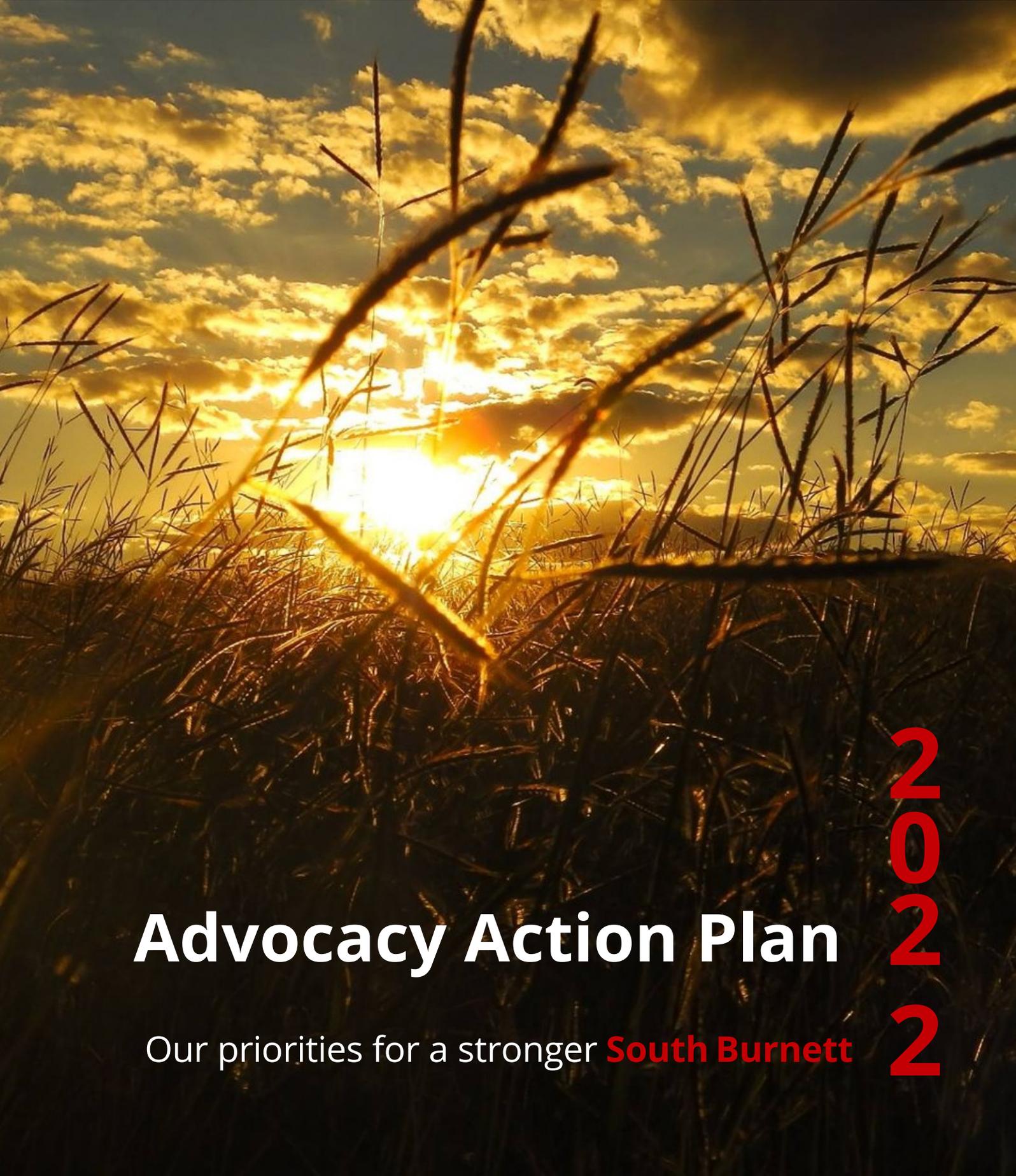




SOUTH BURNETT

REGIONAL COUNCIL



Advocacy Action Plan

Our priorities for a stronger **South Burnett**

2022

Our Region



Mayor's Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present the South Burnett Regional Council Advocacy Plan for 2022. The plan is designed to provide information on key initiatives being pursued by our council. With 'outside' support, and by working in collaboration, advocacy is a powerful way for communities to progress matters that are important to them. This also supports Council and other levels of government to work together constructively. Our Council is open for business.

ABOUT THE SOUTH BURNETT

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

A diverse range of agricultural produce and associated supply chains, including leather, pork, wine, pharmaceuticals, fruit, horticulture, beef, oils, peanuts and timber are the core strength of the South Burnett economy. The diverse range of growing industries exporting to domestic and global markets are supported by high employment and value add industries including Health & Social Services, Manufacturing, Mining, Electricity, Water & Wastewater and Retail Trade.

Australia's two largest peanut processors and a global pharmaceutical industry extend from the region's rich red volcanic soils while Swickers is one of the southern hemisphere's largest and Queensland's only export accredited pork abattoir.

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

Major employment industries in the South Burnett in 2018/19 were Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (13.3%); Manufacturing (10.9%); and Health Care and Social Assistance (10.8%) This demonstrates a stable base of employment across the region. Productivity has increased from \$117,597/worker in 2004/05 to \$131,791/worker in 2018/19.

GRP

\$1.9b

Year ending 2019

**Registered
Business
3,086**

**2019
Unemployment
Rate
7.7%**

**Population
32, 555**

Worker productivity by industry is calculated by dividing the industry value add by the number of persons employed in that industry. It shows which industries generate the most value add per employee.

Some industry sectors such as retail trade, are not highly productive per worker, but they employ a lot of people. Other industries, such as mining, employ fewer people but generate high levels of productivity.

In the South Burnett 50.9% of the local workers (people who are employed in the local area, regardless of where they live) are males and 49.1% are female.

In South Burnett, there are more younger workers (15 to 44 years) than older workers (45 year and over) in the local worker population.

39.0 % of local workers in the South Burnett are employed part-time and 58.6% are employed full-time. Within the South Burnett region, the workforce has a similar proportion of Managers and Professionals compared to Queensland.

In South Burnett, 10.7% of local workers earned \$1,750 or more per week.

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

MAYOR BRETT OTTO

Our Vision and Commitment



***The South Burnett...
unique communities working together
in a strong and vibrant region***

Our commitment to our region and our communities.

The South Burnett Regional Council will work to the financial strength of our region and is committed to a Council presence in all of our communities.

This is transformation time for the region – with so many exciting opportunities. Leadership, advocacy, culture, respect, collaboration and promotion are our key enablers.

The two key priorities of this term of Council will be to continue to give attention to ongoing financial sustainability and to continue to support and develop our towns and villages.

AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

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

Whilst major cities are increasing in size and wealth, there is a real risk that our rural centres will continue to fall further behind.

Employment opportunities are often limited and when opportunities arise, it is difficult to attract skilled staff.

This could be due to quality of life services that are lacking and limited infrastructure to support the population.

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

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

Our Council has produced 5 priority areas that would not only assist our local area, but would assist Queensland and Australia. Our region is an area that can deliver great growth and more jobs. We are committed to delivering better outcomes for our community.

ADVOCATING FOR OUR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY

The South Burnett ranks 58th of the 78 Queensland LGA's on the Index of Relative Disadvantage. (SEIFA Index - ABS 2016)

Community disadvantage comes about as a result of the complex interplay between the characteristics of residents living in a community (e.g., unemployment, low income) and the effects of the social and environmental context within the community (e.g., weak social networks, relative lack of opportunities). Australian Institute of Family Studies (2011)

"The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage for South Burnett Regional Council in 2016 was 908 compared with localities such as Lockyer Valley Council at 947 and Isaac Regional Council at 1017 thereby indicating the economic disadvantage is clear. The South Burnett Regional Council Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics."

Our Advocacy Principles:

1. The priorities within this document have also been identified in South Burnett Regional Council's Corporate Plan 2021 - 2026, Council's Capital Works Plan and other relevant policies, plans and strategies adopted by Council
2. The priorities are realistic and attainable, in the short to medium term. We will stage or breakdown larger and longer-term priority projects
3. The priorities have a clear community need and benefit and are backed up by evidence.
4. The priorities have broad community support
5. The priorities align with those of State and Federal decision-makers and Council will seek to work in partnership with other levels of Government, as well as candidates for election to other levels of Government, to deliver these priorities
6. Council has indicated the resources it will commit to these priorities as a partner
7. Council will also work with other advocacy organisations and local community groups where our interests align, to build support for our priorities

Sustainable Economic Growth and Development



The South Burnett region has potential to become an agricultural production centre for Queensland and Australia, resulting in substantive economic growth, creation of new jobs, increased exports and raising the standard of living for multiple communities in the region.

The region has high quality soils, favourable climatic conditions and close proximity to domestic markets and internal export pathways. To access these benefits, the region requires an increase in agricultural water supply and reliability. This can be achieved through targeted, fit-for-purpose infrastructure that is low cost and high return for the region.

We request the Federal Government to recognise that there are no one size fits all housing solutions and increase targeted funding streams and dedicated resources to increase social and affordable housing supply in regional communities in ways that meet the growing demands. Our council supports the call of the LGAQ for a National Housing Summit to address the critical housing shortages for rural and remote communities.

WATER FOR OUR FUTURE

The current Burnett Feasibility Study funded under the National Water Industry Development Fund (NWIDF) has completed phase one.

Council is aiming to increase access to water allocations and establish infrastructure that provides improved water security across urban and rural water supplies. Reliable and affordable water is essential for sustainable economic development and growth of the region.

Phase 2 in the development of a 25-year regional economic plan that will inform water infrastructure investment decisions for South Burnett is well advanced. This plan will be for the entire South Burnett.

Council proposes the NWIDF programme to conduct targeted areas that will accelerate and materially progress the water projects identified in the Options Analysis:

1. Strategic assessment of the viability of converting Gordonbrook Dam from urban to irrigation use and developing a plan for augmentation of the existing strategic water infrastructure, which must include off-site water storage from Boondooma.
Estimated \$300 000 for Business Case Preparation
2. Assessment of the practical viability of Barlil Weir (engaging in a full detailed business case) leading to the construction of a re-regulating weir on Barambah Creek. *Estimated \$1 Mil*
3. Completion of a hydrological and economic assessment of a potential weir project on the West Barambah Catchment of the Barker Barambah Water Scheme. *Estimated \$200 000*
4. Targeted investment assessment on the strategy for accessing new water for irrigators in Blackbutt. *Estimated \$300 000*

OUR ROAD NETWORKS

Regional communities need safe roads.

Council will prioritise continued works both in terms of gravel re-sheeting and the sealing of existing gravel roads and ongoing maintenance and improvement works to our regional roads. Council would like to develop Transport Corridors throughout the region and appropriate infrastructure to accommodate the volume and type of road transport.

1. Renewals and safety improvements:
 - Mundubbera-Durong Road improvements - *Estimated \$20 Mil*
 - Memerambi – Gordonbrook Road - *Estimated \$22 Mil*
 - Kingaroy Barkers Creek Road - *Estimated \$3 Mil*
 - Byee Road - *Estimated \$3 Mil*
2. Increased programmes for renewals in addition to upgrade of guardrails and bridges across the region including:
 - Tanduringie Bridge - *Estimated \$13 Mil*
3. Critical transport assets and community connectivity infrastructure which would include rail trails, cycleways, and increased footpath connectivity
4. Advocate for continued Commonwealth Government investment in major connecting highways and freight routes that enable producers to transport their product to export markets via Bundaberg Port, Wellcamp Airport or Brisbane
5. Increased support for Roads to Recovery and the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRICI) Programmes. *Increased support of (Ten) 10% for South Burnett Regional Council.*

FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT

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

Within Australia, since 1996 Local Government costs have increased over 400%. Over the same period the value of the Financial Assistance Grant from the Federal Government has fallen from 1% of Commonwealth tax revenue to just 0.55%. This funding gap is becoming harder for Councils to close through own source revenue options, particularly in rural and regional communities.

Often these communities' ratepayers have lower incomes and still the demand for both infrastructure and operational spending is higher per person. This funding gap forces Councils into a choice of delivering the services that their community needs (and not just want), or their own financial sustainability. Restoring the Financial Assistance Grant funding levels back to 1996 levels will go a very long way to giving rural and regional Councils and their communities the stability and services they need to thrive.

1. Support the Australian Local Government Association's call to restore the national value of Financial Assistance Grants funding to an amount equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth Taxation revenue and therefore to provide a fairer share of federal funding for our local communities.
2. Support and maintenance for community health services including mental health and suicide prevention programmes - *Estimated \$1 Mil*
3. Bio-security initiatives and funding commitments to ensure compliance with Local Government bio-security plans - *Estimated \$1 Mil*



REGIONAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

This will be actioned through the 2025 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy. Our key outcomes are:

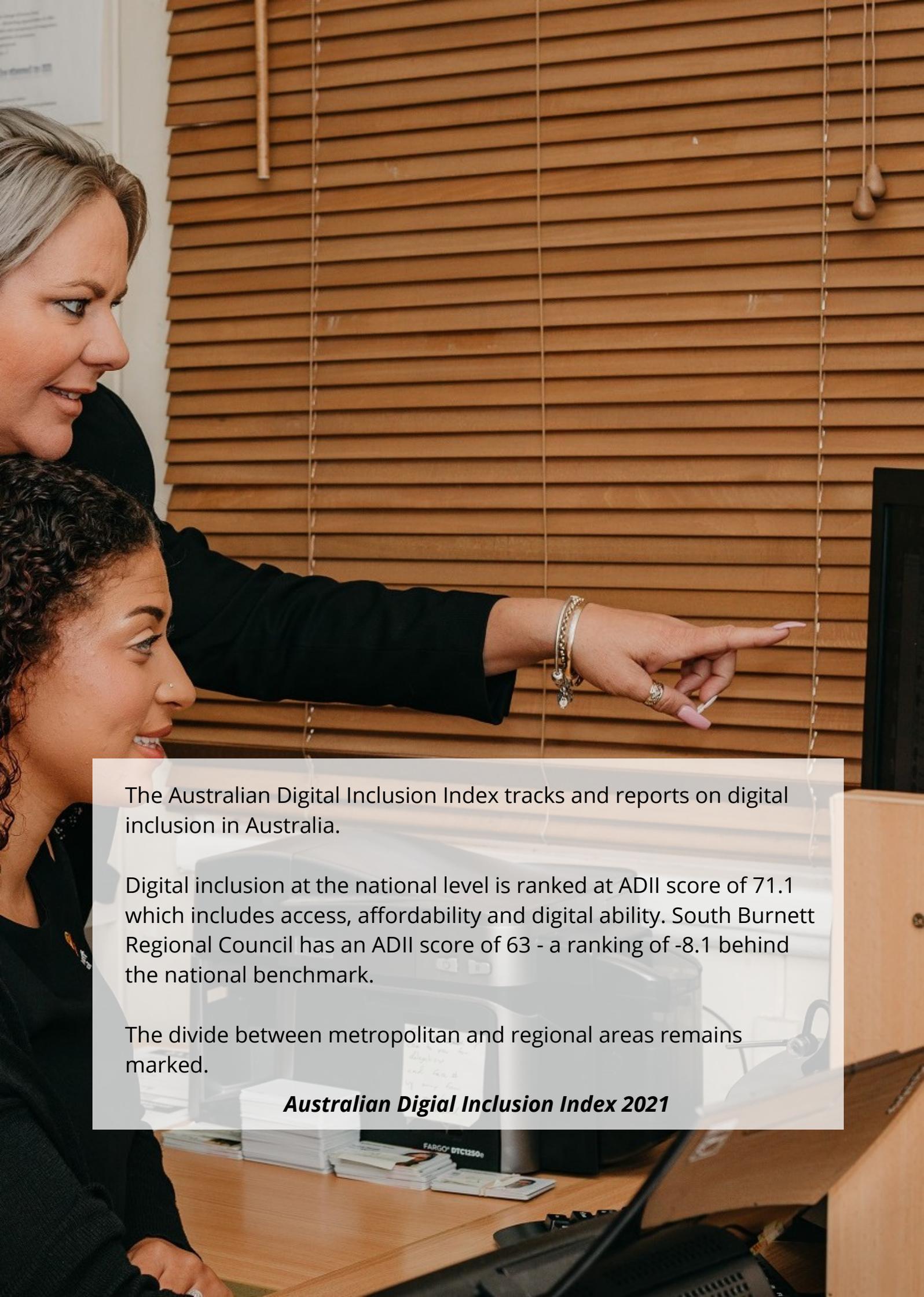
1. Working together with Government to build a plan for our region's coal transition beyond the eventual closure of Tarong Power Station and Meandu Mine including support for renewable energy projects. Council is seeking funding and resources to establish a bi-partisan committee that will support the region through transition and diversification of the economy in pursuit of decarbonisation goals. *This pilot project will require seed funding of \$100 000*
2. Investment in food manufacturing and processing sector, and other potential value adds in a way that creates long term employment, export, and supply chain opportunities.
3. Investigate further development opportunities to improve and expand the usage and development of the Kingaroy Airport through the development of a Master Plan, Glider Hub and Air Park development. - *Estimated \$200 000*
4. National Park infrastructure and nature-based tourism - Bunya Mountains National Park - *Estimated cost of Master Plan \$50 000*
5. Greater diversification of Agribusiness
 - support for Coolabunia Saleyards. - *Estimated \$1 Mil*

DATA COMMUNICATIONS AND BLACK SPOT

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

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

1. Transform Kingaroy as a 'Smart Country Hub' with investment in QCN fibre, electric parking bays and improved telecommunications infrastructure as part of the Kingaroy Transformation Project - *Estimated \$3 Mil*
2. The hub will include the development of a Regional University Centre which delivers programmes such as Mechatronics and Health - *Estimated \$4 Mil*
3. Disaster Recovery and system fail-safe for continuity of service including a purpose sited ABC rebroadcast tower in the South Burnett Regional Council Area covering the blackspot between ABC Wide Bay and ABC Southern Queensland. Also the erection of a minimum of two mobile phone towers in the South Burnett as part of the Mobile Blackspot Program.
5. Development of an online self-service portal for rate payers for requests, applications, and account status - *Estimated \$500 000*

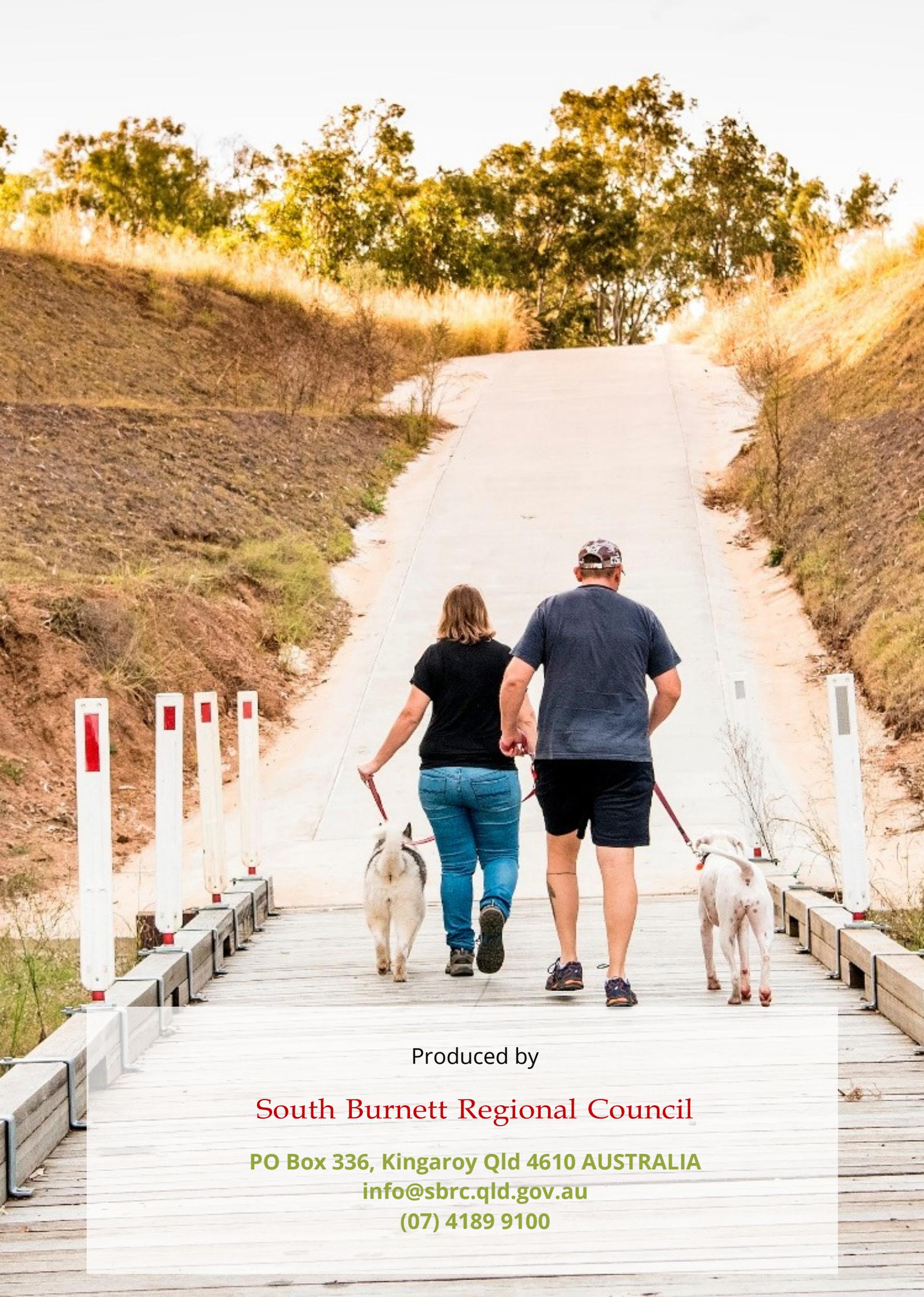


The Australian Digital Inclusion Index tracks and reports on digital inclusion in Australia.

Digital inclusion at the national level is ranked at ADII score of 71.1 which includes access, affordability and digital ability. South Burnett Regional Council has an ADII score of 63 - a ranking of -8.1 behind the national benchmark.

The divide between metropolitan and regional areas remains marked.

Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2021



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