



South West Queensland **The Cornerstone of Opportunities**

Driving Productivity, Prosperity and Participation

**QUEENSLAND STATE ELECTION
2020**

Priorities to support the South West
and Queensland post COVID-19
and long term

South West Queensland The Cornerstone of Opportunities

Bordering New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory, South West Queensland truly is the cornerstone of the State. Comprising approximately 320,000km² across the local government areas of Balonne, Bulloo, Maranoa, Murweh, Paroo and Quilpie, 24,000 people call South West Queensland home.

As Queensland faces unprecedented times, we believe South West Queensland offers ample opportunities to help our communities and those beyond our borders to unite and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Whilst we have strong foundations established in our traditional industries of oil, gas and agriculture, importantly, we have massive untapped potential in our emerging industries of apiculture, goats and macropods, renewable energy, agtech and education, carbon farming and tourism.

Industries that provide the opportunities to create meaningful and long term employment; industries that can help sustain our diverse towns and regional centres; industries that support innovation and entrepreneurship; and industries that can re-shape where and how Queenslanders chose to live and work.

What we need now is long term Government commitment to work with us to make it happen - not political rhetoric, not false promises, but real vision, leadership and action.

This is why we will be calling on the parties contesting the 2020 State Government Election to properly invest in the fundamentals that support industry growth, healthy and connected communities and natural resource and waste management.

We look forward to much constructive dialogue in the lead up to the State Election and sharing with our communities how each party will support the South West – **the cornerstone of opportunities!!!**



Home to the Cooper and Eromanga resource basins – the **largest onshore petroleum province in Australia.**



Diverse economic opportunities exist in oil, gas, gemstone (opal), beef, sheep, cropping and game meat processing.



SWQ generates **\$5.2 billion in royalties** which is shared across all Queenslanders.



SWQ generates **\$2.92 billion in Gross Regional Product** each year.



The region's river systems form part of the **important Murray-Darling Basin and Lake Eyre Basin** water resources.



The region's CSG industry is **critical to supplying gas markets** both inter-state and internationally.



Our Region

The Cornerstone of Opportunities



The South West Local Government Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of the First Nations peoples to this country and commit our-selves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.



Creating Opportunities for South West Queensland Communities and Beyond


Funding and support for improved road,
rail and air services




Regional approaches to health,
community development
and connectivity




Quality land, water and
waste management practices



PRODUCTIVITY FOR OUR INDUSTRIES



PROSPERITY FOR OUR COMMUNITIES
AND QUEENSLAND



PARTICIPATION IN MEANINGFUL AND
LONG-TERM WORK

1

Grow our traditional and emerging industries by providing funding and support for improved road, rail and air services

Good road, rail and air services are fundamental to the growth and success of communities in South West Queensland. Extensive planning and consideration of transport priorities has already been undertaken and identified in the State Government's *South West Queensland Regional Transport Plan* (2019) and further, the *South West Regional Roads and Transport Group's Strategic Road Transport Plan* (2019).

Both Plans align and identify the following priorities for transport services across South West Queensland as follows:

1. A transport system that supports economic development through efficient access to domestic and international markets
2. A transport system that enhances liveability through connected communities
3. A safer transport system
4. A resilient and responsive transport system.

To progress these priorities we seek:

- 1.1 \$10 million additional Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding over four years for the South West Queensland Regional Roads and Transport Group (SWRRTG) to continue infrastructure upgrades on the Local Roads of Regional Significance. This will ensure communities are better connected economically and socially across the region.**
- 1.2 Increased and stable funding allocations to the 'South West District' under the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP). This will support economic development through improved supply chain connectivity, more efficient heavy vehicle access and increased domestic tourism.**
- 1.3 \$75 million over ten years to progressively seal the Warri Gate Road between Noccundra Waterhole and the New South Wales Border. This will support the agricultural and tourism industries, improve road safety for locals and create both local and regional employment opportunities.**



- 14 A new 'place based' approach to Road Maintenance Performance Contracts (RMPCs) (and other programs/packages of work) in South West Queensland by awarding 'sole invitee' contracts to Councils as a priority. This will provide employment stability, value for money outcomes for the State and improved road stewardship capability in the local government workforce.
- 15 Funding for a feasibility study to assess the benefits and costs of establishing a rail freight hub in Quilpie connected to the inland rail network. This will improve rail connections to the *Inland Rail* to accommodate heavy agricultural, mining and bulk commodity loads from the west and to minimise the need for both road and rail freight loads through Toowoomba.
- 16 State Government commitment to fund the Western and South West rail networks. This will ensure full utilisation of existing assets and provide a modern and efficient freight and livestock service to leverage off the opportunities offered by the *Inland Rail*.
- 17 A review by the Queensland Productivity Commission into the matters of air route supply, regulated routes and airfare subsidies, including a particular focus on assessing the economics of applying a maximum (capped) fare. This will help inform decisions about how best to support the continuation of affordable and sustainable passenger and air freight services across South West Queensland as a key enabler of economic development.



SPOTLIGHT

Why inadequate funding for the Warri is a worry!

Improvement in the condition of the Warri Gate Road will only enhance the value of agriculture within the region and improve access for intra and interstate transport of agricultural products (TrANsIT 2020).

Yet, unlike the New South Wales Government, Queensland has failed to see the benefits that upgrading the Warri Gate will bring - not only to the South West, but to many Queensland regions!

The Warri Gate Road is a strategically important road that connects the far south west of Queensland with the Silver City Highway to Broken Hill in New South Wales.

Whilst the New South Wales Government has committed to sealing their part of the road to the border, in Queensland, there has been little commitment to sealing the 149.55km gravel stretch from the border to the Noccundra Waterhole. Known as the Warri Gate, this road has a reputation for:

- regularly disrupting industry due to wet weather closures
- causing vehicle breakdowns and hence increased operating costs for transport carriers
- posing serious road safety risks for tourist and locals alike.

Whilst the Bulloo Shire Council has proactively invested in maintaining and improving sections of the Warri Gate, long term investment by the State Government is needed if the economic and social benefits of this road are to be realised. These include:

- ✓ improved access for tourists, bringing more people to the area and creating opportunities for tourist related businesses
- ✓ improved efficiency in the delivery of education, health and emergency services to local communities
- ✓ improved access for pastoralists and local communities during and following wet weather
- ✓ improved property values due to more reliable access
- ✓ more sustainable use of gravel in the area and less environmental damage to waterways from gravel runoff from the Warri Gate Road
- ✓ greater social cohesion due to improved and more reliable access.

THIS IS WHY WE SEEK:

\$75 million over 10 years to complete the two-lane seal on the Warri Gate Road.



ANNUAL SAVINGS OF
\$239,289.00 IN
MAINTENANCE COSTS



14 DIRECT LOCAL JOBS CREATED

39 INDIRECT REGIONAL JOBS CREATED

61 ADDITIONAL QUEENSLAND BASED JOBS



**ECONOMIC RETURN
BETWEEN
\$1.93 AND \$5.06**

FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED



2

Strengthen our communities through regional approaches to health, community development and connectivity

South West Queensland consists of a number of key communities from the major centres of Roma, Charleville and St George, to smaller communities such as Thargomindah, Cunnamulla and Quilpie.

Community wellbeing, quality of life, economic development opportunities and population retention in these communities can all be enhanced through regional approaches to health, dedicated community development programs and connectivity.

Stand-alone health services and increased digital connectivity (as examples) have never been more important to South West Queensland as communities recover and continue to adapt to the impacts of COVID-19.

This is why we seek:

- 2.1 Increased and sustained funding to each Remote Area Board for approved project related activities that support collaboration and economic development outcomes across the South West region.**
- 2.2 Increased and sustained investment in the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program (or similar) as a support mechanism to attract and retain new residents to South West Queensland communities.**
- 2.3 Ongoing commitment to the \$100 million Resources Community Infrastructure Fund (or similar) and regional Local Government representation on the Advisory Committee responsible for allocating funding for community infrastructure.**
- 2.4 Funding for a feasibility study to assess the costs and benefits of providing a CAT Scan Service within the existing Southern Queensland Rural Health partnership and delivery model of care.**
- 2.5 Increased and sustained investment in existing funding programs such as Building our Regions, or a dedicated funding program for telecommunications / digital connectivity projects in South West Queensland communities.**
- 2.6 Focussed support for improving domestic and family violence outcomes by ensuring South West Queensland and further, Western Queensland receives an adequate share of COVID-19 related domestic and family violence funding from both the Australian and Queensland governments. This aligns with the 'Third Action Plan' (2019–20 to 2021–22) of the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy (2016–2026)* which seeks to "ensure initiatives implemented consider the needs of Queenslanders in regional, rural and remote locations who experience domestic and family violence" (pg.11).**
- 2.7 A dedicated grant or expansion of the 'First Home Owner' grant for the purchase of existing housing stock to improve affordability, stimulate investment and attract and retain families and professionals in South West Queensland communities.**
- 2.8 The continuation of both the Indigenous Tourism Development Service and the Growing Indigenous Tourism in Queensland Fund with a heavy emphasis on supporting capability development as part of both initiatives. This will grow business opportunities, create new jobs and career pathways for our First Nations community members in the South West.**
- 2.9 Continue and increase the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund by an additional \$25 million over five years to support tourism product development and grow the domestic tourism industry in Outback Queensland.**



"We want to ensure that our remote and regional towns continue to be vibrant, vital and thriving communities."

"So, through our Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program, we're supporting these three councils in their focus to be more inclusive, harmonious and united places to call home."

Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe – Queensland Government media release – September 12, 2019.

SPOTLIGHT

Let's start with a CAT Scan Service:

Quality health services a priority for Charleville and all of South West Queensland

Remote communities and vast distances often means that individuals, families, and whole communities struggle to receive the health care they deserve. This is further compounded by difficulties in recruiting health care professionals meaning many residents must travel long distances to access adequate health services.

Whilst not unique to South West Queensland, this problem extends beyond just being a health care challenge to one of community sustainability, given the ability to attract and retain new residents and workers demands services (especially health) that are readily available in metropolitan and large regional centres.

Currently, residents in Charleville and surrounds travel up to 11 hours to Roma for a simple CAT scan. This is an unacceptable scenario and one where rural and remote residents should not be denied lifesaving diagnostic imaging facilities essential to time critical medical assessment in the event of accident or medical emergency.

THIS IS WHY WE SEEK:

Funding for a feasibility study to assess the costs and benefits of providing a CAT Scan Service within the existing Southern Queensland Rural Health partnership and delivery model of care.



Stepping Up to the Digital Connectivity Challenge

Improved digital infrastructure is fundamental to encouraging entrepreneurial opportunities (through remote working) and the ability of regional businesses to compete domestically and internationally. Improved digital infrastructure has never been so important, both economically and socially in helping remote and regional communities recover and capitalise on the opportunities in a post COVID-19 world.

Recognising these opportunities, SWLGA has been proactive in seeking solutions to provide high-speed, reliable digital connectivity outcomes for our communities as evidenced by the following projects which have been supported under the Building our Regions Program.

1. Balonne Shire Digital Connectivity Project: \$1,657,100 (\$1 million BoR, \$54,600 council, \$602,500 industry – five construction jobs)
2. Murweh Shire Digital Connectivity Project: \$1,459,925 (\$937,250 BoR, \$522,675 industry – five construction jobs)
3. Bulloo Region Digital Connectivity Project: \$778,500 (\$250,000 BoR, \$250,000 council, \$278,500 industry – three construction jobs)
4. Paroo Shire Digital Connectivity Project: \$1,650,900 (\$1 million BoR, \$650,900 industry – five construction jobs)
5. Surat Digital Connectivity Project: \$932,800 (\$275,000 BoR, \$275,000 council, \$382,800 industry – three construction jobs).

THIS IS WHY WE SEEK:

Increased and sustained investment in existing funding programs such as Building our Regions, or a dedicated funding program for telecommunications / digital connectivity projects in South West Queensland communities.



3

Create thriving eco-systems and business opportunities through quality land, water and waste management practices

The South West is characterised by distinctive bio-regions and natural landscapes that underpin the region's prosperity through rural production, tourism, as well as recreational, social and cultural activities. Like many regions, South West Queensland confronts various challenges associated with the:

- proliferation of weed species and pests such as feral pigs, wild dogs, cats, foxes and goats;
- the security and sustainability of critical water resources such as the Great Artesian Basin as well as the Murray Darling and Lake Eyre Basins; and
- management of waste materials and opportunities for beneficial re-use.

This is why we seek:

- 3.1 Increased and sustained funding for exclusion fencing projects, including the opportunity for all councils in the South West to be supported over the life of the Program. This will support our agricultural industry, create jobs and boost regional income.**
- 3.2 \$2 million additional funding per annum over four years to support the vital work of Southern Queensland Landscapes in supporting resilient, sustainable and profitable land management practices.**
- 3.3 The continuation of the Interim Great Artesian Basin Infrastructure Investment Program (IGABIIP), or similar, irrespective of ongoing funding support from the Australian Government.**
- 3.4 Discontinuation of 'pristine rivers' regulation as part of the Lake Eyre Basin Plan given the potential negative impacts on the agricultural and resources industries in South West Queensland.**
- 3.5 Funding for a feasibility study to assess the costs and benefits of acquiring a tyre shredder and / or the potential of establishing a tyre re-cycling service across South West Queensland in order to deal with the continued problem of illegal dumping and / or stockpiling of tyres.**

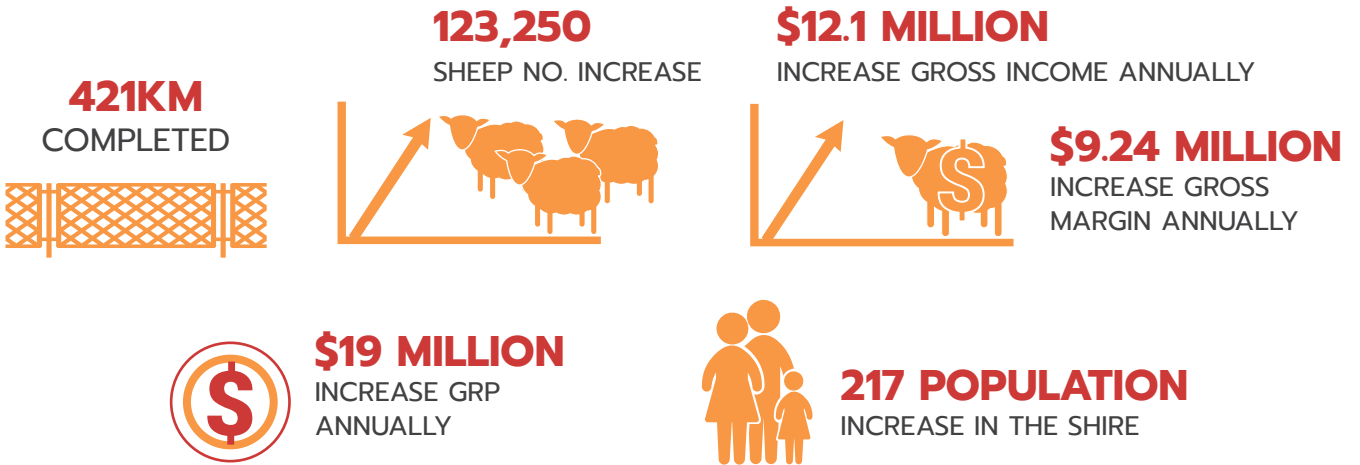


SPOTLIGHT

Exclusion Fencing creating confidence, growth and jobs

With a wild dog population that was out of control, the Balonne Shire's agricultural output declined by more than 50 per cent from 2001 to 2019.

In response, in late 2019, Council adopted a Special Rate Scheme to rebuild the Shire's economic diversity and improve producer resilience. Preliminary analysis from Hall Chadwick accountants reveals that the Scheme is already paying big dividends, not just for Balonne, but also for the broader region as follows:



These nominal figures are based on landholders matching funding with in-kind fence construction. It is estimated that within two years, the Special Rate Scheme, coupled with grant funding and private investment, could see 75 per cent of the Balonne Shire fenced - more than any other Shire in Queensland.

This key economic initiative will improve productivity, profitability and stability to create a more drought-resistant agricultural sector and rebuild the social fabric of Balonne and its neighbouring communities.

THIS IS WHY WE SEEK:

Increased and sustained funding for exclusion fencing projects, including the opportunity for all councils in the South West to be supported over the life of the Program. This will support our agricultural industry, create jobs and boost regional income.

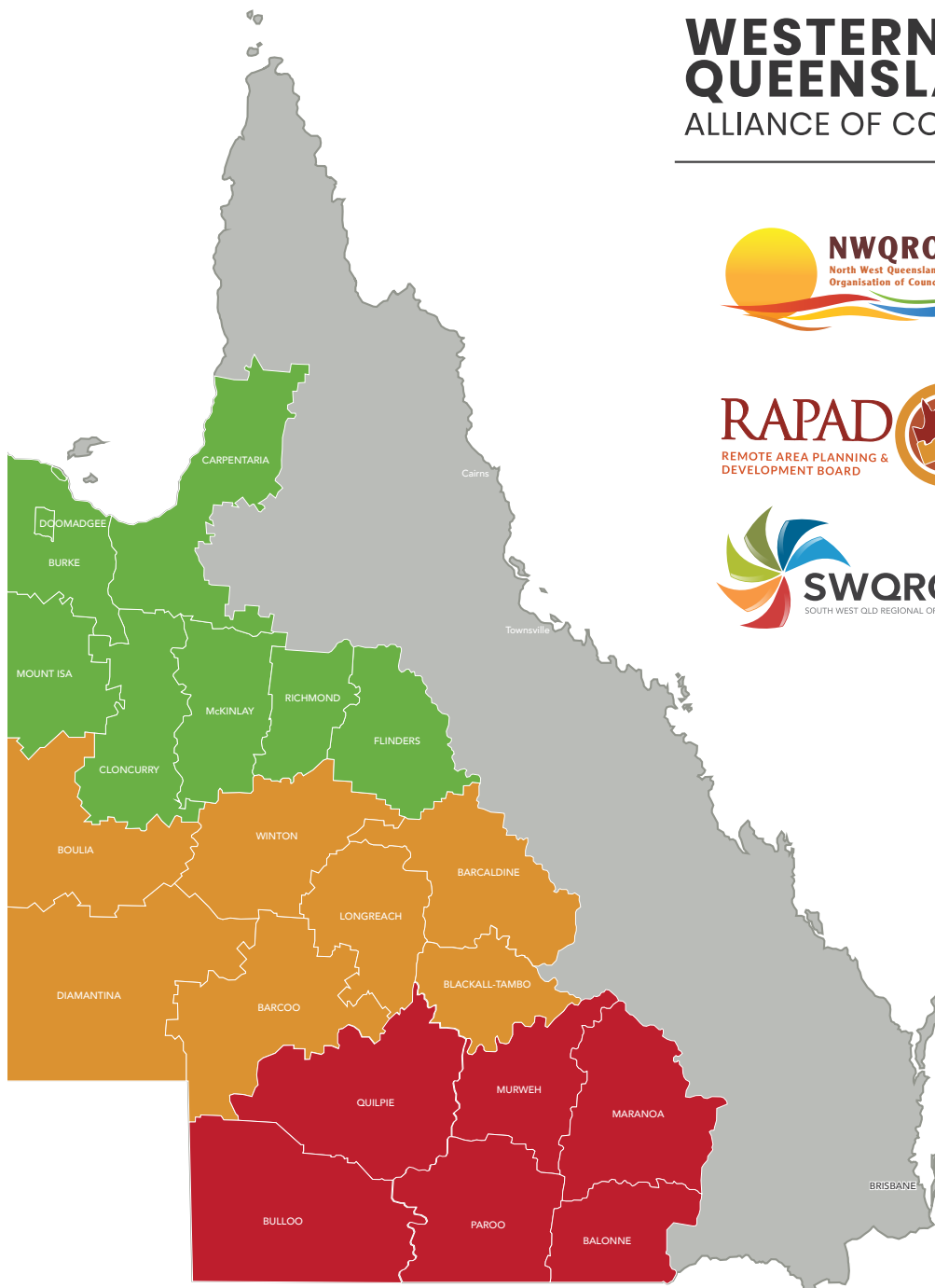
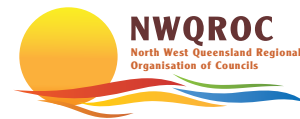


Our commitment to Western Queensland and the State goes beyond our local boundaries.

The SWLGA forms part of the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, which collectively with the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board aims to draw attention to the challenges, opportunities and contribution that Western Queensland makes to the State and Australia.

The SWLGA supports the issues highlighted in the *2020 State Election Platform* for the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils: <<https://wqac.com.au/s/WQAC-2020-State-Election-priorities.pdf>>.

WESTERN QUEENSLAND ALLIANCE OF COUNCILS





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