

2021-2026
SOUTH BURNETT

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



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Acknowledgement

South Burnett Regional Council acknowledges the Wakka Wakka and Wulli Wulli People - the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Cover Photo

Courtesy Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

Statistics

Statistical Information sourced from www.id.com.au/south-burnett, Unemployment and Labour Force data sourced from Australian Government <https://www.employment.gov.au/small-area-labour-markets-publication-0>

Adoption by Council

The 2021-2026 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy was adopted by Council on 28 July 2021.

Copies of the Regional Development Strategy

Copies of the Regional Development Strategy are available free of charge electronically on Council's website at www.southburnett.qld.gov.au or can be viewed at any Council Library or Customer Service Centre.

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VERSION 5 - Final (15-07-2021)



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

This Regional Development Strategy provides a framework that will assist the South Burnett to grow and plan for its future.

The strategy will see Council adopt a culture of growth; a future focused mindset that seeks to support and promote investment will be part of our Council's DNA.

Strategic infrastructure, land availability and facilities:

Council will leverage its existing infrastructure, considering how its planning schemes and approach can be a catalyst for our region's favourable geographical location. Council will maintain a focus on continuous improvement and customer service in its approach to working with stakeholders to ensure our transport routes, water security and investment ready land is available into the future.

Leadership, advocacy and promotion: Council will work with all stakeholders to discuss and focus on a pipeline of priority shovel ready projects and support partnerships that aim to improve the quality of life experienced by all residents, and the resilience of everyone who calls the South Burnett region home.

Customer Service: Council continues to support and leverage our region's strong and diverse economy with customer service that exceeds expectations.

A broad focus on liveability and lifestyle:

- Council supports the liveability of the South Burnett, in ways that complement our region's country lifestyle, while sustaining and encouraging business and population growth.
- Elevate our region's cultural assets and performing arts including arts, festivals, events, heritage and music to

optimise opportunities for unique experiences.

- Council supports the development and progression of infrastructure and services to support visitor experiences and encourage greater visitation, with consideration to the growing range of major events, particularly sports tourism and the unique local experiences on offer, for instance our rail trails.
- Council leverages the tourism investment from State and Federal governments to grow international visitation.

Position the South Burnett as a current and future energy hub, while supporting the government's pathway to decarbonisation:

- Council seeks to leverage the opportunities afforded by existing energy generators and work with new project proponents in ways that create social and economic value, whilst underpinning our long-term sustainability during this era of transition. Council recognises the long-term sustainability of our region, will require strong collaboration across all levels of government, and together we believe we could support the modernisation of Australia's energy sector.

Council seeks to commence early planning discussions and investigate the growth opportunities available in the South Burnett to advance sectors including technology, agriculture, food production and manufacturing. By working together with government, industry and community stakeholders we believe our region is well placed to consider a long term view that is supported by shorter term action plans, enabling us to take advantage of the changes in ways that minimise the impacts on our region.

FROM THE CEO

Regional Development encapsulates so much of what we, as a Council, do to support the wellbeing of the South Burnett region. It's a diverse and extremely productive area with a strong regional identity brimming with opportunities.

The South Burnett is a region of innovative agriculture, smart business, and creative talent where locals and visitors can experience our distinctive place – a region that is making a positive difference in people's lives through the quality of the work we do.

Whether gains in economic performance are achieved through baseline productivity improvements or through sector-based innovation, the South Burnett is well positioned to drive steep change in the region's economy into the future.

However, there are local challenges that will need to be met going forward including changes to water security, workforce planning and the provision of affordable housing as the region enters a period of growth.

On a more global level, the need to respond to the challenge of transitional economy and a commitment to put a greater emphasis on environmental sustainability and the wellbeing of all communities are also challenges that need to be faced.

While some of these challenges aren't peculiar to our area, the responses should be particular to the South Burnett region if it is to adapt and thrive in the face of change.

It is important to recognise that Council cannot control everything in this area, but we can focus on what we can control, influence, or have an interest in, to ensure ongoing improvements in our economy are made possible.





PURPOSE

THE 2021-2026 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IS A COUNCIL DOCUMENT THAT OUTLINES THE STRATEGY FOR REALISING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE SOUTH BURNETT REGION.

Informed through workshops with South Burnett Councillors, Industry, Queensland Government Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation representatives, this document aligns with relevant strategies from the Wide Bay Burnett Local Government Areas and State and Federal Government.

Stakeholders within and outside of the region will be able to utilise the Regional Development Strategy to inform their own strategic planning and develop partnerships with Council and other stakeholders to add value to their priorities and implementation of actions.

Council intends for this strategy to evolve and will be supported by a Regional Work Plan that identifies projects and opportunities for sustainable growth over time.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

COMPELLING LOGISTICS

The South Burnett is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the projected growth in freight movements.

According to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), Australia's national land freight task is expected to grow by around 75 per cent between 2011 and 2031.

Improvements to transport infrastructure and supply chains will enable cost-effective and efficient movement of goods and services, growing business and encouraging population and employment growth.

A B-double road network takes advantage of proximity to major ports and airports in Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Fraser Coast and Bundaberg.

The South Burnett offers a range of sophisticated logistic options delivering a long-term competitive freight pricing position for industry.

The South Burnett is part of the Wide Bay Burnett region and enjoys strategic economic relationships with the neighbouring regions of Sunshine Coast, Darling Downs, Brisbane, and South East Queensland.



INLAND FROM THE SUNSHINE COAST, THE SOUTH BURNETT REGION IS AN EASY DRIVE FROM BRISBANE, BUNDABERG, OR TOOWOOMBA.

STRENGTH OF EXISTING INDUSTRY AND SUPPLY CHAINS

The South Burnett is home to Australia's two largest peanut processors and a global pharmaceutical industry which benefit 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.

The variety of growing industries exporting to domestic and global markets are supported by a range of high employment industries including Health and Social Services, Manufacturing, Mining, Electricity, Water and Wastewater and Retail Trade.

A diverse range of agricultural produce and associated supply chains, including leather hides, pork, wine, pharmaceuticals, fruit, horticulture, beef, oils, peanuts and timber are the core strength of the South Burnett economy.

AN AGRICULTURAL REGION GROWING A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY, THE SOUTH BURNETT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

GROWTH IN MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING

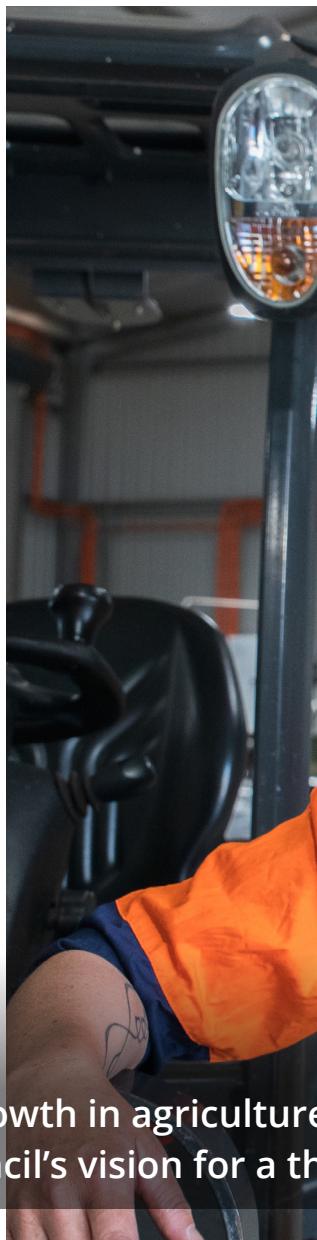
The South Burnett is an economy in transition from primarily commodity-based agricultural production to substantial and growing levels of processing being carried out within the region.

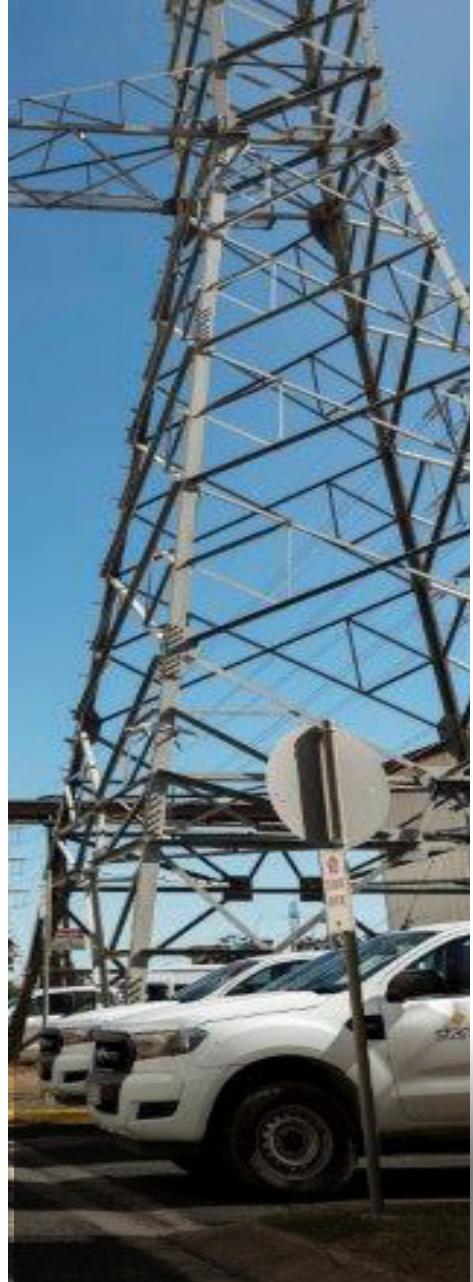
At the cutting edge, this has been driven by significant targeted investment by locally based and global businesses. This growth direction aligns directly with global mega trends particularly in demand for Australian agriculture to provide food security for growing export markets, including Asia.

Value adding can create large scale employment and supply chain prospects and enable further export opportunities. The development of artisan food products, attractive to both tourists and large-scale tourism development, further strengthens the South Burnett economy.



Enabling further growth in agriculture and manufacturing is integral to realising Council's vision for a thriving, diverse regional economy.





STRONG INVESTMENT PIPELINE

Increasing investment in dominant industrial projects is driving growth across the region.

The region is welcoming an economic shift, with trends over the past five years demonstrating increased investment with a stable labour work force¹. Being a short two hours from every major city, port and airport, the South Burnett has an advantageous location, enhanced by cost-effective access to available industrial land, commercial opportunities and available work force.

\$97.8M
Value of building
approvals in
2019-20

\$120M
Swickers
redevelopment &
expansion

\$850M
Coopers Gap
Wind Farm

\$92.5M
New Kingaroy
Hospital

\$250M+
Current
Investment
pipeline for
additional projects

\$13.9M
Kingaroy
Transformation
Project (Under
construction -
completion 2023)

¹ Small Area Labour Market LGA Data – South Burnett smoothed labour force 2010-2020.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE

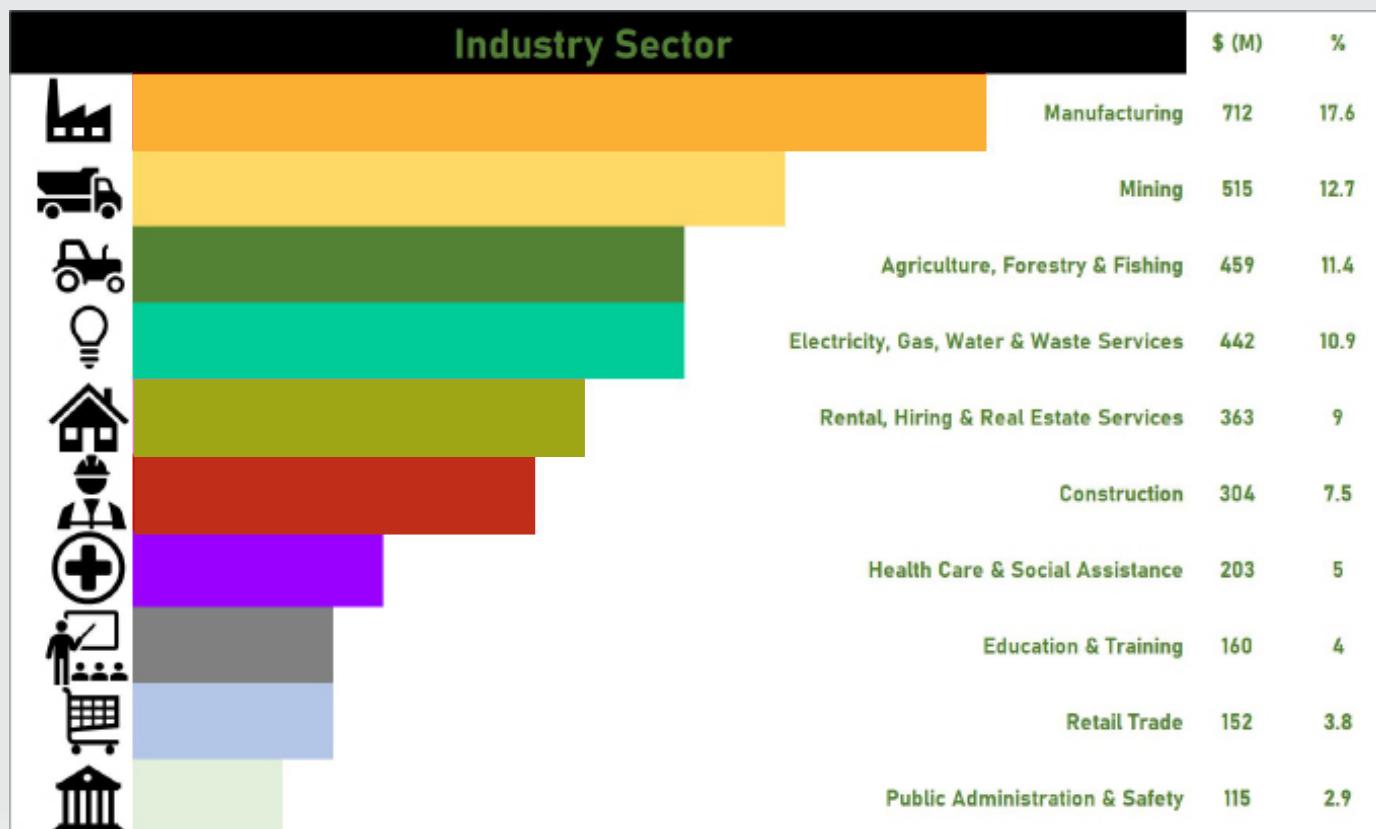
ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

The South Burnett region boasts an ever-diversifying economy. The latest ABS data (2016) demonstrates that 85 per cent of the region's output is derived from 10 key industry sectors including Manufacturing, Mining, Agriculture and Construction services.

Growth in value of production over the last five years has been led by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; and Transport, Postal and Warehousing. The growth in these industries, reflects a shift in the region's sophistication. Businesses that use professional services are more likely to develop new jobs and/or commence projects with the potential to grow the economy.

The region's established energy generation, supporting infrastructure and transmission network strengthens its attractiveness for new investment and the responsible growth of renewable energy in areas such as wind, solar, hydrogen and battery storage. The region is well placed to continue its role as an energy powerhouse for Queensland, and interstate while being a leading region in the Queensland government's commitment to 50 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030. Both state and federal government's growing commitment to decarbonisation will see more renewable generation investment in the South Burnett, including by our existing generators. Leveraging energy investment in ways that create social and economic value to the region will underpin our sustainability during this era transition.

Top ten industry sectors by output:





EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

In 2019/20, major employment industries in the South Burnett included:

- Health Care and Social Assistance - 13.8 per cent
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing - 12.0 per cent
- Retail - 11.2 per cent
- Education and Training - 10.1 per cent
- Manufacturing - 9.4 per cent²

This demonstrates a stable base of employment across the region.

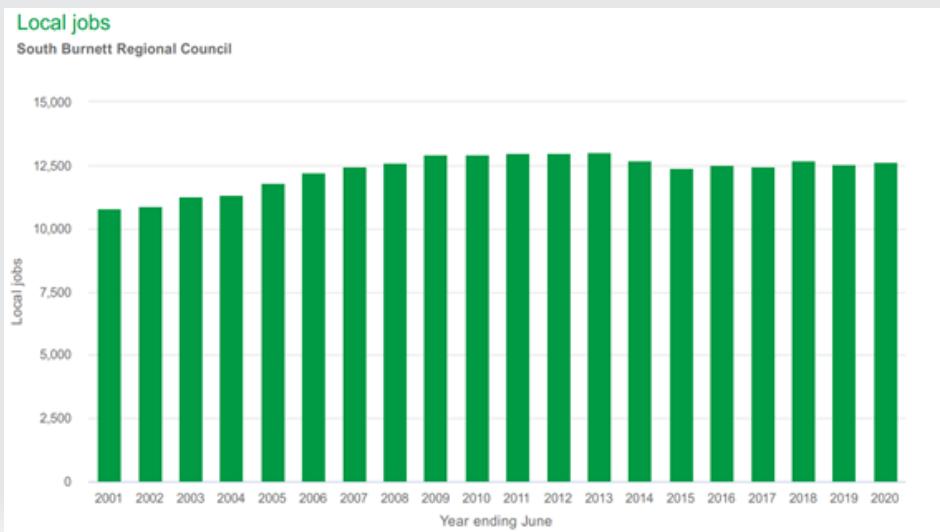
Total worker productivity for the region 2019/20 was \$132,139 compared to a Queensland average of \$125,172 per worker. Some industry sectors, such as retail trade, are not highly productive per worker, but employ a lot of people. Other industries, such as mining, employ fewer people but generate high levels of productivity, contributing strongly to Gross Regional Product, earning \$1,750 or more per week.³

In the South Burnett region 53 per cent of the local workers are males and 47 per cent are female.

⁴ The South Burnett employs a diverse range of workers supporting industry development and investment attraction for the region.⁵

OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS	2016
Labourers	16.4%
Managers	15.4%
Technicians and trades workers	13.8%
Professionals	13%
Community	11.8%

SOUTH BURNETT WORKER PRODUCTIVITY



Stability of regional workforce 2001–2020*.

*Economy.id Local Jobs (NIEIR) Modelling

² Economy.id Employment (total) by Industry (NIEIR) Modelling

³ Economy.id Worker productivity (NIEIR) Modelling

⁴ ABS South Burnett (R) (LGA) (36630) Regional Summary (2017)

⁵ ABS South Burnett (R) (LGA) (36630) Regional Summary (2016 Census)

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP)

South Burnett's Gross Regional Product (GRP) was \$1.94 billion in the year ending June 2020, a decline of -2.3 per cent from the previous year which was likely due to the combined impacts of drought, and COVID-19. Growth in GRP was recorded in seven of the preceding eight years from 2012 to 2019.

Sub-Industries that have contributed significantly to this longer term growth include Warehousing and Storage Services, Coal Mining, Exploration and Other Mining Support Services, Computer System Design and Related Services and Food Product Manufacturing. Accelerating GRP growth in the past two years, despite difficult local economic conditions, is a good sign for longer term sustainability.

(source: www.economy.id.com.au/south-burnett)



REGISTERED BUSINESSES AND BUSINESS SIZE

There were 2,744 registered businesses in the South Burnett in September 2020, an increase of 206 since September 2015.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing currently comprises 44 per cent of all total registered businesses, compared to 8.8 per cent in Queensland.
(Source: www.economy.id.com.au/south-burnett)

Industries that grew business numbers between 2017 and 2020 include Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Administrative and Support Services.⁶

Demonstrating that South Burnett businesses are innovative and able to achieve more with less, businesses with less than 20 employees make up over 98 per cent of registered businesses.

Almost 400 businesses in the region turn over more than \$500K and 125 turn over more than \$2 million per annum.⁷

⁶ .idcommunity South Burnett Council Business trends - Australian Business Register - filtered counts - Current at 30th Sept 2020

⁷ Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury, Queensland Regional Profiles: Workforce Profile for South Burnett (R) Local Government Area

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE



EMPLOYMENT

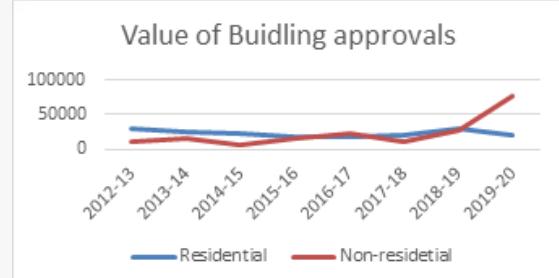
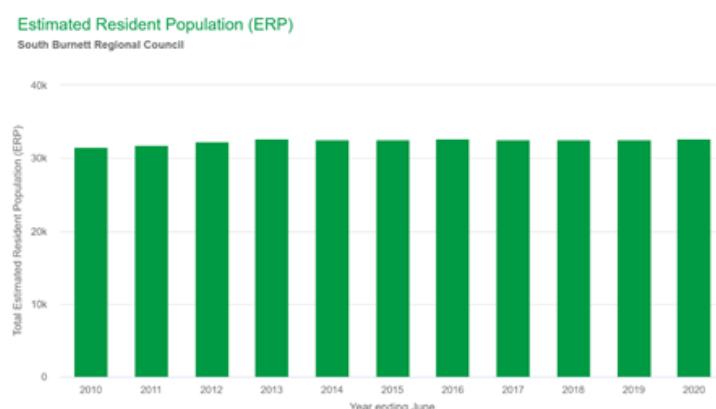
Typically, the South Burnett region has an active workforce with capacity to fill locally created employment positions. The December 2020 Small Area Labour Market (SALM) data reflects:

- Smoothed labour force of 13,398 persons
- Smoothed unemployment of 1,607 persons
- Unemployment rate of 12 per cent

Whilst highest in 2020 since December 2010, the unemployment rate of the South Burnett remains comparable to neighbouring regions and Queensland averages.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The Estimated Resident Population of South Burnett Regional Council was 32,632⁸ which has remained stable for over 5 years. Affordability of housing supports first home buyer entry into the housing market.



Increasing value of building approvals is a positive indicator of economic growth.

VALUE OF TOTAL BUILDING APPROVALS

The value of building approvals increased 218 per cent between FY 2014/15 and FY 2019/20. The value of building approvals for the year ended June 2020 was \$97.78 million, made up \$21.16 million in residential building approvals and \$76.63 million in non-residential building approvals.⁹

⁸ Compiled and presented in economy.id Source - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0).

⁹ Compiled and presented in economy.id Source - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia, catalogue number 8731.0.

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

DIVERSIFICATION AND REGENERATION

Agricultural commodity growth, further diversification into high value and niche products and economic benefit derived from regenerative agriculture practices are driven by factors including market opportunities, water security, and new agricultural technologies. Challenges facing regional development are expected because of changed climate conditions, bio security, government policy, and market stability.

To support future opportunities for the agriculture sector including intensification, diversification and regeneration, South Burnett Regional Council is working with regional organisations and government to develop a regional agricultural strategy.

Circular economy opportunities, including those that integrate with or leverage agriculture, are also a potential avenue for future growth in investment and manufacturing, and would support regional resilience.

AGRI-MANUFACTURING

Investment is currently occurring in the agri-manufacturing sector. The Swickers Bacon Factory's expansion and upgrades showed high confidence in the region's pork production capability. Further growth of the Swickers factory to increase capacity for ham production and state of the art slaughter facility has led to increased employment and outputs.

Swickers is the largest employer in the South Burnett region. Swickers investment in the region is joined by ongoing activity by other food manufacturing companies, including ongoing expansion of Crumptons, an ownership change for Peanut Company of Australia (PCA) to Bega. The \$24M relocation and expansion of Plenty Foods (formally Proteco Oils) is underway, with the \$7.5M construction of stage 1 to be completed in 2021.

Manufacturing is a strong sector in the South Burnett, and a major contributor to its GRP. Council recognises continued growth in manufacturing will be key to the ongoing success of the region.

EMERGING INDUSTRIES

The South Burnett's geographic position and inherent characteristics will enable the region to intentionally capitalise on numerous emerging industries.

Advancements in renewable energies such as hydrogen, solar or wind, and technology such as batteries, could see our region potentially leverage existing infrastructure of State significance, including Tarong Power Stations and Cooper's Gap wind farm, that already supplies much of Queensland with its energy needs.

As an agricultural powerhouse, and home to Cherbourg Aboriginal Council's material recycling facility (MRF), opportunities exist to create a circular economy, and further explore resource recovery or partner with the agricultural sector.

The South Burnett aspires to become a region of choice for ag-tech related studies and pilot programs. "Queensland's Finest" speaks to the region's high-quality produce, and highlights the potential of the innovative, technological and environmentally sustainable practices, including regenerative agriculture, currently embraced and promoted



COST EFFECTIVE CAPITALISATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL LAND

Industrial land constraints for large manufacturing and special industry in Queensland's south east corner is a genuine opportunity to drive potential for further industrial development.

Industrial land is available within the region and costs are highest in Kingaroy, but still well below the rate of larger urban centres or coastal regions. High yield commercial properties are also available in the region, especially in the regional centre of Kingaroy. Comparative prices remain low, generating opportunity for investment and capitalisation of assets.

South Burnett Regional Council is keen to support development, and to provide investors with streamlined investment support.

High quality liveability and a smart country lifestyle are characterised by a strong network of smaller communities that link to a well serviced regional centre at Kingaroy. Council's ongoing investment in the revitalisation of its town and village CBDs, and commitment to providing reliable trunk infrastructure, including improved connectivity, offers opportunity for the increased functionality of primary commercial areas.

The key tools for ensuring industrial and commercial land availability are the South Burnett Regional Council's Planning Scheme and the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan. Council is committed to ensuring these documents support well considered growth and sustainability across the region now and into the future.

LEVERAGING MAJOR INVESTMENT

Construction has seen a 16 per cent increase¹⁰ in FTE employment over the past few years. Major regional construction projects include:

- Redevelopment of the Swickers Bacon Factory (2017-19)
- Construction of Coopers Gap Wind Farm (2019-20)
- Ongoing scheduled overhauls at Tarong Power Stations

A forward pipeline of major projects and investment activity, including the Kingaroy Hospital, Kingaroy Transformation Project and expansion of Parkside Timber's Wondai dry mill and Plenty Foods (formerly Proteco Oils), will facilitate continued demand for construction activity.

The value of building approvals in the South Burnett has enjoyed unprecedented growth in value over the past three years.

Council recognises that investment doesn't occur in the region without strong business relationships and supply chain development. Council is committed to working in partnership with industry, investors and business representative groups. Council welcomes opportunities to engage in conversations and leverage project outcomes that involve broader regional collaboration with other local government areas.



¹⁰.idcommunity South Burnett Employment by industry (FTE) Full-time equivalent employment by industry sector 2019/20 NIEIR data

THE STRATEGY

BUILDING UPON OUR STRENGTHS WHILE ENCOURAGING FURTHER DIVERSITY OF OUR ECONOMIC BASE PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR FUTURE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.



THE FOLLOWING REGIONAL ENABLERS PROVIDE THE HIGH-LEVEL DIRECTION FOR THE STRATEGY:



Appropriate supporting infrastructure



Streamlined Investment Support



Targeted sector investment



REGIONAL ENABLER ONE

THE SOUTH BURNETT REGION HAS APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT AND LIVEABILITY.

STRATEGIES:

- 1 Water is reliably delivered to support investment in agriculture and industry, and enable urban growth in our communities.
- 2 Transport infrastructure and strategic freight networks to allow for the efficient movement of goods.
- 3 Digital communication quality, capacity and coverage supports liveability, investment in industry, and ag tech.
- 4 Major investments in infrastructure are leveraged to deliver local content and jobs, supporting workforce attraction and retention.
- 5 Projects that support future investment and community needs are known and investment ready.

REGIONAL ENABLER TWO



COUNCIL DELIVERS STREAMLINED INVESTMENT SUPPORT, AND PROMOTES WELL PLANNED GROWTH.

STRATEGIES:

- 1 Clear investment information is available to prospective investors.
- 2 Council's planning scheme identifies precincts for growth and supports appropriate development.
- 3 Council's planning scheme identifies and caters to future workforce needs and enables improved housing outcomes in our region.
- 4 Council advocates and partners with stakeholders to position the South Burnett as a current and future energy hub.

REGIONAL ENABLER THREE



COUNCIL ATTRACTS INVESTMENT, GROWING THE ECONOMY.

STRATEGIES:

- 1 Council attracts innovative agribusiness, professional services and high-quality tourism investment.
- 2 Council leverages assets to drive investment and support a business environment conducive to growth.
- 3 Council effectively advocates to State and Federal Governments to ensure funding flows to key projects.
- 4 Council builds and maintains strategic regional partnerships to support, grow and drive the regional economy.
- 5 Council identifies key stakeholders and investigates the creation of circular economy outcomes in the South Burnett.





**SOUTH BURNETT
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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JULY 2021 - Final Version

Disclaimer: This Regional Development Strategy is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee it is without flaw of any kind. There may be errors and omissions or it may not be wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. South Burnett Regional Council accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information contained in this report.