projects
3. The priorities have a clear community need and benefit and are backed up by evidence
4. The priorities have broad community support
5. The priorities align with those of State and Federal decision-makers and Council will seek to work in partnership with other levels of Government, as well as candidates for election to other levels of Government, to deliver these priorities
6. The priorities align with the State Government's 'Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan'
7. Council has indicated the resources it will commit to these priorities as a partner
8. Council will also work with other advocacy organisations and local community groups where our interests align, to build support for our priorities





## WATER FOR THE FUTURE

The current Burnett Feasibility Study funded under the National Water Industry Development Fund (NWIDF) has delivered the initial stages of the programme with completion of the Strategic Business Case and the release of a Draft Options Analysis.

Council is aiming to increase access to water allocations and establish infrastructure that provides for improved water security across urban and rural water supplies. Council proposes the NWIDF programme to conduct six targeted assessments that will accelerate and materially progress the water projects identified in the Options Analysis:

1. Development of an Economic Road Map that identifies and assesses the best strategy to capitalise on the region's unique water and economic environment. The Road Map will have a focus on creating jobs to prepare for the closure of Tarong Power Station
2. Assessment of the practical viability of Barlil Weir (prior to engaging in a full detailed business case) leading to the construction of a re-regulating weir on Barambah Creek
3. Assessment of the incremental urban water needs from now until 2037 and development of a tangible, actionable strategy to acquire permanent water allocations from Stanwell
4. Targeted investment assessment on the strategy for accessing new water for irrigators in Blackbutt
5. Construction of water recycling plant at Swickers Bacon Factory facility in Kingaroy
6. Assessment of the future of Gordonbrook Dam as an urban and/or irrigation water source for the region

# 1

## ROAD NETWORKS

Regional communities need safe roads.

Council will prioritise continued works both in terms of gravel re-sheeting and the sealing of existing gravel roads and ongoing maintenance and improvement works to our regional roads.

Council would like to develop Transport Corridors throughout the region and appropriate infrastructure to accommodate the volume and type of road transport.

Poor roads not only are unsafe and risk lives, but also damage produce and discourage tourism.

1. DTMR renewals and safety improvements:
  - sealing of Bunya Mountains-Maidenwell Road
  - Mundubbera-Durong Road improvements
2. Increased programmes for renewals in addition to upgrade of guardrails and bridges across the region
3. Advocate for continued State Government investment in major connecting highways and freight routes that enable producers to transport their product to export markets via Bundaberg Port, Wellcamp Airport or Brisbane
4. Increased support for Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, Black Spot Programme and School Infrastructure Programme

# 2





# 3

## FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT

Queensland is growing and so is the demand for Council services.

Within Australia, since 1996 Local Government costs have increased over 400%. Over the same period the value of the Financial Assistance Grant from the Federal Government has fallen from 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue to just 0.55%. This funding gap is becoming harder for Councils to close through own source revenue options, particularly in rural and regional communities. Often these communities ratepayers have lower incomes and still the demand for both infrastructure and operational spending is higher per person. This funding gap forces Councils into a choice of delivering the services that their community needs (and not just want), or their own financial sustainability. Restoring the Financial Assistance Grant funding levels back to 1996 levels will go a very long way to giving rural and regional Councils and their communities the stability and services they need to thrive.

1. A review of the methodology by State Government for the distribution of the Federal Assistance Grant to maintain and improve current levels of funding
2. Support and maintenance for community health services with Community Health
3. Greater diversification of Agribusiness
4. Greater flexibility and roadside grazing regulation for drought management
5. Bio-security initiatives and funding commitments to ensure compliance with Local Government bio-security plans
6. Working together with Government to build a plan for our region's coal transition beyond the eventual closure of Tarong Power Station and Meandu Mine.
7. Rail Trails, cycleways and increased footpath connectivity



# 4

## REGIONAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Council needs investment to grow our regions population, boost employment, liveability and industry across the region.

1. 2025 South Burnett Economic Development Strategy
2. Investment in food manufacturing and processing sector, and other potential value adds in a way that creates long term employment, export and supply chain opportunities.
3. State support for renewable energy projects
4. Investigate further development opportunities to improve and expand the usage and development of the Kingaroy Airport including Master Plan, Glider Hub and Air Park development.
5. Queensland Space Industry (Concept) in line with Queensland Space Industry Strategy 2020-25
6. National Park infrastructure and nature-based tourism - Bunya Mountains National Park





# 5

## MOBILE BLACK SPOTS / DATA COMMUNICATIONS

Quality mobile phone and data connectivity isn't just about convenience, it is essential for business, small, medium or large – rural or urban.

Emergency services, the visitor economy, all sectors require stable and effective communications infrastructure to operate and thrive. Regrettably far too many parts of the South Burnett Regional Council area still lack effective mobile phone services and data connectivity. The work in removing Queensland mobile black spots has been welcome, but it is far from finished.

1. Transform Kingaroy as a smart country hub with investment in QCN fibre, electric parking bays and improved telecommunications infrastructure as part of the Kingaroy Transformation Project, funded in part by the Federal Governments Building Better Regions Fund
2. Expand Internet connectivity of the region and develop "smart communities"
3. Expand mobile phone coverage across the South Burnett
4. Disaster Recovery and system fail-safe for continuity of service
5. Development of an online self-service portal for rate payers for requests, applications, account status
6. Emergency Power Nanango



# 6

## W4Q FUNDING MODEL & OTHER GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC RECOVERY INITIATIVES

Council advocates for the continued flexibility for Local Governments to deliver projects which meet the individual community needs.

1. Critical transport assets and community connectivity infrastructure
2. Community building and facility upgrades and renewals
3. Community liveability upgrades including arts, open space refurbishments, park and playground equipment upgrades
4. Tourist facility upgrades and local tourism initiatives
5. Economic Recovery Initiatives
6. Community wellness and mental health initiatives



# ABOUT THE SOUTH BURNETT

Inland from the Sunshine Coast, South Burnett is an easy drive from Bundaberg, Brisbane and Toowoomba. It is an agricultural region growing a diversified economy.

A diverse range of agricultural produce and associated supply chains, including leather, pork, wine, pharmaceuticals, fruit, horticulture, beef, oils, peanuts and timber are the core strength of the South Burnett economy. The diverse range of growing industries exporting to domestic and global markets are supported by high employment and value add industries including Health & Social Services, Manufacturing, Mining, Electricity, Water & Wastewater and Retail Trade. Australia's two largest peanut processors and a global pharmaceutical industry extend from the region's rich red volcanic soils while Swickers is one of the southern hemisphere's largest and Queensland's only export accredited pork abattoir.

Enabling growth in the Agriculture and Advanced Manufacturing is integral to realising Council's vision for the regional economy.

Major employment industries in the South Burnett in 2018/19 were Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (13.3%); Manufacturing (10.9%); and Health Care and Social Assistance

(10.8%). This demonstrates a stable base of employment across the region. Productivity has increased from \$117,597/worker in 2004/05 to \$131,791/worker in 2018/19. Worker productivity by industry is calculated by dividing the industry value add by the number of persons employed in that industry. It shows which industries generate the most value add per employee. Some industry sectors, such as retail trade, are not highly productive per worker, but they employ a lot of people. Other industries, such as mining, employ fewer people but generate high levels of productivity. In the South Burnett 50.9% of the local workers (people who are employed in the local area, regardless of where they live) are males and 49.1% are female. In South Burnett, there are more younger workers (15 to 44 years) than older workers (45 year and over) in the local worker population. 39.0% of local workers in the South Burnett are employed part-time and 58.6% are employed full-time. Within the South Burnett region, the workforce has a similar proportion of Managers and Professionals compared to Queensland. In South Burnett, 10.7% of local workers earned \$1,750 or more per week.



“South Burnett Regional Council doesn't just provide roads, rates and rubbish. We provide leadership, build community and plan for a positive future.”

MAYOR BRETT OTTO

GRP  
**\$1.9B**

Year Ending  
2019

**3,086**  
Registered  
Businesses

**7.7%**  
Unemployment  
Rate 2019

Population  
**32,555**





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REGIONAL COUNCIL

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