



Regional
Development
Australia

TOWNSVILLE AND NORTH WEST QLD

STRATEGIC PLAN

2019 – 2020



RDA facilitates and advocates for sustainable economic development by collaborating with regional stakeholders



An Australian Government Initiative

Purpose

RDA facilitates and advocates for sustainable economic development by collaborating with regional stakeholders

Vision for the region

A prosperous, sustainable, cohesive and liveable region

Vision for RDA

RDA will be recognised by key stakeholders as a valued contributor to the future economic sustainability of the region. RDA will contribute to this by:

- leading projects where there is a facilitation and/or advocacy gap to develop infrastructure or programs for current and future economic development needs and opportunities;
- supporting projects that are led by other organisations to develop infrastructure or programs for current and future economic development needs and opportunities;
- supporting the Australian Government in the delivery of the Regional Employment Trials Program;
- supporting the Australian Government in the promotion of its programs for regional benefit; and
- providing advice to the Australian Government on key regional issues.

Our Values

- Integrity in everything we do
- Respect for everyone we work with
- Innovation and a commitment to achieve outcomes and
- Sustainable outcomes for our region's people and environment.

Strategic Priorities

RDA will be an effective organisation, delivering high quality facilitation and advocacy services that deliver on the needs of the Australian Government, the region and its communities.

RDA will have success in delivering its projects to achieve outcomes in attracting public and private investment to the region, with a strategic focus on infrastructure that will broadly benefit all industries and communities.

The following strategic priorities are based on the five key determinants of sustainable economic growth as outlined in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Framework for Regional Economic Development.

Human Capital

- STEM skills development by facilitating and managing engagement between industry and education providers
- Support to employment initiatives (Regional Employment Trials Program)

Economically, environmentally and socially sustainable communities and population growth

- Affordable energy
- Water storage and distribution for communities and industry
- Community infrastructure including health, recreation, arts and culture to improve livability

Access to international, national and regional markets

- Transport productivity and connectivity – across roads, rail, ports and airports
- Telecommunications access and reliability

Comparative Advantage and Business Competitiveness

- Support existing industries to grow – mining, agriculture, defence, tourism
- Support new inward investment
- Identify opportunities for business growth in the aviation sector

Effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships and integrated regional planning

- Northern RDA Alliance partnership and strategic work
- Supporting flood recovery efforts through the CEO's participation in the Townsville Economic Recovery Taskforce and Townsville Local Content Committee and Committee members' participation in other flood recovery engagement
- Engagement in regional economic groups

Operating Environment

RDA operates across the Townsville and North West Queensland region of 448,000km², made up of 15 local government areas. This includes part or all of the federal electorates of Kennedy, Herbert and Dawson. The area equates to 25.9% of Queensland, 15% of Northern Australia and 5.8% of Australia.

The population of the region is 267,000 (June 2018) and this is forecast to increase to 353,500 by 2041. Eight local government areas are expected to decrease in population while Townsville, Palm Island the Burke local government areas are expected to increase the most.

Unemployment is 8.8% (December, 2018), much higher than the state unemployment. Of the 11,809 people unemployed, 8,113 people are in Townsville and 954 in Mount Isa. Palm Island, Doomadgee, Mornington, Burke and Carpentaria Shires all have unemployment above 30%.

The region's economy is driven by the mining and processing industries, agriculture – in particular sugar, horticulture and cattle, defence and the services industries – in particular education and research, health, government services and tourism. The annual economic contribution of the region is \$17.3 billion (2016/17), a decrease from \$20.6 billion in 2012/13 due to the on-going impacts of the reduction in new mine investment, reduction in mine revenues and long-term drought impacts particularly on the cattle industry.

Stakeholders

Our key stakeholders include:

- all three levels of government;
- ally organisations in economic development e.g. Gulf Savannah Development (GSD), Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Zone Inc (MITEZ), Remote Area Planning and Development Board for Central West Queensland (RAPAD), Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL);
- ally organisations in business development e.g. Chambers of Commerce;
- ally organisations in community development; and
- businesses and residents across the region.

Strategic Goals – December 2020

1

Investment attraction – Secure financial commitments to the implementation of the Inland Queensland Road Network Strategy (IQRNS)

This requires a commitment of internal resources to project management and advocacy leading up to the 2019 federal election.

The highest risks to success are a lack of funds from project partners to fund key activities; a lack of commitment by key political parties to support and fund the IQRNS ahead of the election; a derailment of IQRNS priorities by organisations with other interests.

Success will be achieved if both major parties commit to funding priorities in IQRNS ahead of the 2019 federal election. Funding is sought to cover the next 5-10 years of priorities. A target of \$500 million is set.



2

Undertake an Aviation Development Study and promote the identified aviation opportunities with the goal of business growth and inward investment

This requires a commitment of internal resources to project management, engagement of a consultant and engagement with key stakeholders to take the project forward. Stage 1 of the project has been co-funded by the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning in January, 2019.

The highest risks for this project are the level of interest and engagement that will be achieved with key local governments and industry stakeholders to participate and fund the project beyond its initial scoping in Stage 1.

Successful milestones in the project include the delivery of Stage 1 and a SWOT analysis for the region, financial commitments by regional stakeholders to partner in taking the project forward, development of the aviation industry growth strategy and an action plan, development of promotional materials and their distribution through appropriate channels.

Success will be achieved with the growth of existing aviation businesses and attraction of new businesses.



3

Develop the case for funding of a STEM initiative and commence roll-out

This also requires a commitment of internal resources to project management, engagement of a consultant and engagement with key stakeholders to take the project forward.

The first stage is the development of an MOU with RDA Hunter to share information on their program for us to transfer it successfully to the north.

The second stage is engagement with key stakeholders to ensure no duplication of others' work in STEM and to seek support for RDA to take this forward.

The business case is to be developed to secure funding, potentially from governments and industries.

Success will be achieved in the short-term with the completion of each milestone in the project and longer term through the development of STEM skills in the region to cater for future employers' needs.

4

Successfully manage RDA's Regional Employment Trials Program (RETP) responsibilities in the Townsville and North West Queensland Region

The highest risks are attracting sufficient high quality applications in order to fully utilise the allocated \$1 million.

RDA's success will be measured by the quality and value of the applications that are granted funding, with the target being \$1 million.

The success of the program will be measured by the employment and employment readiness outcomes achieved and lessons learnt for future programs.



5

Secure funding for RDA to implement at least one RETP project

This requires a commitment of internal resources to research, engage with stakeholders and prepare two applications, and if successful with one or two grants – project management and recruitment of a contractor to deliver the project.

The highest risks are a lack of success in securing a grant and finding the right contractor. Access to information and stakeholder uptake are also risks to be managed.

Successful milestones include a successful grant application, recruitment of a suitable contractor, delivery of the associated project activities and delivery of a report on key findings and recommendations.

Success will be achieved when the project positively influences outcomes on employment (different outcomes are targeted for each project). Further success would be achieved if the project was considered worthy of expansion.

6

Assist local stakeholders with securing Australian Government grants – Building Better Regions Fund, Regional Growth Fund and any new emerging economic development grants

This requires a commitment of internal resources to promote the grants, organise and deliver workshops and provide advice to project proponents and letters of support as appropriate.

The highest risk is managing the workload around grant rounds without any warning from the government as to when the grants will be opened. Secondly, regardless of how much advice is provided, success to a very large extent relies on the quality of the applications that are submitted.

RDA would like to see a success rate for regional projects that is in line with or above the success rate of other RDA regions. Successful applications will attract new funding to the region to enable projects to proceed, in most cases generating employment through construction and operations.

7

Economic recovery activities after the monsoon event

Participate in the Townsville Economic Recovery Taskforce, chair the Townsville Local Content Committee and support other economic recovery activities across the region.

The success of RDA's work in this regard will be measured through stakeholder feedback and satisfaction of our contribution, new initiatives undertaken and implemented, and indirectly the number of businesses securing work and funding and the speed of economic recovery.



Attributes and Resources

Financial resources – we will manage our financial resources by:

- complying with Australian Government contract requirements to ensure base funding is secured on time;
- budgeting and reporting on finance matters at each Committee meeting;
- effectively managing funds in bank accounts and term deposits; and
- seeking partners to co-fund projects.

Staff resources – we will encourage and support the development of our staff by:

- committing funds to staff development and training;
- allowing time for participation in training and development activities during business hours.

Governance – we will continuously work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our governance and management processes.

Stakeholders – we will always engage with and listen to our stakeholders in a respectful and professional manner.

Advocacy – we will continuously advocate for our region and will use evidence to support our cases.

Innovation – we will encourage innovation within the organisation and within our projects with partners.

Technology – we will address issues arising with the quality of our technology and prioritise budget for their improvement.



Introducing RDA Committee Members



Mr Frank Beveridge

Chairman

Frank joined RDA in 2016 and is the former Mayor of Charters Towers Regional Council, having served in local government for 16 years, previously as Deputy Mayor and Councillor. Frank has been in small business for 30 years in the region and is married with four children.



Mr David Donohue

Deputy Chair

David joined RDA in 2015 and took on the role of Acting Chair in 2018. He is an experienced company director, Chairs the Council of The Good Shepherd Home and serves as President of TropLinks Inc. David is the Managing Director of Townsville headquartered Queensland Corporate Communications Network (QCCN).



Mr Chris Briggs

Secretary

Chris joined RDA in 2018 and is General Manager at SeaLink Queensland in Townsville. He has many years experience within senior and executive management teams. Chris previously worked with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as Director Tourism and Stewardship. He has also held a number of committee positions.



Cr Mary Brown

Treasurer

Mary joined RDA in 2017 and is the Deputy Mayor of Hinchinbrook. She has over 30 years experience in private enterprise, has raised six children with her husband and has established several local businesses. Mary is also a past President of the Hinchinbrook Chamber of Commerce.



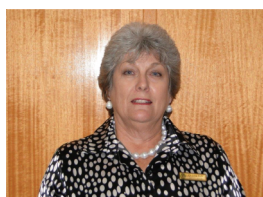
Prof. Sabina Knight

Sabina joined RDA in 2013. The Director of Mount Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health, James Cook University, she is an internationally recognised rural health leader with an extensive career in remote and rural primary health care, public health and education, and community development.



Cr Greg Campbell

Greg joined RDA in 2017 and is Mayor of Cloncurry Shire Council. He also served as Deputy Mayor 2008-2012 and as a councillor 2004-2008. In the past, he worked over 20 years in the energy industry, including technical and managerial roles with Ergon Energy for the North West.



Cr June Kuhl

June joined RDA in 2017 and is the Deputy Mayor of Richmond Shire Council, having served in local government for nine years, previously as Deputy Mayor and Councillor. June and her husband Gavin have operated a grazing property in the Richmond shire for almost 40 years.



Cr John Woods

John joined RDA in 2018 and is a councillor of Burdekin Shire Council and runs a home maintenance service. He has been with the council for 18 years, 10 of which he served as Mayor. John is Deputy Chair of the Northern Alliance of Councils and President of the Home Hill Harvest Festival Committee. He has also served on a number of boards.



Cr Jack Bawden

Jack joined RDA in 2018 and is Mayor of Carpentaria Shire Council. He is Chair of the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and a member of the North West Queensland Regional Roads Group. Jack also operates an auto electrical/mechanical work shop in Normanton.



Glenys Schuntner

CEO

Glenys joined RDA in 2010. Her previous positions include CEO of Townsville Enterprise Limited and senior management roles at the Australian Trade Commission, including Senior Trade Commissioner in Malaysia, and Trade Commissioner and Consul in Sendai, Japan. Glenys has also held management positions in the airline and retail travel industries.

Committee members are volunteers who have applied for the roles, and have been selected and appointed based on their extensive knowledge, experience, networks in the region and their passion for supporting regional development. For more information about nominating to join the RDA Committee, please visit <https://rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/> and feel free to contact the RDA office in Townsville for more specific information about operations across the North and North West Queensland region.



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