TOOWOOMBA REGION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2013

Capitalising on our advantages to build a prosperous future
The Toowoomba Region is renowned for providing its residents with an attractive and unique lifestyle that is underpinned by economic opportunities and security. Located centrally to the growth of Queensland’s South East Corner and the resource rich Surat Basin, the region today stands on the precipice of unprecedented opportunity.

This Economic Development Strategy seeks to secure the Toowoomba region’s continuing role as the service centre of the prosperous Darling Downs and Surat Basin Regions. In order to provide ongoing prosperity, the region must maintain a stable and sustainable economy that provides diverse and rewarding employment opportunities for all. There needs to be an emphasis on innovative and competitive businesses across all sectors that generate wealth. Such an economy is essential for the social and economic well-being of residents. The economy requires continued diversity as its strength, with retail, manufacturing, agriculture, education and health and community sectors being important industry sectors.

This strategy recognises that economic development is integral to facilitating a sustainable region and as such also has to be managed in the context of the wider social and environmental outcomes sought by Council for the communities of the Toowoomba region. Council acknowledges that businesses in the region make a valuable contribution to the vibrancy and sustainability of the region, and are an important partner in achieving a high quality of life for residents and community well-being.

Paul Antonio
Mayor
The role of local economic development is to enable the creation of wealth and jobs across a diverse economic base. The goal of the Economic Development Strategy is an innovative, sustainable and balanced economy that provides valuable employment opportunities for residents and enhances the region’s high quality of life.

The Toowoomba region, along with other regions, faces a number of challenges, including climate change, ongoing swings of the economic cycle, growth and demographic shifts which impact the labour market. Council is working proactively to not only respond to these issues, but to also turn these challenges into opportunities to develop our economy.

The development of a new Regional Planning Scheme for the entire region provides an opportunity to ensure we have the right foundations on which to build our economy, including the location of land for business and streamlined development assessment requirements.

In ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of this strategy, it is important that Council and its stakeholders clearly define their roles, capacities and responsibilities in contributing to a more robust economy.

Council’s plan of action is to promote and facilitate the region’s economic development over the long-term, achieving high levels of growth without compromising the social, cultural and environmental attributes that are inextricably linked with the region’s economic success.
The Strategy will focus on nine key areas:

- Key Policy Driver 1: Economic and business governance;
- Key Policy Driver 2: Creating a supportive business environment;
- Key Policy Driver 3: Infrastructure and mechanisms to support growth;
- Key Policy Driver 4: Diversification and value adding;
- Key Policy Driver 5: Skills and training;
- Key Policy Driver 6: Marketing and investment attraction;
- Key Policy Driver 7: Enhancing the visitor experience;
- Key Policy Driver 8: Enhance tertiary services provision in Toowoomba City; and
- Key Policy Driver 9: Sustainable regional centres.

The Economic Development Strategy builds on the work and achievements to date of Toowoomba Regional Council and its partners in industry, government and the non-government sector in growing the regional economy. While Toowoomba Regional Council is the lead facilitator of the strategy, its implementation relies on Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise, public and private sector resources, active partnerships, the business community and all levels of government. Realising this vision will require flexibility and the capacity to learn from successes and failures. It may be necessary to refine this approach over time and adapt to changes in the larger environment.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Toowoomba Region

Toowoomba Regional Council was formed with the merging of the previous Cambooya, Clifton, Crows Nest, Jondaryan, Millmerran, Pittsworth, Rosalie Shire Councils and the Toowoomba City Council. With approximately 159,098 residents in 2009, the Toowoomba Regional Council is the seventh largest Council in population of the 73 Queensland Councils: following Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Moreton Bay, the Sunshine Coast, Logan City and Townsville.

The area of the Toowoomba Region is 12,973 km². The region’s industries include manufacturing, health and community services, retail, agriculture and government administration and defence. Education in the region is strong and it is home to the University of Southern Queensland, Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and various State and Private Schools servicing Queensland and Northern NSW. At the junction of the Warrego, New England and Gore highways, it connects, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin, and it is only 90 minutes’ drive to Brisbane.

The region, with the Australia’s largest inland regional city of Toowoomba as its capital, is the economic and commercial hub of the Darling Downs region. It is ideally located to service the nearby Surat Basin energy precinct as it develops to provide thermal coal and coal seam gas to the world.

3.2 Purpose of the Strategy

The Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy will provide certainty around the roles of Toowoomba Regional Council and Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise in achieving a strong economic future for the region. In specific terms, the Strategy aims to:
• Facilitate conditions necessary for regional economic success based on the region’s natural competitive strengths; including highly skilled and educated community, strong national and international relationships, essential urban infrastructure to meet the needs of industry and the community;
• Encourage the development of those industries having natural competitive advantages in national and international markets;
• Facilitate employment opportunities arising from the needs of regional industries and services;
• Promote coordinated and informed actions that will achieve economic development;
• Ensure that economic development supports positive and sustainable social and environmental outcomes; and
• Ensure that government agencies, private groups and industries are guided and coordinated through implementation of agreed actions and programs identified in the Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy and the Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy.

3.3 Role of Toowoomba Regional Council
Council contributes to the region’s economy in three major ways:
• Core Business
• Economic Development Initiatives
• Advocacy for Regional Initiatives

3.3.1 Council’s Core Business
Council undertakes a range of functions which form part of its core business and which have a significant impact on the local economy.

Council plays a major role in contributing to the robustness of the economy through the development and implementation of the Planning Scheme for the region. The Toowoomba region currently faces a series of challenges and one of the roles of the Planning Scheme is to ensure the region’s significant economic development capabilities are afforded protection through specific recognition in land use planning policy. Through the Planning Scheme, Council aims to ensure support for appropriate development that is attractive to new investors and which supports successful local business, as well as protecting the natural amenity and ensuring good quality agricultural land is protected as a key economic resource.

The creation of Local Laws enables Council to regulate in relation to safety and amenity. These Local Laws and their implementation also have an impact on local businesses which needs to be taken into account.
As well as stimulating the economy through being a significant employer in the region, Council delivers a major capital expenditure program. Through its procurement strategies, Council encourages the development of business capabilities and economic growth within the Toowoomba region. By working with other economic development initiatives undertaken as part of sector development, Council can increase the positive impact its buying capacity has on the local economy.

3.3.2 Economic Development Initiatives

Council directs resources to targeted interventions that can stimulate, facilitate or provide co-ordination to assist in building capacity in the regional economy. There is a range of circumstances where Council has discretion to act to influence or assist in economic development. In general, the public sector would intervene in economic development only where:

- a need has been demonstrated,
- the intervention is likely to be effective,
- no other player or organisation is as well placed to take action,
- the free market needs assistance, and
- social equity needs will not be met without intervention.

There is a clear need for intervention, for instance, in the following circumstances:

- In the provision of public goods, such as key infrastructure which benefits the whole community. This can include site assembly to enable developments.
- Where there are unplanned events that affect the community as a whole, such as a company closure where the whole costs of that closure are not borne by the company.
- Where companies with potential may not have the skills to grow and expand and need help and assistance.
- Where there is imperfect information in the market place to make investment decisions. The public sector can play a key role in providing accessible information.
- By coordinating activities such as creating networks for businesses, joint marketing and promotion activities.
- Where there is a need to diversify the economy to provide a more stable business environment and establish an economically resilient area.
- Where there is a need to provide certainty and confidence for investors through leadership and investment in the economic sector.

Toowoomba Regional Council delivers economic development initiatives in two ways. In 2011 Council’s Economic Development Advisory Committee transitioned to an independent regional economic development organisation named Toowoomba Regional Enterprise. Shortly after its formation Toowoomba Regional Enterprise merged with another regional body called Surat Basin Corporation, with the new merged entity becoming known as Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise. Council provides funding to Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise to undertake a range of economic development activities in the Toowoomba region that align with their expertise and remit. Council also has internal resources to deliver economic development activities through the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Branch.
3.3.3 Advocacy for regional initiatives

Regional advocacy is a crucial role for Council and applies where Council has no decision making role but recognises the importance to the regional economy of certain issues, decisions or projects. This role relates also to private sector decisions and projects. Whilst Council is an enabler, it is not the main ‘driver’ of local economic development. This is the role of business and industry.

3.4 Strategic and Policy Context

The following strategic documents all have an impact on, or have helped shape local economic development and are linked with this strategy.

- 2009 - 2031 Toowoomba Regional Council Community Plan
- Toowoomba Regional Council 2009 – 2014 Corporate Plan
- Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy
- 2012 Regional Development Australia Darling Downs & South West Roadmap
- South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009 – 2031
- Draft Darling Downs Regional Plan
- Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise Strategic Plan

3.4.1 Nested Policies Model Approach

It is important to ensure that the economic development policies pursued in the Toowoomba Region are in accordance with the Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy and other state level development polices and initiatives. This nested approach is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Nested Policies Model Approach
4.1 The Toowoomba Region Economy

A key strength of the Toowoomba Region is its diverse economic base, offering a range of rewarding employment opportunities. The Toowoomba Regional Council Economic Profile January 2013 highlights that the total value-added by the Toowoomba regional economy is estimated at $7.259 billion, with the top contributors being:

- Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services ($825.2 million, or 11.4%);
- Mining ($799.4 million or 11%);
- Financial & insurance services ($655.5 million or 9.0%);
- Manufacturing ($637.2 million or 8.8%); and
- Health care & social assistance ($608.3 million or 8.4%).

Figure 4.1: Industry Sectors Ranked by Value-Added, Toowoomba Region, Dec 2012
The following table lists the $M's and %'s of the total value-added for all 19 sectors.

Table 4.1: Industry Sectors Ranked by Value-Added, Toowoomba Region, Dec 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>Toowoomba (R)</th>
<th>Dec 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental, Hiring &amp; Real Estate Services</td>
<td>$825,262</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>$799,407</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial &amp; Insurance Services</td>
<td>$655,572</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$637,236</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>$608,389</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>$481,679</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration &amp; Safety</td>
<td>$460,433</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>$392,708</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>$365,142</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>$346,567</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>$334,393</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Postal &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td>$286,306</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>$280,651</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water &amp; Waste Services</td>
<td>$212,352</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>$164,051</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>$148,910</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Media &amp; Telecommunications</td>
<td>$120,285</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Support Services</td>
<td>$105,434</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Recreation Services</td>
<td>$33,416</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,259,193</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: REMPLAN

Continuation of the diversity in the Toowoomba Region (TR) economy is a strength that must underpin all future economic policies. This strategy recognises that balanced economic development is integral to achieving social and environmental outcomes for TR residents.
4.2 Geographic Advantages of the Toowoomba Region

Toowoomba Regional Council was formed through the merging of the previous Cambooya, Clifton, Crows Nest, Jondaryan, Millmerran, Pittsworth and Rosalie Shire Councils with the Toowoomba City Council. Toowoomba is the economic and commercial hub of the Darling Downs sub-region (including the Surat Basin communities).

With an estimated resident population of 157,695 residents, as at 30 June 2012, Toowoomba Regional Council is the ninth largest Queensland Council in terms of population size and covers a geographic area of 12,973 square kilometres. Toowoomba is Australia’s largest inland regional city.

Toowoomba is located at the junction of the Warrego, New England and Gore Highways, allowing for direct connectivity to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin. In addition, Toowoomba is located approximately 90 minutes’ drive to Brisbane.

4.3 Competitive Advantages of the Toowoomba Region

The Toowoomba Region has a number of competitive advantages. These advantages will assist in future economic growth and development across the Toowoomba Region by providing growth opportunities for existing firms, and allowing for the creation of new industries and services to establish within the Toowoomba Region.

The competitive advantages of the Toowoomba Region include:

• Diverse and balanced economy;
• Strategic location at the convergence of a number of national and state highway networks;
• Energy resources (net exporter of energy);
• Communications infrastructure, including NBN fibre and fixed wireless rollout and access to Telstra’s 4G network in Toowoomba City;
• Significant knowledge regarding the use of communications infrastructure, particularly at USQ and SQIT;
• Education assets;
• Health infrastructure; and
• One regional planning scheme, facilitating investment in the region.

4.4 Existing Key Industries in the Toowoomba Region

The most significant industries within the Toowoomba Region include:

• Manufacturing;
• Mining;
• Wholesale trade;
• Health and personal services;
• Community services;
• Retail;
• Agriculture;
• Education;
• Government administration; and
• Defence.
### Key Economic Indicators for the Toowoomba Region

The table below outlines thirteen economic indicators that provide a snapshot in time of the current regional economic profile of the Toowoomba Region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Indicator</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Resident Population*</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>157,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Population</td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>244,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Employing Industry</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in jobs (work in region)</td>
<td>2006-2011</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong> (2011 Census)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$15.593 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$7.259 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRP</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$7.813 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Approvals (No.)</td>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Approvals ($)</td>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>$287.85 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Lot approvals</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>1,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Lot Registrations</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Lot Sales (No.)</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Lot Sale Price</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>$142,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Sales</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>3,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached Housing Median Sale Price</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>$292,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Overnight Visitors</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>1,633,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Visitor Nights</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>5,405,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Visitors</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Visitor Nights</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>1,147,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Occupancy</td>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trends</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs within TRC</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>59,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEIFA</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Sept Qtr 2012</td>
<td>84,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Sept Qtr 2012</td>
<td>4,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force</td>
<td>Sept Qtr 2012</td>
<td>89,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>Sept Qtr 2012</td>
<td>95.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on data from Government Statistician as at 30 June 2012
**Based on 2006/2009 National Input Output tables and June 2012 ABS Gross State Product
†Vacant land
***Toowoomba Golden West & South Burnett region, Tourism Queensland

Source: TRC Economic Profile January 2013
5.1 Strategy Overview and Vision

The Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy has been developed around a strategic vision and nine key economic policy drivers relevant at the Toowoomba Region level.

The vision for the Toowoomba Region economy is as follows:

“To foster an innovative, sustainable and balanced economy that provides valuable employment opportunities for residents and enhances the region’s high quality of life.”

This vision has been identified through consultation with groups across the Toowoomba region and from feedback on the Community Plan. The challenge facing future development in the Toowoomba region is the need for sufficient job creation to support the region’s anticipated population growth. This equates to approximately 3,000 jobs per year based on approximately an additional 37,000 additional households in the region to 2031.

The character and quality of these jobs will have a significant influence on the type of economy and society that emerges over this period. The current competitive strengths in the Toowoomba region’s current economic profile will need to be supported through positive regional development policies managed through both Toowoomba Regional Council and Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise.

Natural competitive advantages such as the agricultural and mining activities along with the traditional manufacturing base will require continued support. Other industries such as health, education and retailing must continue to grow as these sectors generate significant employment opportunities for both unskilled and highly skilled workers.
5.2 Key Economic Policy Drivers

There were nine key drivers identified as a basis of supporting specific outcomes and potential actions aimed at achieving the Regional Economic Development Vision. These policy drivers are:

- Key Policy Driver 1: Economic and business governance;
- Key Policy Driver 2: Creating a supportive business environment;
- Key Policy Driver 3: Infrastructure and mechanisms to support growth;
- Key Policy Driver 4: Diversification and value adding;
- Key Policy Driver 5: Skills and training;
- Key Policy Driver 6: Marketing and investment attraction;
- Key Policy Driver 7: Enhancing the visitor experience;
- Key Policy Driver 8: Enhance tertiary services provision in Toowoomba City; and
- Key Policy Driver 9: Sustainable regional centres.

5.3 Strategy Timeframe

The Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy recognises the approximately twenty year timeframe to 2031 adopted for most strategic policy documents produced by the State Government and Toowoomba Regional Council, including the Queensland Government Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy. The use of consistent timeframes assists in the sharing of research materials such as population and growth projections.

The Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy adopts a long term view of economic development initiatives, but places a significant focus on establishing economic development processes in the short term (up to five years). Consistent with other regional and local planning strategies, it is anticipated that the Toowoomba Region Economic Development Strategy would be regularly reviewed at five yearly intervals.
5.4 Implementation

5.4.1 Implementation plan
The implementation and monitoring of this strategy will be coordinated through the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Branch within Council.

5.4.2 Financial and resource requirements
Toowoomba Regional Council provides funding for economic development, which is distributed to Council’s Economic Development section and Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise. Funding provided to Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise is negotiated and managed through a formal Funding Agreement and associated documentation that stipulates Council’s expectations of what will be undertaken and achieved with the funding.

Both Council and Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise have a team of professional staff with a broad range of skills, disciplines and experience. The staffing resources of both organisations will need to be maintained in line with the delivery requirements of a world-class economic development strategy and its associated programs.

Opportunities for collaborative project funding from State and Federal Government agencies will be sought where available to reduce the overall costs of Council’s economic development program.

5.4.3 Responsibility and accountability
Responsibility of actions within this strategy has been allocated to either Council or Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise depending on the activity’s alignment with the capabilities and capacity of each organisation. Where the delivery of an activity will benefit from a coordinated partnership between Council and Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise it has been allocated to both.

Achievement of the actions within the timeframes specified in the Action Plan will be monitored and reported to Council on a regular basis.
5.4.4 POLICY DRIVER 1
Economic and business governance

Objective
To provide a governance framework for the delivery of economic development initiatives and enhance the quality of business governance within the Toowoomba Region.

Rationale
To ensure that the execution of regional economic development initiatives is efficient and coordinated as it is imperative that economic development actors (including Council, TSBE, major institutions and businesses) understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Action Plan
Outcome 1.1 Establishment of a framework for the delivery of economic development initiatives within the Toowoomba Region.

Action 1.1.1 Establish a legal entity to act as a regional economic development organisation to be known as ‘Toowoomba & Surat Basin Enterprise’ (TSBE). Owner - TRC; Timing - Now

Action 1.1.2 Formulate a charter of roles and responsibilities between TSBE and TRC. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - 3 Months

Action 1.1.3 Review internal resourcing arrangements pertaining to economic development. Owner - TRC; Timing - 3 Months

Outcome 1.2 Establishment of a framework to collaborate with economic development organisations outside the Toowoomba Region to deliver broader regional initiatives.

Action 1.2.1 Formulate effective working relationships between TSBE and other regional economic development organisation to establish mechanisms for inter-regional cooperation and collaboration for the purposes of marketing and investment attraction. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 3 Months

Action 1.2.2 Formulate effective working relationships between TRC and other regional economic development agencies to establish mechanisms for inter-regional cooperation and collaboration for the purposes of lobbying. Owner - TRC; Timing - 3 Months
Outcome 1.3 National and state government decision making processes pertinent to the Toowoomba Region are based in-region.

Action 1.3.1 Lobby state and national agencies to ensure that decisions and processes affecting the Toowoomba Region are administered by branches located within the Toowoomba Region. Owners - TRC (lead) & TSBE (subject to TRC requirements); Timing - Ongoing

Action 1.3.2 Formulate a database of local decision makers whose remits affect the region. Owner - TRC; Timing - 6 Months

Outcome 1.4 Facilitate a program to develop business and management skills in local businesses.

Action 1.4.1 Develop industry capability registers (with assistance from TRC) for: Agriculture; Energy & Mining; Services to mining; Manufacturing; and Transport & Logistics. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 1 Year

Action 1.4.2 Facilitate delivery of a supply chain capability service to match local businesses with local suppliers. Owner TSBE; Timing - 1 Year

Action 1.4.3 Develop and maintain a database of business coaches for the purposes of connecting local businesses to appropriate business coaching services. Owner TSBE; Timing - 1 Year

5.4.5 Policy Driver 2

Creating a supportive business environment

Objective

To foster a supportive environment for existing and prospective businesses from start-up to maturation.

Rationale

The creation of an environment conducive to business will assist in retaining and developing existing businesses and attract or encourage the start-up of new businesses in the region.
Action Plan

Outcome 2.1 Retention, development and attraction of local businesses (including start-ups).

Action 2.1.1 Monitor business registrations within the Toowoomba Region to identify
• The extent to which new businesses are forming; and
• The rate of attrition from the region.
Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.1.2 Develop and implement a business retention and expansion program that:
• Identifies the nature and timing of supply chain gaps for the Agriculture, Mining, Services to Mining, Manufacturing and Transport & Logistics industry sectors;
• Provides resources to work with local businesses to transform supply chain gaps into viable business opportunities; and
• Identifies new investment opportunities through value mapping and profiling of existing industries and their value chains.
Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.1.3 Promote an online portal for business to access information pertaining to Queensland and Australian government grants and assistance programs.
Owner - TSBE; Timing - 1 Year

Action 2.1.4 Encourage business start-ups by ensuring there are a range of business accommodation options available to start-ups through a range of initiatives, including but not limited to:
• Review of home based business code to allow for two non-resident employees on site at any time;
• Development of a ‘Small Space Strategy’ to ensure that start-up business have access to small scale retail, commercial and industrial space (e.g. encouraging serviced office developments, provision of small spaces in future council office projects, establishing an approvals process for pop-up stores in public spaces); and
• Review of development controls to ensure there are no impediments to the establishment of incubator facilities within the Toowoomba Region.
Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year

Outcome 2.2 Review and monitor local regulatory environment to ensure there are no layers of unnecessary regulation and that regulation is being administered efficiently.

Action 2.2.1 Review planning scheme provisions to identify any impediments to establishing home based businesses. Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year

Action 2.2.2 Review TRC procurement policies, local laws and permits to ensure they support local business and meet the needs of the community. Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year

Action 2.2.3 Identify opportunities to reclassify the assessment levels of development activities from impact assessable to code assessable in key economic zones (e.g. centres zones, industry zones, etc.). Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year

Action 2.2.4 Monitor assessment and approval times of applications for development or business permits. Owner - TRC; Timing - Annual
Outcome 2.3 New and prospective businesses have reliable access to market information and emerging trends in the Toowoomba Region.

Action 2.3.1 Promote TSBE as a provider and distributor of economic information on the Toowoomba region and the Surat Basin to business and industry. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.3.2 TRC to act as a collection house for economic data and information for the Toowoomba region. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.3.3 Work collaboratively with regional stakeholders to increase the range of data collected in the region. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.3.4 Collect and distribute economic data for the Toowoomba Region, including:

- Socio-economic profiles;
- Industry profiles;
- Property market profiles; and
- Development pipeline profiles.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 2.4 There is an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land for the expansion of existing businesses and/or relocation of new businesses to the region.

Action 2.4.1 Establish a strategic land supply monitor for residential, commercial and industrial land in TRC. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.4.2 Monitor the take-up of residential, commercial and industrial land. TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.4.3 Review the supply-demand balance of residential, commercial and industrial land within the Toowoomba Region. Owner - TRC; Timing - 5 Yearly

Action 2.4.4 Ensure that the supply of land for enterprise and employment uses is protected from reverse amenity impacts from sensitive uses.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 2.5 Property owners invest in building refurbishment and redevelopment with confidence.

Action 2.5.1 Publish an annual infrastructure plan or capital works plan.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Annual

Action 2.5.2 Council’s infrastructure plan is publicised and distributed.

Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Annual

Action 2.5.3 Council regularly consults with the business community in relation to major capital works. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 2.5.4 The primacy of the Toowoomba CBD and its regional centres is promoted.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
5.4.6 Policy Driver 3
Infrastructure and mechanisms to support growth

Objective
To increase the competitiveness and investment attractiveness of the Toowoomba Region through the development of an efficient infrastructure network.

Rationale
An efficient infrastructure network provides accessibility to and the efficient movement of necessary inputs, such as energy, water, materials and labour, which is imperative for the sustainability of local businesses and the attraction of new businesses to the region.

Action Plan
Outcome 3.1 Infrastructure is delivered in a timely and cost effective manner that facilitates ongoing business development and enhances the region’s competitive advantages.

Action 3.1.1 Formulate an Infrastructure Plan outlining Council-delivered short, medium and long term projects and associated funding commitments. The infrastructure plan should:

- Identify short, medium and long term infrastructure projects;
- Articulate the level of funding commitment for each project;
- Identify uncommitted capacity within the TRC infrastructure network.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Annual

Action 3.1.2 Infrastructure Plan is publicised and made available to business, industry and the community.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 3.1.3 Outcomes of infrastructure delivery on the regional economy are collated and reported by TRC and publicised by TSBE.

Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Annual
**Outcome 3.2 Collaboration in the delivery of strategic inter-regional infrastructure.**

Action 3.2.1 Establish a regional infrastructure providers forum consisting of representatives from local government, DTMR, DSDIP, DIT (C’wealth) and the business community, with the purpose of:

- Identifying infrastructure projects requiring joint responses;
- Prepare funding submissions within the respective host agencies for such projects; and
- Report on economic impact of the delivery of joint infrastructure projects across regional boundaries.

Owner - TRC (lead) & TSBE (subject to TRC requirements); Timing - Ongoing

**Outcome 3.3 Freight efficiency is enhanced through a Toowoomba Region transport & logistics strategy.**

Action 3.3.1 Develop a regional freight & logistics strategy with DTMR and industry to:

- Confirm the capability of the region’s transport & logistics sector;
- Identify the challenges and opportunities facing the transport & logistics sector;
- Identify key projects for input to the infrastructure plan;
- Map key supply and value chains within the region’s transport & logistics sector; and
- Communicate the capability of the region’s transport & logistics sector and the region’s competitive advantages as a transport & logistics location.

Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years

Action 3.3.2 TRC and TSBE to publicise and promote the above freight & logistics strategy.

Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - 2 Years

**Outcome 3.4 Air services (including RPT, charter, aerial work and flight training) within Toowoomba are expanded.**

Action 3.4.1 Identify and monitor the air services needs of the region and identify opportunities for services out of Toowoomba.

Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 3.4.2 Partner with DTMR and other appropriate agencies to demonstrate the feasibility of, and lobby for additional air service corridors out of Toowoomba.

Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

**Outcome 3.5 Development assessments are conducted within statutory timeframes.**

Action 3.5.1 Monitor development assessment timeframes and where assessments exceed statutory timeframes identify the cause.

Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
Achieve 3.6 Businesses have access to cutting edge information and communications technology throughout the region.

Action 3.6.1 Finalise the Toowoomba Region Digital Economy Strategy.
Owner - TRC; Timing - 6 months

Action 3.6.2 Partner with communication service providers to ensure that the region’s communications infrastructure, product offering and pricing are appropriate to the needs of the region and are competitive nationally. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 3.6.3 Facilitate information sessions about the potential of high speed broadband via the NBN – e.g. e-commerce, data management and storage, business logistics and business use of social networking. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Action 3.6.4 Attract industry to the Toowoomba region by promoting the region’s ICT advantages (including NBN) in accordance with the Digital Economy Strategy.
Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 3.6.5 Adopt cutting edge ICT in the day-to-day operations of Council.
Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 3.7 Liveability within the Toowoomba Region is enhanced.

Action 3.7.1 Recommendations from the Toowoomba Region Urban Design Initiatives are reviewed and adopted where appropriate. Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years

Action 3.7.2 Investigate opportunities for rewarding or incentivising adaptive reuse of heritage and character buildings within the Toowoomba region.
Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years

Action 3.7.3 Investigate opportunities for rewarding or incentivising land assembly within the Toowoomba CBD to deliver enhanced urban design outcomes.
Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years

Action 3.7.4 Support place making initiatives throughout the Toowoomba Region, including street art and performance, utilisation of Toowoomba’s laneways and provision of integrated civic spaces.
Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
5.4.7 Policy Driver 4
Diversification and value adding

Objective
Businesses within the Toowoomba Region leverage off the economic drivers of the broader region to diverse and develop value adding opportunities within the agricultural and mining sectors.

Rationale
The mining sector is expected to experience rapid growth in the broader region within which Toowoomba is located. Agricultural represents the traditional economic base of the Toowoomba Region. Diversification and value adding within both the agricultural and mining sectors would insulate the Toowoomba Region from the cyclical nature of these primary sectors while also creating greater regional employment and wealth.

Action Plan
Outcome 4.1 Toowoomba remains the agricultural and horticultural services hub for the Darling Downs and South Western Queensland.

Action 4.1.1 Prepare an Agriculture & Horticulture Capability Profile for the Toowoomba Region identifying the size, diversity and contribution of agriculture to the Toowoomba Region; agricultural services available, including an agricultural services directory; and the region’s competitive advantages in agriculture. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 1 Year
Outcome 4.2 Toowoomba is the professional and contracting services base for the Surat Basin.

Action 4.2.1 Prepare a Mining & Mining Services Capability Profile for the Toowoomba Region identifying the size, diversity and contribution of mining and mining services to the Toowoomba Region; mining services available, including a mining services directory; and the region’s competitive advantages in mining and mining services. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 1 Year

Action 4.2.2 Engage with the Industry Capability Network to enhance the capability of Toowoomba Region mining services providers. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 4.2.3 Promote the Toowoomba Region as a competitive location to provide mining services. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 4.3 Upstream and downstream value adding related to the agricultural and mining sectors is expanded.

Action 4.3.1 Undertake a regular review of industrial land supply to ensure that there is adequate land available for value adding industry. Owner - TRC; Timing - 5 Yearly

Action 4.3.2 Review planning scheme provisions to ensure that there are no unreasonable impediments for on-site processing. Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years
5.4.8 **Policy Driver 5**  
**Skills and training**

**Objective**  
To respond to the evolving skills and training requirements of industry to ensure businesses have access to appropriately skilled labour to innovate and grow.

**Rationale**  
With labour being a key input to most businesses, access to a suitable skilled labour force is a key requirement to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive and globalised economy. Access to a skilled workforce is a key investment criteria for businesses looking to establish operations in a new region. Additionally, the nurturing of a culture of learning and skills development can provide an engine room for regional innovation and investment attractiveness.

**Action Plan**

**Outcome 5.1** Ongoing engagement and collaboration between all levels of government, industry and training providers within the Toowoomba Region.

- **Action 5.1.1** Support the Education Capital initiative. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

- **Action 5.1.2** Monitor education and training needs of business and industry within the Toowoomba Region, Darling Downs and South West Queensland by engaging with business and industry. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - 3 Months

**Outcome 5.2** Tertiary education and vocational training services and facilities are available in the region for a wide range of skill sets.

- **Action 5.2.1** Encourage the expansion of major educational institutions within the Toowoomba Region through ongoing promotion of the region as an education region. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

- **Action 5.2.2** Lobby the Queensland Government to expand local medical and clinical education programs at Toowoomba Base Hospital, St Vincent’s Hospital and St Andrews Hospital. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
5.4.9 Policy Driver 6
Marketing & investment attraction

Objective
To position and market the Toowoomba Region as an investment location of choice and to identify businesses that complement or leverage off the region’s competitive advantages.

Rationale
The communication of the region’s competitive advantage is imperative to attract new businesses and investment to the region. The attraction of new businesses brings new markets and opportunities to the region and a diversification and growth in the region’s economic base.

Action Plan
Outcome 6.1 The development of a Toowoomba Region marketing plan to guide regional marketing and branding strategies.

Action 6.1.1 Prepare a Toowoomba Region marketing plan, containing:
• A situation analysis of the region economy;
• SWOT analysis; and
• Marketing strategy (including branding initiatives and marketing collateral).
Owners - TRC (lead) & TSBE (subject to TRC requirements); Timing - 1 year

Action 6.1.2 Implement marketing plan. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 6.2 Record and track new business enquiries.

Action 6.2.1 Establish a register of business enquiries outlining business name, industry, requirements, stage of enquiry. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Now

Action 6.2.2 Track and follow-up business enquiries. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 6.2.3 Establish a protocol for managing economic development related enquiries which come through Council’s call centres. Owner - TRC; Timing - 3 Months
Outcome 6.3 Ongoing engagement and collaboration between industry, the community and all levels government.

Action 6.3.1 Convene regular and recurrent coordination meetings between TRC, TSBE, Trade & Investment Qld and Austrade. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Quarterly

Action 6.3.2 Ongoing monitoring and engagement within the economic development space to identify government agencies that may influence economic development outcomes within the Toowoomba Region. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 6.4 The Toowoomba Region develops national and international profile as a place to invest and grow.

Action 6.4.1 Actively collaborate with Trade & Investment Qld and Austrade to introduce 'Trade Missions' and visits to the region from potential investors. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 6.4.2 Identify and present to inter-state target firms (or industry groups) related to key industry sectors identified by TRC (or otherwise agreed by TRC) for the purposes of industry attraction. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Action 6.4.3 Identify necessary requirements to host international business delegations and ensure those capabilities are established within the region. Owners - TRC & TSBE; Timing - 2 Years

Action 6.4.4 Develop an International Relations Strategy that articulates the long term outcomes of desired international relationships and the activities required to achieve them, including:

- Trade promotion and regularly communicating opportunities to strategic international markets;
- Establishes an International Businesses Development Program focussing on investment attraction, industry development and trade promotion; and
- Communicates business and trade opportunities to other levels of government, including Trade & Investment Qld and Austrade.

Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year
5.4.10 Policy Driver 7
Enhancing the visitor experience

Objective
To enhance the quality of the visitor experience within the Toowoomba Region through the provision of quality accommodation, catering and attractions.

Rationale
Tourism is a highly segmented industry with the potential to add value to the Toowoomba Region at many levels. A quality visitor experience can significantly add to the perception of a region as a place to do business. In addition to recreational tourism and those visiting family and friends, the Toowoomba Region is likely to experience significant growth in business travellers off the back of major resource and infrastructure investment in the Surat Basin.

Action Plan
Outcome 7.1 Toowoomba City is considered a desirable location for business activity, and hosts a number of conferences of regional, state and national significance.

Action 7.1.1 Investigate the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a regional scale conference facility in Toowoomba City, including potential funding options.
Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year

Outcome 7.2 The Toowoomba Region is considered an attractive destination by intrastate, interstate and overseas visitors, offering a range of activities and services to enhance the visitor experience.

Action 7.2.1 Continue to support the marketing and product development initiatives of Southern Queensland Country Tourism.
Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
5.4.11 Policy Driver 8
Enhance tertiary services provision in Toowoomba City

Objective
To maximise the range of higher order business and community services available in the region.

Rationale
The ready availability of higher order services supports and facilitates investment attraction, deepens regional business skill sets and enhances regional quality of life.

Action Plan
Outcome 8.1 The development of a Toowoomba Region marketing plan to guide regional marketing and branding strategies.
Action 8.1.1 A business services register is prepared identifying the range of professional and business services available in the Toowoomba region, including business names and contacts. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
Action 8.1.2 Undertake a gap analysis of professional and business services. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 2 Years
Action 8.1.3 Business and professional service sector targets are included in the investment and attraction strategy. Owner - TSBE; Timing - 2 Years

Outcome 8.2 Existing high order business and personal services are retained and expanded in Toowoomba.
Action 8.2.1 Business and professional services firms are encouraged to participate in business skills training and coaching seminars. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 8.3 The health and wellbeing sector continues to expand and develop.
Action 8.3.1 Lobby for increased health care funding to meet identified health care gaps. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 8.4 The education and training sector continues to expand and develop.
Action 8.4.1 Engage with schooling providers to identify vocational training opportunities that respond to the skills and training needs of the broader region. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing
Action 8.4.2 Encourage expansion of tertiary and vocational training courses within Toowoomba. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing
5.4.12 Policy Driver 9
Sustainable regional centres

Objective
To ensure the sustainability of the Toowoomba Region’s regional centres.

Rationale
The Toowoomba Region comprises a series of regional communities each with its own character and competitive advantages. It is imperative that these regional centres prosper to provide the region with depth and diversity.

Action Plan

Outcome 9.1 Toowoomba has a network of sustainable regional centres.
Action 9.1.1 Assess the sustainability and viability of Toowoomba’s regional centres through regular monitoring of key socio-economic indicators. Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year
Action 9.1.2 Local Plans for Toowoomba’s region centres. Owner - TRC; Timing - Ongoing
Action 9.1.3 Infrastructure plans for the Toowoomba Region clearly identify projects relevant to Toowoomba’s regional centres. Owner - TRC; Timing - Annual

Outcome 9.2 Regional communities establish their own intrinsic competitive advantages and character.
Action 9.2.1 Prepare profiles of regional centres outlining their respective capabilities and competitive advantages. Owner - TRC; Timing - 2 Years
Action 9.2.2 Promote the competitive advantages of regional centres to facilitate investment. Owner - TSBE; Timing - Ongoing

Outcome 9.3 Regional centres have access to project funding.
Action 9.3.1 Identify and promote grant funding opportunities available to regional centres from the Queensland and Australian Governments. Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year
Action 9.3.2 Develop a strategy for which businesses and community groups can facilitate economic development initiatives in regional centres. Owner - TRC; Timing - 1 Year
5.5 Performance Measures

Data on a range of measures will be collected in order to monitor and review our activities and their contribution to the aims of the strategy. Some of this data is already collected externally by accepted and accredited bodies. They will be used in a suite of monitors. Others will need to be collected directly. A baseline measure will be established for each indicator against which future data will be compared.

In order to assess, review and monitor our activity for this Strategy, data will be collected under the following headings:

**Employment & Unemployment**
- Total number
- By industry sector
- By gender
- By tenure
- Participation rate

**Business Growth**
- Total number of businesses by sector
- Business employee size by sector
- Number of business start ups
- Number of business failures
- Failure rate

**Business Property**
- Average land price
- Average rent/m²
- Employment land availability

**Gross Regional Product**
- Regional Total
- Total by ANZSIC sector
- By employee

**Population**
- Total
- Growth rate
- Forecast projections
- Age profile

**Skill Levels**
- Level of qualifications
- Number of qualifications

**Tourism**
- Total visitor numbers
- Domestic overnight visitors
- Domestic day trips
- International visitors
- Room occupancy rates
- Room nights