RegionsQ Framework
July 2014
The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning is responsible for driving the economic development of Queensland.

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Foreword

RegionsQ is a part of the Queensland Government’s strong plan for a brighter future in Queensland. It represents a new direction for this Government to continue to deliver and build vibrant and prosperous regions. The RegionsQ Framework draws on the Governing for Growth Economic Strategy and Action Plan and identifies the priorities that will achieve the long term vision set out in The Queensland Plan—a decentralised state with the best opportunities, the brightest minds and a prosperous economy.

The Queensland regions are a powerhouse of the state economy and the RegionsQ Framework will build on the key priority areas and initiatives already in place to deliver strong and resilient regional economies and communities.

This Government acknowledges the unique nature of our regions and the diversity and challenges they deliver. The framework will set a new direction for economic development service offerings as well as focusing our resources to deliver even better services and drive the development of regional economies.

However, driving economic development alone is not enough. Queenslanders want and expect that regional communities are equipped with community, social, learning and health support services and opportunities. It’s about providing the right services to support liveability, lifestyles and learning for families that choose to live in the wonderful towns and cities of regional Queensland. The RegionsQ Framework has identified this as well as other priorities that this Government will focus on to make regional Queensland an even better place to live, work, invest and raise a family.

The RegionsQ Action Plan will be developed from the framework as a whole-of-Government plan. It will draw on the expertise, knowledge and relationships of all Government departments, local government, businesses and communities to build on the progress this Government has already made in ensuring Queensland continues to be a great state with great opportunity.
Introduction

Queensland’s regions have long been the economic powerhouse of the state. However, regional development in Queensland has in the past been limited by complex planning regulation, lack of investment in infrastructure, and red tape for industry, business and landholders. Regional economies have also been affected by the boom and bust cycles associated with some sectors. Regions have frequently struggled with issues such as land availability for housing, access to government services, navigating conflict between competing land uses and maintaining resilience in the face of natural disasters.

Over the last two years there has been an emphasis on establishing a clear community driven vision to lay the foundations for growth and investing in the regions. RegionsQ puts regions at the forefront in delivering jobs and driving strong economic growth. RegionsQ is the Queensland Government’s plan for achieving strength and resilience in regional Queensland.

The government has undertaken important actions to lay the foundations of growth:

- The Queensland Plan provides the community driven aspiration for what we want our regions to be in the next 30 years.

- There has been a roll out of new generation statutory regional plans to ease land use conflicts between important pillars of the Queensland economy and provide opportunities for future economic growth. New economic growth focused regional plans will be rolled out across the state over the coming years.

- The government has invested in new infrastructure through development of new Priority Development Areas to provide a stock of industrial land and affordable land supply. The Royalties for the Regions program has delivered important economic and community infrastructure. This commitment to investment will continue, with opportunities for a broader range of investments.

- The time taken to take projects from conception to production through the Coordinator-General, planning and environmental approvals continues to fall. This will mean more jobs faster for further economic diversification. RegionsQ is about continuing to deliver more investment, faster.

Figure 1 demonstrates how the government’s key initiatives are linked and work together to support regional growth.

RegionsQ comprises four key components:

- This document, the RegionsQ Framework, sets the agenda for fostering economic growth in our regions and outlines some recent government achievements. A new initiative is presented—Projects of Regional Significance—where a targeted and collaborative effort will have significant positive economic outcomes for a region.

- RegionsQ Forums to be held around regional Queensland during July and August 2014 will provide information about the framework and seek feedback from regional Queenslanders on the RegionsQ priorities and how they can contribute.

- The RegionsQ Action Plan will be released in late 2014/ early 2015 as the culmination of this process and will outline Queensland Government actions to achieve Queensland’s vision for the regions.

- The RegionsQ Showcase, to be held in early 2015, will be a major event to shine a spotlight on the great lifestyle and investment opportunities available in Queensland regions. It will bring regional Queenslanders together to showcase why they live and work in their regions and promote development opportunities.
Overview

Consultation undertaken in progressing *The Queensland Plan* clearly shows Queenslanders want more growth in regional Queensland and see a strong role for our regions in driving the state’s economic future. A targeted effort to drive population growth beyond the south-east corner has been identified as an aspiration of Queenslanders.

The government recognises Queensland’s regions have significant potential for growth and government can play a key role in facilitating good economic outcomes by unlocking potential and removing impediments. The Queensland Government’s approach to regional development is outlined in *Governing for Growth*—which identifies the government’s strategic objectives as:

- capitalising on economic drivers and unique assets to grow and strengthen regional economies
- unlocking regional economic potential by enabling major project investment and exports
- building productive and resilient supply chains.

The benefits of the government’s actions and economic policy settings are already being seen in the latest data on Queensland’s economic performance. Evidence includes higher levels of business confidence, strong growth in the four pillars of the Queensland economy and solid employment growth. Queensland created over half of all new jobs in Australia in the twelve months to May 2014. These positive outcomes are backed by ratings agency Standard and Poor’s who recently reaffirmed Queensland’s AA+ credit rating with a stable outlook.

This *RegionsQ Framework* takes the pro-growth goals established in *Governing for Growth* and applies them to driving development in regional Queensland. The framework recognises regional diversity and the need to take advantage of regional strengths. It identifies six priority areas that acknowledge the unique challenges of regional Queensland:

- planning for development in regional Queensland
- infrastructure services for regional growth
- making it easier to do business in regional Queensland
- growing regions: capitalising on economic drivers
- attracting and retaining people in regional Queensland
- communicating and promoting the regions’ potential.

In setting these priority areas this framework recognises that liveability factors, including access to infrastructure, jobs, schools, hospitals, and vibrant communities, play a vital role in driving regional economic development.

Queensland is also well-placed to provide a strong foundation for the further development of northern Australia given our strong network of regional centres, existing strategic infrastructure, and a range of opportunities for further growth.

The Queensland Government has already made progress in the six priority areas—some of the key achievements are outlined in Figure 2—but knows there is more that can be done to foster economic development in the regions. While the government will continue to take a lead role, set the right conditions and cut red tape, a collaborative effort from all stakeholders is needed to achieve real change.

For the purposes of the RegionsQ initiative, which is about growing Queensland regions, we have taken a more flexible view of the south-east corner. We recognise south-east Queensland, as defined by the boundaries of its regional plan, is itself a region with inter-related communities, infrastructure, business and industry. However, we also acknowledge that some areas outside of the Brisbane metropolitan area are growing rapidly and are enabling growth in neighbouring regions. For this reason, RegionsQ will consider growth opportunities within south-east Queensland but outside of greater metropolitan Brisbane.
Figure 1 — RegionsQ approach

- Setting the vision
  - Laying the foundations for growth
    - Investing in regions
      - Delivering for the regions

- The Queensland Plan
  - Regional plans, Regional Planning Interests Act 2014
  - Governing for Growth
    - DestinationQ
    - ConstructionQ
    - ResourcesQ
    - Queensland’s Agriculture Strategy

- Priority Development Areas
- Priority Port Development Areas
- State Planning Policy
- Priority Development Infrastructure
- Halved major project approval timeframes through the Coordinator-General

- State Infrastructure Plan
- Queensland Ports Strategy
- Reforms to Queensland's planning legislation
- State Assessment and Referral Agency
- Economic Directions Statement Queensland Airports 2013-2023

- State Budget
- Royalties for the Regions

- Economic Development Queensland
- Queensland Betterment Fund

- Planning for development in regional Queensland
- Infrastructure services for regional growth
- Making it easier to do business in regional Queensland
- Growing regions: capitalising on economic drivers
- Attracting and retaining people in regional Queensland
- Communicating and promoting the regions’ potential
Figure 2—Some of our key achievements to date

### RegionsQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning for development in regional Queensland</th>
<th>Infrastructure services for regional growth</th>
<th>Making it easier to do business in regional Queensland</th>
<th>Growing regions: capitalising on economic drivers</th>
<th>Attracting and retaining people in regional Queensland</th>
<th>Communicating and promoting the regions' potential</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014</td>
<td>Released Infrastructure for Economic Development</td>
<td>Reformed vegetation management</td>
<td>Completed the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit</td>
<td>Established the Rural and Remote Clinical Network</td>
<td>Launched Destination Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivered Regional Plans for the Darling Downs and Central Queensland</td>
<td>Established the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA)</td>
<td>Removed the waste levy</td>
<td>Launched the Queensland Ports Strategy</td>
<td>Reformed Hospital and Health Services (Health Boards)</td>
<td>Delivered Major Projects Conferences in 2012 and 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivered Next Generation Tourism Planning – a guideline for planners in Queensland</td>
<td>Launched WaterQ and PowerQ, 30-year strategies for Queensland's water and electricity sectors</td>
<td>Introduced the Construction and Tourism (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014</td>
<td>Established the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund</td>
<td>Committed funding for the infrastructure requirements of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine</td>
<td>Committed funding for the infrastructure requirements of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established the State Planning Policy</td>
<td>Released the 10 year Moving Freight strategy</td>
<td>Implemented the Workers Compensation And Rehabilitation Act 2013</td>
<td>Launched the Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy</td>
<td>Launched the Future Resources Program through the Geological Survey of Queensland</td>
<td>Launched the Future Resources Program through the Geological Survey of Queensland</td>
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<td>New schools and early childhood education support in regional areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implemented the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy</td>
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About our regions

Economic performance

Regional Queensland has a strong economic base that has performed well over the last decade. While future demand for agricultural products and commodities is expected to remain strong, underpinned by strong global demand, there is a need to ensure regional economies capitalise on current positive conditions to strengthen and diversify their economies to ensure long-term economic resilience.

In 2010–11, over $140 billion worth of output was produced outside of the Brisbane statistical division, which equated to 51.9 per cent of total Queensland Gross State Product.¹

The unprecedented level of business investment in recent years has led to solid employment outcomes in the regions. It is estimated that the Queensland economy grew by three per cent in 2013–14, compared with two and three-quarter per cent for Australia.²

The Queensland economy is now entering a period of transition, as the investment phase of the large liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects starts to wind down and the production and export phase begins.³

Exports

Over the medium-term, a forecast surge in exports—driven by LNG which is centred in Gladstone—combined with a stronger household sector is projected to boost Queensland’s economic growth to an estimated six per cent in 2015–16—the fastest of all states in Australia for the second consecutive year. ¹

The bulk of Queensland’s exports are accounted for by the four pillar industries and their supply chains with the majority of that produced in regional centres.

Industry: four pillars

The four pillar industries directly contribute at least one-quarter of Queensland’s economic output. This contribution is far higher in some regional economies and accounts for up to three-quarters of total industry output. ³

²2012–13
TOTAL EXPORTED TONNES

92%
REGIONAL PORTS

8%
PORT OF BRISBANE

Queensland is on track to produce over 200 million tonnes of coal in 2013–14. Coal is Queensland’s largest export commodity and the bulk of this is exported from regional ports.1

China has been a key source of growth in international visitors to Queensland over recent years. In 2013, the Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland were the most visited Queensland destinations by Chinese visitors.2

Queensland is by far the most decentralised mainland state. Over the year to June 2013, population growth outside Greater Brisbane accounted for almost half the total increase in Queensland’s population. Queensland’s population outside Greater Brisbane is projected to increase to 3.654 million people in 2036.3

Outside of Greater Brisbane, the largest increases in long-term population growth are projected to occur in the statistical areas of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Fitzroy, Townsville, Cairns and Mackay.1

Regions dominate resource output1

Regional Queensland enjoys the majority of domestic visitor expenditure2

International visitors spend more in regional Queensland3

Over half of Queensland’s population lives outside Greater Brisbane1

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Priority action areas

Planning for development in regional Queensland

The Queensland Government has responded to industry calls for transparency, clarity and efficiency in development and planning decisions. Government reforms are ensuring the regions’ continued growth and prosperity, and are delivering a contemporary planning and development system.

Land-use planning supports regional economic growth by simplifying the system, cutting red tape, and empowering local governments to deliver and manage effective planning for their communities. It allows:

- earlier commencement of development projects and employment
- fosters certainty of investment for industry
- generates greater confidence in government processes
- delivers better regional and community planning through empowered local governments.

The Queensland Government is committed to delivering a new generation of statutory regional plans with an economic development focus, to cover the entire state. These regional plans seek to provide strategic direction to achieve regional outcomes that align with the state’s interest in planning and development.

Some of the reforms delivering tangible results for the regions include the:

- State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) which has made the system easier and more cost efficient
- Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 which seeks to resolve competing land uses
- release of the Darling Downs and Central Queensland statutory regional plans, a draft statutory plan for Cape York, and a review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031.

The government is also developing new planning legislation—the Planning and Development Bill 2014. This will significantly simplify Queensland’s planning and development system and will replace the cumbersome Sustainable Planning Act 2009. The new Bill will ensure Queensland’s planning system focuses on supporting economic growth—a key election promise of the government.

Some of our key actions

- The Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014, passed in May 2014, implements pathways to freeholding for state rural leasehold land leases.
- The creation of a State Development Area for the Galilee Basin and investigation of other possible new State Development Areas in regional Queensland.
- The Environmental Offsets Act 2014, passed in May 2014, will simplify and streamline the process of offsetting impacts of development to provide enhanced conservation outcomes.
- The Queensland Heritage Act 1992 and Queensland Heritage Strategy are being reviewed and amended to reduce regulatory burden, increase transparency and improve process efficiency, and plan strategic action for Queensland’s cultural heritage over the next five years.
- The Queensland state land—Strengthening our economic future discussion paper was released in June 2014. It marks the start of a major reform of Queensland’s state land system aimed at modernising and consolidating legislation, streamlining government processes, reducing red tape and regulation and improving the way services are delivered toQueenslanders.
- 2014–15 Budget initiative—additional funding of $2.6 million over four years to assess, condition and regulate impacts of major resource projects on matters of national environmental significance under the Commonwealth’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. This will remove regulatory duplication and provide a ‘one-stop shop’ for applicants.

NUMBER OF NEW HOUSES APPROVED YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of New Houses Approved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Brisbane</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Queensland</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More houses are approved in regional Queensland*

* Source: Queensland Treasury and Trade Government Statistician Regional Profiles (Based on ABS 8731.0, Building Approvals, Australia, various editions).
Case study: Regional Planning Interests Act 2014

Benefits

- Provides land use certainty for regional communities
- Cuts red tape

The boom in resource exploration, extraction and production in Queensland has led to significant economic opportunities but also uncertainty for landholders about the impact of the industry on agricultural assets and communities. This resulted in land use conflicts between the agriculture and resources sectors, leaving landholders, resource companies and local councils dissatisfied and without a clear avenue for resolution.

To ensure prosperous and resilient regional communities into the future, it is vital that both the agricultural and resources sectors grow and flourish. That is why the Queensland Government recently launched the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (the Act) which is delivering on the government’s commitment to protect prime agricultural land while streamlining assessment processes for regional developments.

The framework established in the Act ensures landholders in Priority Agricultural Areas or Strategic Cropping Areas have a say in any resource development that occurs on their properties and provides an incentive for resources companies to reach agreement with landholders. When a new mining or gas development is proposed, the assessment process established by the Act restores the balance of power between rural producers and resources companies by giving both parties the certainty they need for the future. The Act also introduces Priority Living Areas which have been established to safeguard areas required for the growth of towns from incompatible resource activities.

Key industry stakeholders have expressed their appreciation of the government’s endeavours in relation to the co-existence criteria.

The Act also allows regional communities, through their statutory regional plans, to determine the agricultural, living and environmental areas to be protected and has established a clear and equitable process of assessing developments in those areas.
Case study: Cape York Regional Development

Benefits

- Making it easier to do business on Cape York
- Broad community agreement on the future direction for the Cape proposed in the Cape York Regional Plan
- Sensitive river and stream courses protected and other areas available to provide economic opportunities

The Cape York region is rich in biodiversity and culture and contains untapped economic potential. However, it is constrained by remoteness and difficulties in accessing markets, seasonal weather, limited infrastructure and labour capacity. It is difficult to attract investment due to a shortage of freehold land and complexities with other land tenure types.

Due to be released in September 2014, the Draft Cape York Regional Plan and Cape York Economic Development Action Plan will provide economic opportunities for Cape York communities, as well as protect important environmental areas.

Case study: The former Biloela Research Station site

Benefits

- Makes much-needed light industrial land available to support economic development in Biloela
- Regional and Resource Towns Action Plan funding allowed water connection to the site
- Continued access to the woodworkers’ shed

Around 247 hectares of farm land at the former Biloela Research Facility was sold at auction on 30 October 2013. The Queensland Government identified that part of the remaining land could support economic development in the Biloela area by providing much-needed industrial lots. To meet that need, it was decided that a ten hectare lot would be subdivided into five “light industrial” lots.

The Queensland Government has engaged with Cape residents to address the economic disadvantage in the region, especially in the Indigenous communities. Gerhardt Pearson, Executive Director of Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, said he was pleased the Queensland Government has released more areas of the Cape for responsible economic development.

“We are pleased to see that privately-held Indigenous land has been largely excluded from inclusion within the Strategic Environmental Areas in the plan,” Mr Pearson said.

The Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 prepares for the repeal of the Wild Rivers Act 2005 as it prescribes Strategic Environmental Areas for Cape York. The Wild Rivers policy objective to protect these special environmental areas can be more effectively implemented through this new Act. The Cape York Regional Planning Committee provided strong support for this approach.

The Queensland Government has also released the Draft Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management in Cape York to support economic development opportunities. There is no longer a moratorium on water licence applications on Cape York Peninsula.
Infrastructure services for regional growth

Economic infrastructure and social infrastructure are critical to supporting the long-term growth of Queensland’s regions. Economic infrastructure includes transport, electricity generation and transmission, water supply, telecommunications, while social infrastructure includes hospitals and schools. Well-functioning economic infrastructure enhances productivity, underpins industry expansion and creates the conditions for major jobs growth. It improves business efficiency through increased connectivity, supports economies of scale, increases labour market flexibility and opens up new markets.

In constrained fiscal circumstances, the government’s approach to the infrastructure task is changing to enable increased private sector involvement in infrastructure delivery. Nowhere is this task felt more acutely than in regional Queensland where distances, climate and smaller population centres impact on the costs of infrastructure. This new approach will facilitate more efficient and effective infrastructure delivery to meet community need and realise economic potential.

Due for release in 2014, the Queensland Government’s new state infrastructure plan will focus on major infrastructure that supports the:

- Transportation of products and people
- Supply of energy and water
- Improvement of health, education and liveability.

These are essential for the long-term development of regional Queensland.

Some of our key actions

- Transport action plans are being developed in areas important to economic development to respond to emerging issues and trends, and to support the management of the transport system in Queensland. The Bruce Highway Action Plan and the Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2013–2015 have also been developed and the development of other action plans will be ongoing.
- Queensland Betterment Fund is an $80 million funding program aimed at increasing the resilience of Queensland communities to natural disasters, while at the same time reducing future expenditure on asset restoration.
- Royalties for the Regions is a $495 million funding program providing new and improved regional infrastructure, roads, and floodplain security projects to benefit people living, working and investing in Queensland’s resource regions.
- Commencement of the Priority Development Infrastructure co-investment program to incentivise councils to use a new ‘fair value schedule of charges’.
- Some 2014–15 Budget initiatives:
  - Regional Queenslanders will benefit from
  - An allocation of $159.8 million for regulated network refurbishment, load energy management, asset replacement, and reliability and augmentation works for the Darling Downs energy network.
  - Funding of $24.5 million to improve the Warrego Highway between Toowoomba and Miles, delivered in partnership with the Australian Government.
  - The 2014–15 Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) will deliver a record $768 million for the Bruce Highway as part of the ongoing effort to improve the 1700 kilometre lifeline.

More state government capital expenditure outside Brisbane

$173.3 million for hospital redevelopments in Cairns, Mackay, Townsville, Rockhampton and Mt Isa.

Source: Based on Queensland Treasury and Trade, Capital Budget Statement 2014–15 State Budget.
Case study: Palm Island Betterment Project

Benefits

- Savings realised
- Communications access maintained during cyclone events in early 2014

Upper Mount Bentley Road has been impacted by numerous weather events, hampering access to the telecommunications tower and triggering disaster funding eight times between January 2008 and January 2013.

Reliable communications infrastructure is of great importance to Palm Island residents. A key piece of Palm Island’s infrastructure, the island’s only radio telecommunications tower, supports communication throughout the island and to the mainland. It is essential for maintaining contact with emergency services and police.

Following the 2013 cyclone season, the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council applied for support from the Queensland Betterment Fund for the reconstruction of Upper Mount Bentley Road at a higher standard to increase its resilience during future events.

Case study: Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

Benefits

- $2.4 billion increase in economic activity in the Toowoomba region
- More than 1800 full time equivalents (FTE) during the three year construction phase
- Almost 80 per cent of heavy and super heavy vehicles will be directed away from the existing crossing
- Travel time across the range will be reduced by up to 40 minutes

The Australian and Queensland Governments are working together to modernise the state’s infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing regional economies.

As a transport hub for the Darling Downs and a gateway to the developing energy sector in the Surat Basin, Toowoomba streets carry a heavy concentration of commercial/heavy vehicles. Toowoomba is a key link in the National Land Transport Network with the convergence of three major freight routes:

- Brisbane-Darwin (Warrego Highway)
- Melbourne-Brisbane (Gore Highway)
- New England Highway (inland route between Brisbane and Sydney).

As a result, recent road investment has focused on improved safety on the range and traffic management through Toowoomba. This has been an important investment but there is limited scope for further cost-effective improvements on the existing route. The Queensland Government, Toowoomba Regional Council, community and industry stakeholders all agree an alternative is needed.

In January 2014, the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing (TSRC) project secured joint funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments. The TSRC, which is expected to shift almost 80 per cent of heavy vehicles off the existing crossing and reduce travel time by up to 40 minutes, is one of the Queensland Government’s top three infrastructure priorities.

With construction expected to begin in 2015, the approximately 41 kilometre road project will help drive Queensland’s economic growth as it is anticipated to increase economic activity in the Toowoomba region by $2.4 billion. The project will also create more than 1800 jobs during the three-year construction phase and provide a gateway to the state’s resource-rich Surat Basin and the ‘food bowls’ of the Darling Downs.
Making it easier to do business in regional Queensland

Regional business plays a critical role in the Queensland economy. The government is committed to making the business environment attractive for investment by removing unnecessary impediments, building capability and facilitating practical solutions.

The government also plays a role in creating the conditions which help business and industry growth, and where they can innovate for competitive advantage. Business capability improvement, development to increase the productive performance of the goods and services supply chain and growing the digital economy will enhance regional responses to market opportunities. These are of particular importance to the regions’ small businesses.

The cost of doing business is a key factor in investment decisions and a KPMG study has highlighted Australia is a high-cost business location. Costs are sometimes greater in regional locations.

The government has already implemented numerous initiatives to reduce the regulatory burden on business and industry and create certainty for investors, while maintaining appropriate protections for consumers, society and the environment. There have also been major reforms to fiscal settings, planning reforms, red and green tape reductions and the timeframe for major project approvals has been halved.

In line with the government’s commitment to reduce red tape by 20 per cent by 2018, Queensland Government agencies have implemented, or are progressing, key red tape reduction reforms across all sectors of the Queensland economy, delivering direct and tangible benefits to key industries, business and the community. By 30 June 2013, there were already over 9,400 fewer regulatory requirements imposed by the Queensland Government than when it came into office.

Some of our key actions

- GoDigitalQld Strategy and Action Plan will help boost productivity through innovation for regional Queensland businesses and industry by raising digital awareness, confidence and skills to compete in an increasingly global, digital marketplace.
- The Business and Industry Portal will be expanded to improve online service delivery as part of the One-Stop Shop initiative.
- National Parks permitting arrangements will continue to be streamlined to reduce red tape for tourism and recreation in Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service-managed areas.
- Water Business Transformation will expand water markets across Queensland by converting a further 9,500 water licences to secure, tradeable water allocations. This will ensure water is available to support economic development opportunities.
- Queensland Government Agent Program counters will provide more efficient multi-agency service delivery across the state following the development of a new business model for courthouses.
- Case management by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning offers a dedicated resource for investors seeking project facilitation services for regional projects. It streamlines the interaction of proponents with the Queensland Government and ensures engagement with government agencies is coordinated and effective.
- Capability development, with a variety of services continuing to be offered to regional business and industry by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning’s regional office network. Businesses are assisted with capability development, supply chain development, business process improvement, and tendering.
- Research, development and extension, and industry development services provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry across Queensland, to build capacity and resilience in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector.
- Some 2014–15 Budget initiatives including funding of:
  - $2.5 million per annum to support the continuation of the GasFields Commission.
  - $1.8 million to support the One-Stop Shop initiative to improve the way Queenslanders receive their services from the government.

Case study: Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital

Benefits

- $1.87 billion investment in Sunshine Coast healthcare
- 10,000 patients each year will not have to travel for treatment
- Approximately 85 per cent of Lend Lease’s investment in the project has been directed towards south–east Queensland businesses with the vast majority (60 per cent) going to Sunshine coast businesses

Local businesses sometimes miss out on opportunities to be a part of the supply chain for major regional projects.

Recognising this challenge, the Queensland Government is working hard to ensure Sunshine Coast businesses don’t miss out on supply chain opportunities as part of the new Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital.

This $1.87 billion project will revolutionise healthcare on the Sunshine Coast and offer a range of new and expanded free public hospital services. As the hospital will offer additional services and will not replace existing regional infrastructure, this means about 10,000 patients each year will not have to travel to Brisbane for complex treatment.

As well as delivering significant health-related outcomes to the region, the project provides a substantial economic opportunity for the region during construction and once built. To maximise this opportunity, the government has been working closely with the proponent consortium—Exemplar Health, Industry Capability Network and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to facilitate opportunities for regional stakeholders. The government has:

- worked with Lend Lease who are leading construction. To make work packages more accessible for regional businesses, Lend Lease agreed to break down approximately 50 large work-packages to more than 260 smaller packages
- brought major project supply chain experience and linkages to the region. The government, with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, have provided information on opportunities, advice and a range of business education workshops to assist regional business
- delivered 27 business capability improvement workshops to over 1300 participants across the Sunshine Coast. These workshops have assisted participants to improve their business knowledge of supplying to a major project and increased their capability so they were better equipped to successfully tender.

It is estimated that 85 per cent of Lend Lease’s investment in the project has been directed towards south-east Queensland businesses so far, with about 60 per cent of that directly to Sunshine Coast businesses.

In addition, the collaborative approach with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and regional stakeholders has been the catalyst for the formation of the Education and Training Consortium. The consortium will promote engagement and increased alignment between education and training, business and industry to deliver even better employment outcomes for the Sunshine Coast community.
Case study: Vegetation Management Reforms

Benefits
- $650 savings per landholder
- Helping agricultural landholders and producers to take advantage of new development opportunities

Individual landholders often had to wait up to two months for a development approval before they could carry out routine maintenance activities on their properties. The Queensland Government has introduced self-assessable management codes to reduce cost and time burdens on landholders.

In December 2013, amendments to the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the vegetation management framework were made. Since the introduction of these reforms, over 500 notifications from 298 individual landholders have been received. Landholders are now no longer limited to the previous five-year permit life, with the new self-assessable notifications lasting as long as the landholders own the land.

This delivers on average a cost savings of $650 per landholder for each five-year period which has provided a total saving of almost $220 000 to landholders so far. Over time this number is expected to increase substantially as more land holders self assess.

These reforms are now helping agricultural land holders and producers expand operations and take advantage of new development opportunities, particularly in Far North Queensland and are building on the government’s commitment to build a strong regional economy.

Case study: Resources Cabinet Committee

Benefits
- Removing barriers to investment and providing major cost savings to the resources sector through streamlined approvals and reduced operating costs.

The resources sector is a crucial driver of the Queensland economy. The Resources Cabinet Committee was established in September 2012 to take a whole-of-government approach and proactively tackle major regulatory challenges in the resource sector. By reducing approval times and cutting red tape, the committee assists to stimulate investment and support the sustainable development of the resource industry.

Regular monthly meetings are held and the committee hears directly from industry about key regulatory challenges and the practical solutions to address these issues. The committee operates at various levels from championing the industry and undertaking visionary planning, such as the Galilee Basin Development Strategy, down to resolving specific regulatory issues for individual companies, such as stream diversion approvals for Middlemount Coal Mine.

Major achievements of the committee are reported every six months and include:
- Overhauling QLeave, the portable long service leave for building and construction industry workers. One major company has estimated savings of $10 million per year, and major projects such as those in the Galilee Basin will save tens of millions of dollars during construction without affecting the sustainability of the scheme
- Strengthening the Environmental Impact Statement process through streamlined Terms of Reference, allowing proponents to focus effort on the critical issues that may require assessment and are of importance to the community. This has reduced Terms of Reference from 100 pages to 25 pages
- Resolution of stream diversion for Middlemount Coal Mine ensuring mining operations could continue, safeguarding regional jobs and securing an ongoing royalty stream of approximately $55 million per annum.

Future priorities include a comprehensive review of the petroleum and gas tenure framework to encourage investment in new and existing basins. Queensland has highly prospective gas reserves ripe for exploration. The right regulatory settings will encourage the long-term investment decisions required to tap new gas reserves. Benchmarking of CSG regulation will be completed to ensure efficiency, and a new financial assurance model will be developed that manages environmental risk whilst reducing industry costs.

Regulatory reforms through the Resources Cabinet Committee aim to place Queensland ahead of other States as an investment destination for the exploration and development of natural resources. The Resources Cabinet Committee is one example of this government’s commitment to working in partnership with industry to ensure that we have an economically strong, competitive and agile resource sector in Queensland.
Growing regions: capitalising on economic drivers

The four pillars directly contribute at least one-quarter of the state’s economic output, and this contribution is far higher proportionately in some regional economies. The bulk of Queensland’s exports are accounted for by the four pillars and their supply chains, with the majority of this produced in regional centres.

Some of our key actions

- DestinationQ annual forums will continue to produce industry-government partnerships that recognise the many facets of tourism and focus on generating growth in tourism that directly contributes to the economic, social and environmental future of all Queenslanders.
- ResourcesQ will drive growth and jobs for Queensland’s resources sector through development of a 30-year strategic vision. The ResourcesQ Partnership Group is comprised of well-respected and experienced industry leaders and will play a key role in ensuring broad industry consultation and that ResourcesQ is grounded in the commercial realities facing the sector.
- ConstructionQ will be an industry-driven 20-year business plan with clearly defined actions for the construction industry. To gain a better understanding of emerging issues faced by the building and construction industry, the ConstructionQ forum will be conducted in September 2014 to examine the challenges facing the sector.
- Queensland’s Agriculture Strategy outlines a vision for an efficient, innovative, resilient and profitable sector, with a target to double agricultural production by 2040. Implementation is structured around four key pathways to growth: resources, productivity, markets, and production costs.

Industry development strategies such as DestinationQ, ResourcesQ, ConstructionQ and the Queensland’s Agriculture Strategy create a positive economic framework for future regional growth in the four pillars.

Capitalising on economic drivers by broadening and deepening regional participation in the four pillars, as well as pursuing emerging opportunities in other sectors, will develop stronger more resilient regional economies.

Integrated Resort Developments offer outstanding opportunities for Queensland to enhance its tourism offerings. Such developments will reinvigorate key locations across the state for entertainment and recreation to both locals and visitors alike. Integrated Resort Development proposals at Cairns and the Gold Coast would be able to receive gaming licences if their projects proceed and meet all the necessary environmental, planning and gaming licencing approvals.

The Queensland Eco and Sustainable Tourism (QuEST) initiative provides tourism operators in key ecotourism destinations with greater business certainty, incentivised best practice standards, opportunities for growth, and streamlined administration.

A Queensland Defence Industries Roadmap that will provide the platform to support and grow the state’s recognised defence industry capability and presence will be developed, following the release of the Australian Government Defence White Paper and Defence Capability Plan.

Regional Industry Development Plans (part of Queensland’s Agriculture Strategy implementation) will provide a place-based strategic approach to facilitating priority agricultural sectors in priority areas.

The High Value Agricultural Land Strategy will make government-owned land accessible to agricultural producers to expand agricultural production.

2014-15 Budget initiative—$480 000 in funding for irrigated cropping and high-value agriculture in both the Flinders and Gilbert River catchments.

Regional Queensland enjoys the majority of domestic visitor expenditure.

International visitors spend more in regional Queensland.

Source: Based on Tourism Research Australia Regional Tourism Profiles for Queensland year ended December 2013.
Case study: DestinationQ—boosting Queensland’s tourism industry

Benefits

- A firm strategy and partnership to make Queensland Australia’s number one tourist destination
- Generating growth in tourism that directly contributes to the economic, social and environmental future of all Queenslanders
- Example: After hosting the 2014 UCI Mountain Bike World Cup in April this year, Cairns has won the right to host this event in 2016 and 2017 which will bring investment and tourist dollars to the region. The key to Cairns’ success was the partnership of Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, James Cook University and Cairns Regional Council. The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing also undertook significant work in hosting the event on land managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Global economic trends, the high Australian dollar and natural disasters have hit the Queensland tourism industry hard over recent years. It has struggled to compete with international destinations and regain its profile as a desirable destination. In response, the Queensland Government began identifying the priority actions needed to get tourism back on track and, in 2012, organised the first DestinationQ forum.

The now annual DestinationQ forums have produced successive industry-government partnerships including formal agreements between the government and Queensland Tourism Council with outstanding results.

Key examples of how this strategy is working to boost Queensland’s regional tourism industry include:

- In April 2014, Cairns hosted the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup where 300 of the world’s best mountain bikers competed. This major sporting event brought a significant number of visitors to the region and boosted the local economy. It also profiled the region to an international audience and demonstrated Queensland’s ability to host world class sporting events. As a result, Cairns has successfully won the right to continue to host this event for 2016 and 2017. Cycling Australia Commercial Director Mr Michael Edgley said “the partnership between Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, James Cook University and Cairns Regional Council was the determining factor in Cairns winning the right to host these mountain bike events.” The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing also undertook significant work in hosting the event on land managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

- The Camping Options Toolkit for Local Governments was a key outcome of the state government’s Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy, which encourages more travellers to take a driving holiday in Queensland. Domestic tourism accounts for 80 per cent of visitor spending in Queensland. Many rural and regional communities rely on revenue from drive tourism, including caravanning and camping. This industry has boomed in recent years, resulting in significant numbers of domestic tourists travelling throughout the state. The toolkit provides councils with a valuable resource to effectively manage camping in their area. The Queensland Government is now providing targeted support to councils to help adopt and implement the toolkit, with work already underway within the Townsville, Central Highlands and Fraser Coast local government areas.

The main goals of DestinationQ are to make Queensland Australia’s number one tourist destination and achieve our share of the national target by reaching $30 billion in overnight visitor expenditure per annum by 2020. The DestinationQ partnership recognises the many facets of tourism and focuses on generating tourism growth that directly contributes to the economic, social and environmental future of all Queenslanders.
Attracting and retaining people in regional Queensland

Attracting and retaining people is key to the future prosperity of regional Queensland. A strong economy which offers diverse job opportunities is fundamental to growing regional Queensland’s population, an aspiration clearly articulated through The Queensland Plan.

The Australian Government’s northern Australia development agenda also sets the goal of population and economic growth in the north. Queensland’s regions are well placed to capitalise on this agenda with the majority of northern Australia’s major population centres located in Queensland.

Research indicates many people initially move to regions because of job opportunities, but their decision to stay is based on the enviable quality of life offered by regional locations. Investment in areas such as health, education, recreation and arts and culture provides the regional amenity that will convince regional Queenslanders to stay, grow their business, invest, and raise their families.

Queensland’s regions are diverse—so tailored solutions will be needed to attract and meet the needs of a growing population.

Some of our key actions

- The Women in Resources Sector Strategy aims to attract and retain women working in the resources sector.
- The Open Data Initiative encourages people, companies, researchers and non-government organisations to use government data to drive innovation, growth and job creation.
- The Regional and Resource Town Action Plan is being implemented by the government to better respond to issues and challenges of towns impacted by the resources sector.
- Teach Rural promotes the unique and diverse career and lifestyle opportunities available to Queensland teachers in regional, rural and remote communities.
- Emerald Agricultural College and Longreach Pastoral College are being reinvigorated with the appointment of new boards and directors to ensure these colleges provide practical agricultural training in the regions which meet industry needs.
- The Accelerate Fellowships Program aims to develop and establish the professional research reputations of early and mid-career researchers by funding research projects addressing the four pillars with a view to attracting and retaining world class Queensland-based researchers.
- The Code of Practice for Local Content developed by the Queensland Resources Council with support from government and other industry stakeholders facilitates a high level of Queensland industry content in Queensland resource and energy projects while maintaining and enhancing the sector’s competitiveness.
- The Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office facilitates home ownership, delivering jobs, skills and infrastructure.
- The Get in the Game initiative provides funding programs for local communities to encourage grass roots sport and recreation that contributes to the liveability, sustainability, health and well-being of communities and support the development and upgrade of local sporting and recreation facilities across Queensland’s regions.
- The Regional Arts Development Fund continues to support local arts and cultural development and the Playing Queensland Touring Fund aims to increase the number of touring arts productions, extend the reach of tours and double the number of touring arts experiences in regional communities.
- Investing in Queenslanders: social and human services blueprint 2014–19 is a five-year plan to build the country’s best social and human services system and will ensure Queensland families, communities and people with a disability will enjoy better and more responsive services.
- Government’s total drought assistance package is $56.2 million over two years to support drought affected communities.
- 2014–15 Budget initiative—funding of $0.8 million over two years for the Cape York Institute—an independent policy and leadership organisation working on reform in Indigenous economic and social policy and supporting the development of current and future Cape York leaders.

1 Source: Queensland Treasury and Trade Government Statistician Regional Profiles and Database (Based on ABS 3218.0, Regional Population Growth, 2012–13).
Case study: Rural Telehealth Services in Queensland

Benefits

- Queensland has one of the largest managed telehealth networks in Australia
- There are more than 2000 systems deployed in over 200 hospitals and community facilities
- The Queensland Government has committed $30.9 million over four years to transform the system into one which is reliable, sustainable and innovative

Queenslanders living in rural and remote communities are often faced with travelling long distances and spending time away from home in order to access the specialist healthcare they need.

In July 2013, the Queensland Government announced its Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland and made a commitment to improve health outcomes and the accessibility of services for all Queenslanders. Under this Blueprint, Queensland Health commenced its Rural Telehealth Service in 2013 to provide patients in remote clinics with improved access to city-based healthcare providers via video link.

Thanks to Telehealth, patients in remote areas of Queensland can now see their Queensland health specialist in larger towns, without having to leave their local communities. The service is effectively an extension of the way patients and their relatives can communicate with nurses, doctors, allied health and other specialists by using videoconferencing, in most cases.

In this way, Telehealth enables better access to specialist clinicians, reduces travel cost and inconvenience for people in rural and remote Queensland.

Put simply Telehealth helps to avoid the expense and disruption and improves access to care locally."

Dr Mark Elcock, Senior Director, Retrieval Services and Counter Disaster

“Retrieval Services Queensland has been using Telehealth since 2005, to provide clinical support via real-time video to critically ill patients in rural and remote locations. Telehealth has helped to increase the safety of patients and aeromedical crew by reducing at-risk missions such as night flights. This has also improved the clinical support available in rural and remote areas and reduced the cost of retrievals not only for Queensland Health but the financial and social burden on patients and their families.

We have now had the opportunity to expand this service to coordinate video enabled emergency support for low-acuity and non-critical patients through the Telehealth Emergency Management Support Unit (TEMSU). This unit utilises existing Hospital and Health Services (HHS) clinical pathways to allow patients to be managed locally and potentially avoiding unnecessary transport or retrievals. Being able to access this support will also assist in the detection and early management of deteriorating patients. The HHS are in strong support of the 24/7 nursing model that is offered by the TEMSU Nurse Coordinator. This role will aid in reducing fatigue especially overnight prior to calling the Doctor or Director of Nursing. TEMSU had initially focused on the seven evaluation sites, but the interest for the service is growing rapidly with 35 sites planned to be operational by 30 June”.

Telehealth will feature strongly in the future delivery of healthcare in regional and rural Queensland and aims to improve health outcomes for all Queenslanders. Queensland Health’s investment in the service is $30.9 million over four years and will help transform the health system into one that is reliable, sustainable and innovative.

Queensland Health has deployed dedicated Telehealth resources across the Hospital and Health Services network to support implementation of Telehealth-enabled service delivery models which leverage the large scale technology platform that is in place. A Telehealth Emergency Management Support Service has also been created to support provision of emergency management advice for rural and remote communities with an initial focus on seven evaluation sites including Moura, Kowanyama, Normanton, Alpha, Bedourie, Roma and Eidsvold.

Put simply, many rural and remote Queenslanders requiring access to medical expertise, including the best clinicians in the state, now have it thanks to Queensland Health’s Rural Telehealth Service.

The service helps address the continuing problem of recruiting and retaining medical practitioners in small, remote communities and helps to reduce professional isolation by bringing care teams together virtually.

Dr Sabe Sabesan, Medical Oncologist, Townsville

"Before we started with a Telehealth service to patients at the Mt Isa hospital, patients had to fly to Townsville, which meant they could be away for days just for a 10-minute appointment. We now service 18 communities spread over 750,000 square kilometres.

Put simply Telehealth helps to avoid the expense and disruption and improves access to care locally."
Case study: Better Regional Health Services

Benefits

- Expanded use of Telehealth and use of new technologies will broaden the scope of locally available health care services
- Investment in new and upgraded facilities to better serve Queensland communities
- Attraction and retention strategies for clinicians and ongoing training to sustain and increase the rural and remote workforce

Accessing health services in rural and remote Queensland can be difficult and is one of the many important factors people consider when deciding where they will live. The Queensland Government has launched Better Health for the Bush, a plan to confront the challenges of delivering rural and remote healthcare in Queensland. The plan informs small communities of the full range of healthcare services, providers and modes of access available to them.

A wide range of healthcare services are readily available in major Queensland cities and urban areas. The need for reliable healthcare naturally extends to other communities, and through flexible, innovative models of care, rural and remote services can be extended to achieve this.

The Better Health for the Bush initiative:

- defines clearer service capability standards for rural and remote communities
- outlines how improved collaboration and coordination will allow clinicians greater access to support and encourage innovation
- delivers reliable and accessible health system performance information in a transparent manner
- defines how reducing duplication and supporting cooperative partnerships can enable public hospitals and community services to complement the resources of other contemporary providers
- highlights how investment in new and upgraded facilities will best serve Queensland communities now and in the future
- explains how the expanded use of Telehealth, and the use of new technologies will broaden the scope of locally available healthcare services
- outlines the attractions and retention strategies for clinicians and how ongoing training will be provided to sustain and increase as needed the rural and remote workforce and its capacity
- outlines how local rural and remote services, supported by a broader network of services can provide services, including birthing, chemotherapy and renal dialysis, closer to a patient's home where clinically safe and appropriate.

While conditions such as major trauma and serious illnesses will still require treatment in an urban or regional center, the Queensland Government has doubled the subsidy rate for accommodation and private vehicle use through providing an additional $97.7 million over four years for the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme to assist patients who need to travel for treatment.

More broadly, reforms across the healthcare system have resulted in strongly improved performance including:

- the Australian Medical Association has cited Queensland's emergency departments as Australia's best, with 78 per cent of patients being treated within four hours, compared to 63 per cent just two years ago
- almost every health service in Queensland treated a greater number of patients within the recommended time than in the same period in 2012
- waiting times have been slashed, with the number of patients waiting any longer than the recommended clinical time dropping by more than half, from 6485 in 2012 to just 2842 in 2014
- Queensland's median wait time for surgery in the 2012–13 financial year was the shortest in Australia, with an average wait of 27 days compared to a national average of 36 days
- more patients are being treated - the percentage of category one patients seen within 30 days has increased from 86 per cent to 93 per cent
- across the state, the number of Queenslanders waiting for two years or more on the general care dental waiting list is down from 61,405 in March last year to 1784 in March this year.

A range of new infrastructure and clinical redesign programs are in place to help equip Hospital and Health Services with tools they need to keep improving.
Communicating and promoting the regions’ potential

Queensland’s regions have a positive story to tell. They punch above their weight in terms of economic production and exports and offer diverse business investment and career opportunities.

Attractive lifestyle options, with improved health and education services make the regions attractive places to live, work and invest.

The RegionsQ Showcase, to be held in early 2015, will put the spotlight on what is great about living and investing in the regions.

The 2018 Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games will bring further opportunities to showcase the regions to the world.

Some of our key actions

- Queensland’s Cultural Diversity Action Plan will outline actions across Queensland to support cultural diversity, including the Valuing Diversity Grants Program which has provided over $1.2 million to 222 culturally diverse events and projects across Queensland since 2012–13.
- Brand Queensland assists Queensland companies to increase their global competitiveness and expand markets through international promotion.
- The Handshakes business matching program, a partnership with the Australian Trade Commission, continues to facilitate investment opportunities for the beef industry at the Beef Australia event, held every three years.
- International promotion and networking through Trade and Investment Queensland assists regional Queensland companies to increase their global competitiveness and expand international markets, and promote Queensland’s regions for investment.
- The annual Major Projects Conference supports the facilitation of major project development throughout Queensland.
- 2014–15 Budget initiative—funding of $98.7 million in 2014–15 to Tourism and Events Queensland to support destination marketing, promoting major events, and developing world-class tourism products and experiences. This investment is targeted towards driving growth in visitor expenditure in key tourism regions and contributing towards the industry goal of generating $30 billion in overnight visitor expenditure by 2020.
Case study: Regional and Resource Town Action Plan

Benefits

- Commitment from Queensland Government, 11 local governments and Ergon Energy.
- 136 specific short-term actions being delivered with 12-24 months
- 40 per cent of actions delivered within the first 12 months and all on track for delivery by March 2015
- Investigations into key issues impacting on growth are also underway in a further three local government areas

Many regional communities are dealing with localised issues, some resulting from the mining boom, which require specific short-term actions. These issues include:

- a lack of housing affordable to purchase and/or rent
- pressure on local government to assess an increased number of development applications in a timely manner
- infrastructure costs and delays
- the availability of land for development.

In August 2012, the Queensland Government held 11 workshops across regional Queensland to better understand the challenges of towns that were feeling pressure from growth in the resources sector. The key challenges identified were:

1. housing availability and affordability
2. residential, industrial and commercial land demand and supply imbalance
3. infrastructure coordination and funding gaps
4. planning practices inhibiting growth and development.

In response, the government developed the Regional and Resource Towns Action Plan (RRTAP) which committed the state, 11 local governments and Ergon Energy to 136 specific, short-term actions for delivery within the 12-24 months. In its first year alone, 40 per cent of RRTAP activities have been successfully completed and an additional 53 per cent are well underway. All actions are on track to be delivered by March 2015.

An example of where RRTAP is helping to create affordable housing options is in Roma at Clearview Rise estate, developed by Economic Development Queensland.

One Clearview Rise resident, Darren, has worked at the council quarry in Roma for the past two years. Darren’s wife, Stacey said they found it difficult to afford the rents in Roma, with one-bedroom units renting for $600 a week. So for the first year, Darren lived in a workers’ donga in Roma, and Stacey and the kids stayed in their family home at Warwick. They’d visit Darren on his weekends off and the drive used to take them five or six hours. “It was really hard living apart for so long, so we moved to Dulacca, an hour out of Roma. Darren would commute daily, so it meant that he was leaving home at 4.30am. We used to spend more than $200 a week on petrol,” Stacey said. “Now that we’re living in Roma, Darren leaves for work just before 6 am and he’s usually home by 5.30 pm. Our lives are so much better since we moved to Clearview Rise.”

In March 2014, the Queensland Government recognised that a number of other towns may benefit from an investigation of key constraints restricting growth. New actions were identified across three local government areas and RRTAP actions were further expanded.
Case study: Introducing the State Assessment and Referral Agency

Benefits

- A single agency lodgement and assessment point for development applications, where the state has a jurisdiction
- A final decision-maker to ensure no 'unreasonable' requirements are imposed on applicants
- Good state-wide coverage—with 10 regional locations across the state
- In its first 11 months, the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA), has provided case management support to over 400 applicants and processed over 2000 development applications

Construction projects, planning for a new farming business or wanting to change the way you use your land can require both local and state government approvals, can be complex and difficult to navigate. As a consequence, the Queensland Government has been working to reduce red tape and make these approval processes simpler and easier.

Launched in July 2013, SARA — the State Assessment and Referral Agency — is the government’s new development assessment process. With officers based in 10 regional locations across the state, the SARA teams are providing businesses, individuals and whole communities with:

- a single point of contact for all state government agencies with an interest in a development
- clear, concise and upfront advice on what information an applicant will need to provide, or issues they will need to address
- a customer-friendly online application process to lodge, pay fees, link to mapping and track the progress of applications
- greater transparency and accountability in the process and the decision.

In SARA’s first 11 months, case management support has been provided to over 400 applicants and over 2000 development applications state-wide have been processed. SARA is ensuring a quicker turnaround on assessments, a more streamlined and consistent application of state and local planning regulations, and a significant saving in time and resources for applicants, councils, and the Queensland Government.

Wide Bay-Burnett: SARA stems the tide

Erosion of the Toogoom shoreline on the Fraser Coast, made worse by storms in January 2013, prompted the Fraser Coast Regional Council to lodge an application to build a 370 metre rock armour seawall. The application involved multiple jurisdictions and a range of complex issues.

Under new SARA arrangements, a number of pre-lodgement meetings were organised between council and all relevant state agencies to ensure the final application lodged met all state interests and requirements.

The wall will protect the shoreline and 16 affected residential properties at a cost of approximately $2.5 million.

As a result, the Toogoom Seawall was approved to proceed and construction has commenced.

North Queensland: SARA fast tracking solutions for drought affected properties

Dry conditions are affecting much of Queensland’s grazing regions, and the SARA team has seen an increase in urgent requests for water bore permits.

Applications for water bores can take up to 20 working days to process and can be impacted by a number of different regulations from vegetation and water management to native title.

SARA’s pre-lodgement processes have enabled the fast tracking of urgent applications with some applications approved in as little as two working days. Having applications case managed by one agency on behalf of all Queensland Government departments has streamlined approval processes and ensures that they are responsive to the needs of the applicant.

The Queensland Government will continue to review water bore licensing and many other lower risk developments to ensure it creates an environment that does not restrict the growth of significant Queensland industries.
Royalties for the Regions refocused

The Royalties for the Regions program has been a key initiative of this government. It was established within the first 100 days of office and since then has delivered three rounds of funding to communities impacted by resource sector activity. To date, the program has provided over $306 million in Royalties for the Regions funding to 98 projects worth over $521 million.

These projects included contributions of over $215 million from local government, industry and other state and federal government agencies. These projects will have a lasting benefit for regional communities, improving liveability for those Queenslanders who choose to work, live and invest there. The benefits of the program are wide-ranging and diverse.

In the four years to 2015–2016, the Royalties for the Regions program will commit $495 million to regions. The program is designed to support critical community needs resulting from resource sector activity—ensuring regional communities receive real, long-term royalty benefits through investment in infrastructure such as community infrastructure, roads and floodplain security projects.

For example, the projects being supported are delivering:

- road projects totalling more than 279 kilometres and including nine bridge and intersection upgrades.
- upgrades to four airports, including improvements to terminal facilities, runways and associated infrastructure.
- reduced risk of flooding for 635 businesses and residences in Toowoomba and Roma.
- increased sewage treatment capacity by 3400 equivalent persons in Miles.

Over the next 12 months there will be another $200 million available under the Royalties for the Regions program, and that money will be spent on projects that focus on economic development and provide an economic future for regional communities. It will focus on economic growth in the regions to support the achievement of the RegionsQ Framework, funding strategic projects that provide and support jobs and business opportunities for regional Queenslanders. The refocused program will identify the infrastructure that is needed in regional communities so that other industries can grow and prosper into the future.

Benefits:

- $495 million over four years to 2015–2016 to support new and upgraded community infrastructure, roads and flood mitigation projects.
- Over $306 million in Royalties for the Regions funding has been committed to 39 regional and shire councils across Queensland.
- Infrastructure projects supported include 20 water, sewerage and waste management projects, four regional airport upgrades, 41 road projects, 21 flood mitigation projects, two childcare centres and a new medical centre.
- A further $200 million is available under the Royalties for the Regions program over the next 12 months.
Projects of Regional Significance

The flagship initiative of this framework is the identification of a number of projects of regional significance where focused action, in partnership with the private sector, can accelerate regional economic and jobs growth.

These projects have been identified where a targeted place-based approach capitalising on local assets, in partnership with the private sector, can realise significant benefits.

The benefits will be maximised through working together to achieve a shared vision—this is the philosophy behind the projects of regional significance as a flagship initiative of this framework.

As part of its approach, government will use the tools it has available to improve the business environment and make investment more attractive including an improved regulatory framework, facilitating and supporting infrastructure and major projects and adjusting policy settings. Government can also direct targeted resources to specific projects and assist clients with case management, project facilitation, capability improvement and development and navigation through the approvals process. In specific cases, state development areas or priority development areas may be declared to support economic growth. If required, the wide-ranging powers of the Coordinator-General could be applied to plan, deliver and coordinate large-scale infrastructure projects, while ensuring their environmental impacts are properly managed.

As projects of regional significance are likely to be at various stages of maturity, they will benefit from different types of intervention and assistance by government.

Projects of regional significance are seen as important catalysts to drive economic growth and can:

- benefit from whole-of-government coordination and collaboration
- add value to business-as-usual—where industry recognises the enhanced economic opportunity that could be created by co-location or linking of multiple investments
- create a notable economic benefit for a region or sub-region with more strategic use of the whole-of-government toolkit
- support growth, diversity and resilience in regional economies
- generate a high level of capital expenditure
- create employment opportunities by supporting, creating and unlocking economic potential.

Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy

In April 2006, the then Queensland Government announced the Traveston Dam, south of Gympie and purchased 480 properties equalling approximately 13,000 hectares of land. However, after the federal government rejected the proposal, the Traveston Dam project was abandoned.

As an example of the government’s place-based approach to economic development, the government launched the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy in 2012. This was in response to the land that had been purchased and which left the Mary Valley community with a very uncertain future and a significant amount of land in government ownership. While recognising the importance of returning this land to private ownership, the Queensland Government identified an opportunity to initiate economic revitalisation centred on investment and the re-establishment of the community in the valley.

The strategy has generated many positive economic and social outcomes for the community including:

- over 250 of the 480 properties have now been returned to private ownership, with over 100 other properties under contract or negotiation
- 11 economic development leases have been signed, bringing significant employment to the valley (e.g. outdoor education camp, ginger plantation, organic herb and seed distributor and a farm stay for people with disabilities and their carers)
- the government is also working to support supply chain opportunities to ensure these industries have the best chance to firmly establish and thrive.
Projects of regional significance can generally be spatially defined and may include a cluster of projects. There will be clear economic opportunities, signalled by investor interest. The Queensland Government will appoint case managers and may apply other resources to work with stakeholders to identify and remove impediments.

This approach provides a real opportunity to bring the whole-of-government toolkit to industry-driven ideas and activities that provide a significant economic and community benefit to the region and supercharge economic growth. These projects will ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This will provide a higher return, generate jobs and build stronger supply chains.

This framework identifies the following projects with the potential for significant future growth:

- Charlton-Wellcamp Precinct
- Cairns Airport Aviation Precinct and Commercial Precinct
- Cooper Basin Development
- North West Minerals Province
- Galilee Basin Development
- Burdekin Catchment Development
- Springfield Health Precinct
- Gulf Rivers Agricultural Zone
- Sunshine Coast University Hospital/Kawana Health Precinct.

This is not an exhaustive list but is reflective of the kinds of projects the government sees as benefiting from this approach.

Charlton-Wellcamp Precinct

The opportunity

- Charlton-Wellcamp is an area zoned largely for industrial uses about 15 kilometres west of Toowoomba. While a number of industrial uses have already been established in the area, there is significant potential for future industrial growth and associated job creation.
- There are currently several major projects located in or adjacent to the precinct:
  - Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport, being undertaken by the Wagner Group, to service passengers and freight, including access to overseas export markets for agricultural producers and business and industry land for future development
  - InterLinkSQ is a major intermodal freight and logistics facility
  - the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing
  - Inland Rail (Melbourne to Brisbane, via Toowoomba)
  - WITMACK Industrial Park.
- All projects require access to quality roads, power supply, gas and sewerage. There is a unique opportunity to develop a regional solution to maximise the economic return that each individual project offers and leverages significant Australian Government, local government and private sector investment.

Government actions

- Foster a collaborative partnership approach with proponents, Australian and Queensland Government agencies and the Toowoomba Regional Council.
- Inform proponents about the status and timing of various projects and identify common issues (e.g. critical infrastructure issues) which, if solved, would bring wider benefit and identify solutions to such issues.
- Provide an overarching facilitation role to ensure solutions are implemented and impediments removed.
- Investigate infrastructure funding models including government and industry partnerships.
- Assist in attracting investment.
- Assist in developing new domestic and export markets for agricultural and other commodities that may become viable due to the improved transport infrastructure associated with the precinct.

The realisation of any of these projects in isolation would bring a significant economic stimulus to the region. When combined, the potential is enormous and will allow Toowoomba to expand its position into a major, nationally-significant transport and logistics hub, servicing a variety of markets including general freight, agriculture and the resources sector.

- The government is working with all proponents to realise the mutual benefits via cooperation and coordination of vital infrastructure so costs are shared fairly.
Cairns Airport Aviation Precinct and Commercial Precinct

The opportunity

- Cairns Airport is an established airport of national significance. The airport’s new aviation enterprise precinct will provide for the long-term sustainability of the aeronautical supply chain including ancillary services, freight, logistics, engineering, maintenance, aeronautical and aerospace training facilities, helicopter operations, government and regulatory agency operations and administration.

- The agricultural industry has identified the potential for export of produce through the airport.

- The centralisation of aeronautical activities within the aviation enterprise precinct will create opportunities for non-aeronautical development in a new commercial enterprise precinct.

- This area could attract national and international commercial operators to realise the potential of its prominent highway frontage and strategic on-airport position through the development of key commercial activities, such as warehouse style retail and an e-commerce market, not previously accommodated in Cairns and the surrounding region.

Government actions

- Coordinate the delivery of government infrastructure and other services.

- Project facilitation and collaboration with industry, local and federal governments to remove impediments.

- Secure benefits for local companies through supply chain support activities.

- Assist in attracting investment.
Cooper Basin Development

The opportunity

- The Cooper Basin has a long history of producing conventional oil and gas and early indications show there is considerable potential for unconventional gas including shale gas and tight gas production in this region.
- The Cooper Basin is well connected with existing infrastructure to transport gas to market. Through the existing Ballera gas processing facility, gas can be sent around Queensland to Mount Isa and to the Wallumbilla gas hub, near Roma, which connects to markets in Brisbane, Gladstone and North Queensland. There is also connectivity with the eastern Australia gas market.

- Shale gas has the potential to change the global energy market. Worldwide interest in shale gas has increased in recent years and large shale gas resources have been identified in Europe, Asia, North America and Australia.
- Benefits from an operational shale gas industry in Queensland include:
  - business investment in Queensland’s resource-rich regions
  - regional employment opportunities and economic diversification
  - payment of royalties to the state to help pay for essential services for Queenslanders
  - increasing the availability of gas to market to help place downward pressure on domestic gas prices.

Government actions

- To provide certainty for industry and to encourage the significant capital investment required to further develop the Cooper Basin the Queensland Government, as part of ResourcesQ, is working with industry to prepare a Cooper Basin Industry Development Strategy. This strategy will identify critical enablers and actions to encourage ongoing exploration activity and bring gas to market. The strategy will be finalised later this year.
- As the industry grows and becomes operational, the government will focus on the development of regional supply chains and exports to maximise Queensland’s local capabilities.
North West Queensland Minerals Province

The opportunity

- North West Queensland has significant economic development potential. There is an opportunity to identify and establish additional mine and resource development capacity.
- The region retains good reserves across a range of existing and new commodities such as uranium, lead, copper, silver, zinc, phosphate, oil shale and rare earth minerals.
- The project looks to drive new investment in the region through:
  - identification and support of new resource developments
  - regional infrastructure development opportunities
  - red-tape reduction
  - resources mapping
  - potential incentives for the resources industry such as those offered in the Galilee Basin.
- Resource production diversification would help protect the region against the commodity price volatility which intensifies the boom-bust cycle of many resource producing areas.
- The region has vast mineral, land, and water resources but lacks the critical transport, electricity, and water storage infrastructure and the skilled labour to support these natural assets. In particular, energy cost and accessibility is currently a critical barrier to economic development.

A case-managed approach to major infrastructure where there is credible investment interest would provide the catalyst for new mine development, intensive agricultural production growth, and key value-adding activities across the mining and agricultural sectors.

This project could build on the North Queensland Resources Supply Chain Study and the Mt Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone North West Queensland Strategic Development Study which have identified future infrastructure needs for industry growth.

Government actions

- The government has a role in promoting investment opportunities and providing facilitation and case management assistance to companies seeking to establish or expand their operations.
- The Geological Survey of Queensland is implementing initiatives of the $30 million Future Resources Program to better understand the resource potential of the province and attract exploration. The Queensland Government will be considering new incentives to stimulate base metals exploration as part of the ResourcesQ framework. These incentives, coupled with this project, could encourage further activity in this region.
- ResourcesQ has identified a need for infrastructure planning to facilitate new investment. The Queensland Government will deliver a North West Queensland Infrastructure Framework to provide a strategic approach to developing infrastructure including roads, rail, electricity, airports, ports and water to support new developments and investment in the region.
- The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government on the development of their White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.
- Work with Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone Inc. and other stakeholders to explore the potential of a range of initiatives targeting further investment and jobs growth.
Galilee Basin Development

The opportunity

- Coal remains Queensland’s biggest export commodity, with Central Queensland now the state’s number one destination for the mining of coal and coal seam gas export industries.
- With forecasts of $28.4 billion in future investment projects, building efficient infrastructure supply chains from mine to port in the Galilee Basin will play a crucial role in opening up the southern and central Galilee to mining as well as providing positive flow-on effects for the Bowen Basin.
- Opening up the Galilee Basin’s vast coal reserves represents a long-term economic benefit for Queensland. Together, the proposed Galilee Basin projects would provide over 15,000 jobs during construction and over 13,000 operational jobs.
- Mining in the Galilee Basin will also have broader infrastructure supply chain benefits that will help spread the wealth throughout the whole state. The government can promote the whole infrastructure supply chain from the mines to the Port of Abbot Point as investment locations, and provide whole-of-government facilitation and other assistance to associated mining services and other investment (e.g. through a case manager approach).
- The construction phase of rail and port infrastructure will increase regional workforce requirements including the need for accommodation and transport, local/regional industrial support bases and the equipment and materials handling logistics requirements for construction.
- Industry proposals for modal shift of the line-haul for current and future resource industry inputs such as fuel and explosives to rail may have significant benefit to the major road links into the Bowen and Galilee Basins by reducing heavy vehicle traffic, and potentially providing more cost effective transport options for primary industry producers as a result.
- Non-resident workers will continue to play a significant role in meeting the resource sector’s skill needs. The timely provision of accommodation for construction workforces presents an opportunity for most regional communities wanting to become non-resident workforce host communities.

Government actions

- To help open up the Galilee Basin to mining, the government will implement strategies to lower upfront costs and stimulate development across the basin’s southern and central coal resources.
- Further work will continue to develop streamlined solutions for water, power and rail and comprehensive infrastructure facilitation for the Galilee Basin region.
- The government will also continue to simplify approvals and reduce red tape for mining proponents. Support will be offered to ‘first movers’, who the government considers will play a vital role in opening up the southern and central Galilee Basin coal resources.
- Important initiatives in the strategy include the recent declaration of the Galilee Basin State Development Area reducing the Galilee rail zone land area by 94 per cent, and minimising the impact on landholders. It also opens up the possibility for Galilee Basin coal to access T2 at the Port of Abbot Point.
The government is planning to undertake a series of Galilee Basin Development roundtables in regional areas to identify and address opportunities for collaboration or impediments that need resolution as coal mining in the Galilee Basin develops. The roundtables would also facilitate industry collaboration to focus on innovative approaches to joint infrastructure arrangements.

The government has a role in promoting investment opportunities and providing facilitation and case management assistance to companies seeking to establish or expand.

The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government on the development of their White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.

### Burdekin Catchment Development

**The opportunity**

- This project is about identifying options to facilitate agricultural development in the Burdekin catchment. A number of studies both past and present have identified infrastructure options that could support future expansion and development of agriculture in the Burdekin.
- Some infrastructure options can also meet potential demand from mining in the Northern Galilee Basin, and provide water for Townsville’s future growth.
- Work that looks at more efficient and cost effective water and energy supply for the future development of the agricultural, manufacturing and mining industry in North Queensland (Bowen/Ayr/Townsville) would be beneficial in expanding priority industry needs.
- Recent studies undertaken as part of the Central Queensland Resource Supply Chain have identified water pipelines from the Burdekin Dam represent as a potential water supply option for future coal mines in the Northern Galilee.

**Government actions**

- Investigate future demands for water and energy through consultation with existing and potential agribusinesses and mining companies with interests in the Northern Galilee Basin.
- Understand how existing water allocations and infrastructure can be utilised and investigate new infrastructure options to meet identified demand within the framework of Queensland Government’s 30-year water and electricity strategies.
- Work with stakeholders and across government to identify options for development of future infrastructure and systems to meet existing and new users’ future requirements.
- The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government on the development of their White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.
- Undertake supply chain and feasibility studies to support resource assessments.
- Work with investors to fast track approvals for new and expanded projects.
Springfield Health Precinct

*The opportunity*

- Springfield Health will be an integrated health precinct within the Springfield Town Centre, 30 minutes south-west of Brisbane, and within commuting distance to the Gold Coast and Ipswich City. The health precinct will be built across 52 hectares and include a private hospital, aged care centre, retirement units and a range of specialist and general practitioners.

- Work has started on stage one of the $85 million Mater Private Hospital. This will house 80 beds, with pre-planning approval granted for an additional 1200 beds and will provide a wide range of medical and surgical services. The five-storey hospital will include a cancer care centre, surgical theatres, inpatients wards, a day surgery unit and 15 medical oncology treatment bays, which will be developed in partnership between Mater and Radiation Oncology Queensland. Construction is expected to be completed in December 2015.

- A sports and fitness centre to promote preventative illness, fitness and general wellness will also be incorporated in the design, as well as a three-star and a five-star hotel.

- This project will create significant investment and employment through construction and the establishment of sustainable ‘health’ industry comprising the integration of service provision, research, industry growth and education.

- Total estimated investment of capital and hospital operation of $2.64 billion.

- The facility responds to population growth in south-east Queensland and provides health facilities for an aging population. A 2013 health service planning study by West Moreton Hospital and Health Service and Metro South Hospital and Health Service indicated a growing need for public health services in the area.

**Government actions**

- Facilitate supply chain opportunities for the construction sector.

- Assist in attracting investment, focussing on health, allied health and medical research and development.

- Queensland Heath has an ongoing interest in the construction of the private hospital and other medical facilities and the opportunity it presents to purchase public health services.
The opportunity

- A number of agricultural interests have been expressed across the gulf catchments. While they are of differing scales, they share common challenges such as access to reliable and sufficient water supply, risks with management of pests and diseases, restrictive land tenure, and infrastructure to support access to markets.

- Projects in the region have the potential to provide significant job opportunities in regional and remote communities, including the support of Indigenous community agricultural enterprise developments involving regionally significant investment.

- The region may also provide ‘contingency’ production areas for continuity of supply when the east coast is impacted by natural disaster, and importantly will contribute to the Queensland Government’s target to double agricultural production by 2040 to meet rapidly growing food demand in Asia.

- In 2012, a competitive tender process was undertaken to release unallocated water from the general reserves of the Flinders and Gilbert River catchments to support new or expanded agricultural activities in the catchments.

- There were recent amendments to the Vegetation Management Act 1999 to allow for high value agriculture that may facilitate expansion or irrigated cropping in the region—which has some of the most significant opportunity for agricultural expansion from a resource availability perspective in Queensland.

Government actions

- Examine critical regulatory impediments and explore whether changes to policy settings could be made to facilitate further agricultural development. This includes working with major project proponents to initiate a coordinated project assessment process and maintain open lines of communication for speedy resolutions.

- Leverage additional Australian Government funding and cooperation across jurisdictions through forums such as the Agricultural Ministers and simultaneous development of White Papers for Northern Australia and Agricultural Competitiveness.

- Continue to explore opportunities within the Gulf Rivers Agricultural Zone, with ongoing support for proponents in the Flinders and Gilbert Catchments (e.g. the Australian Government’s Flinders and Gilbert Agricultural Resource Assessment [FAGARA]), with potential to expand to other areas.

- Undertake supply chain and feasibility studies to support resource assessments.

- Following the release of the FAGARA, the government has brought forward the review of the Water Resource (Gulf) Plan 2007 for completion in 2014.
Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital/Kawana Health Precinct

The Kawana Health Campus is comprised of the:

- $1.8 billion Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital – a tertiary-level public hospital (opening end 2016) that incorporates the $60.8 million Skills, Academic and Research Centre
- $150 million Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital, operated by Ramsay Health Care (opened in November 2013)

and surrounding Oceanside Kawana developments are the largest infrastructure projects to be undertaken in the Sunshine Coast region to date. The area encompasses around 100 hectares in the heart of the Sunshine Coast and is being built around the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital and co-located private hospital.

The Department of Health is managing the development of the 20 hectare Kawana Health Campus, an integrated health campus offering complementary health services on the one site.

Adjacent to the Kawana Health Campus is the Oceanside Health Hub—a purpose built 17 hectare site of complementary commercial businesses as part of the Oceanside Kawana development. This development will deliver new roads, bridges, parks and services that will support the health, retail, commercial and residential developments, which include:

- Oceanside Kawana Town Centre for retail, commercial and indoor entertainment.
- Learning and Transit Centre for mixed use including education, retail, commercial, food outlets, tavern, accommodation, a hotel plus a service station.

Government actions

- Facilitate supply chain opportunities for the construction sector.
- Assist in attracting investment.
RegionsQ Showcase

In support of the government’s commitment to grow and promote regions, a two-day event called the RegionsQ Showcase will be held in early 2015.

This event will focus on raising awareness of our strong and prosperous regions and showcasing what makes regional Queensland a great place to live, learn, work and invest. It will also highlight all that our regions have to offer—the opportunities, services and liveability.

The RegionsQ Showcase will also be a ‘must-attend’ for organisations considering investing in regional Queensland as the event will feature business and industry information workshops throughout the day.

The event will be a collaboration between the Queensland Government, regional councils, regional economic development and tourism organisations, and the private sector.

For more information about the event, visit www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/RegionsQ or contact RegionsQ@dsdip.qld.gov.au
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