10 Economic Development

10.1 Industry Planning

Structures and mechanisms for economic planning in the region are evolving. Many agencies and organisations play a role in, or influence, the planning for and delivery of economic development services and incentives. As a result there is some overlap, confusion of roles, underdevelopment of policies and lack of understanding of effective economic development tools. The emergence of regional planning mechanisms provides opportunities for greater collaboration and coordination, improved clarity in roles, better understanding of spheres of operation and increased effectiveness in planning, funding and supporting economic development.

Objective: To achieve effective planning and delivery of economic development in the region, to clarify and make more effective the roles and influences of bodies involved in economic development and to reduce overlaps and inefficiencies between them.

Policy Principle

10.1.1 Planning and delivery of funding for, and services in support of, economic development requires clarification of the three levels - the region, the four sub-regions and the local level at which planning and delivery are appropriate. Identification and clarity are also needed regarding the roles and levels of the many bodies involved; particularly those in planning and in delivery.

Policy Actions

a Ensure that all plans that impact on economic development, including plans at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, incorporate economic and employment objectives, and implementation criteria.

b Ensure that the principles of sustainable economic, social, cultural development and natural resource management are respected in all economic development planning.

c Use the Regional Plan, associated Regional Economic Development Plans and sub-regional and local action plans to guide the planning, infrastructure provision and implementation activities of governments and industry groups in pursuing economic development opportunities.

d Establish a regional economic development working group (WBBSEDAG) incorporating regional and sub-regional bodies and local government officers involved in economic development, to promote improved collaboration in planning and implementation through:
  • information sharing;
  • consultation;
  • joint planning initiatives, deputations, funding submissions, etc;
  • resource sharing; and
  • engagement strategies through the development of joint economic development projects.

Lead Agency
Collaborating agency
DSD, DPI&F
Local Government
Other State Agencies

RSWEDCAG

WBBROC, WBBSEDAG

WBBACC, Other State Agencies

DSD
RMCN, WBBROC, WBBSEDAG

Local Government
Other State Agencies
### Policy Actions

| e | Identify and promote opportunities for industry development centred on major facilities or established industries in the region including, but not limited to, the Port of Bundaberg, the Maryborough Marine Precinct, Paradise Dam, the Bundaberg Industrial Park, the aviation industries in Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Kingaroy, and also developing nodes for value-adding processing and manufacturing for timber and foods. |
| f | Encourage accelerated employment generating activity in the major urban centres by giving them priority in programs for government services, facilities and infrastructure provision. |
| g | Encourage stronger emphasis on the growth of existing businesses. |
| h | Identify and clarify the roles of the key government and non-government bodies which make decisions affecting, influencing or supporting the planning and delivery of economic development services at the regional, sub-regional and local levels. |
| i | Identify, clarify and coordinate those economic development roles which involve:  
|  | • researching, planning and funding economic development; and  
|  | • funding and delivering economic development support and services. |
| j | At the peak regional planning level, use all available methods to achieve consistency and coordination of sub-regional and local economic development strategies and services including information, consultation, joint planning, reviews and funding decisions. |
| k | Investigate the feasibility of establishing and resourcing an Office of Economic Development to provide a single focus for the facilitation and coordination of major economic projects at the regional level. |
| l | Actively seek to promote investment in industry development from both local and external investors. |
| m | Undertake an Economic Futures study to identify existing industries, potential industries and business opportunities arising from the proposed development of the Traveston Crossing Dam. |
| n | Undertake a Food and Fibres planning project to consider economic opportunities that may emerge from the development of the Traveston Crossing Dam. |
| o | Ensure that adverse social and economic impacts from other major infrastructure proposals are mitigated by undertaking studies that identify opportunities for existing industries, potential industries, and other business opportunities arising from the proposed development; and implementing recommendations of those studies. |
10.2 Engagement of the Business Sector in Economic Development

Effective planning and delivery in support of economic development requires significant improvement in cooperation, information sharing, understanding and engagement across the whole Wide Bay Burnett business community.

Objective: To achieve effective engagement of the broader economic community in understanding of, and support for, economic development strategies and the roles and relationships of the various bodies involved in planning and implementing economic development strategies and actions.

Policy Principle

10.2.1 Enhanced information dissemination, consultation and joint strategic planning is essential to the successful development of economic development initiatives throughout the region; at the regional, sub-regional and local levels.

Policy Actions

a. Develop mechanisms for more thorough consultation, dissemination of information, and enhanced understanding of the Regional Plan throughout the region’s economic community.

b. Support economic development forums and peak business/association forums throughout the four sub-regions that:
   • involve regional and business leaders;
   • are accessible in terms of location, cost, and schedules; and
   • have a topical and relevant outcome focus for businesses and industry sectors.

c. Establish an annual Regional Economic Development Forum involving regional business and industry leaders.

d. Develop a communication plan which includes actively engaging the regional media in presenting positive news and in promoting understanding within the media of the role it plays in encouraging regional economic development.

e. Develop economic analyses for each sub-region of the economic enablers and disablers within those sub-regions, and the gaps that should be focused on in business development activities.

f. Identify, engage and encourage greater effectiveness in policy input and strategy implementation by industry peak bodies.
10.3 Growing Exports and Regional Product Identity

Increased exports are vital to economic development, both directly in terms of cash flow and increased employment, and indirectly in terms of flow-on effects of employment and growth in industries supplying to or servicing exporting businesses. Agricultural products remain the region’s biggest export earners and there are opportunities to further develop exports from some of these industries. Export markets for the region begin at its boundaries, with considerable opportunities in the immediate South East Queensland region. There are strong areas for potential growth. The region lacks identity and is under-recognised externally. A focused effort to identify comparative advantages, identify industries or activities with market potential, then coordinate information and other support services and funding will create additional economic activity.

Objectives: (1) To broaden the economic base and provide increased employment opportunities through industry growth achieved by further developing existing industries or businesses which export from the region and encouraging new industries or businesses with potential for growth through exporting from the region.

(2) To support the creation of a regional identity which will assist the promotion of the region externally for tourism, investment attraction and export purposes, and provide reference for internal cohesiveness.

Policy Principle

10.3.1 Encourage industry development through growth of exports from the region by identified industries or businesses that already export or which have the potential to do so.

Policy Actions

a Identify and foster industries oriented towards export of the region’s products to domestic and overseas markets through dedicated development services.

b Investigate and promote opportunities for value-adding and downstream processing in existing industries.

c Investigate and promote opportunities for value-adding and downstream processing and manufacturing in industries where strategic gaps exist.

d Investigate and promote opportunities for development of knowledge industries and sustainable technologies industries.

e Investigate and promote opportunities for industry-specific networks of producers and related and support industries in activities such as engineering, aviation, aquaculture, wine and organic foods.

f Promote the attractiveness of the region to industries that offer non-seasonal or counter-seasonal employment to balance the existing high proportion of seasonal jobs in the region.
Policy Principle

10.3.2 Encourage industry development by growing exports through creation and promotion of focused branding of the region.

Policy Actions

a. Develop a widely accepted regional ‘brand’ that identifies the region and can be used in the cooperative promotion of the region by manufacturers, food producers and tourism bodies and operators.

b. Develop a strategy to promote use of regional branding by sub-regional organisations, local governments, businesses and industry bodies.

c. Assist key sub-regional tourism and industry bodies to cooperate in preparing plans for brand development, in order to integrate and strengthen sub-regional and local branding within the overall regional branding.

d. Promote the use of the regional branding as a tool for attraction of investment.

e. Support the development and enhancement of tourism initiatives that reflect a unique regional or local identity, icon, character or theme.

Lead Agency
Collaborating agency

WBBROC, DSD

WBBROC

DSD, WBBROC, RTOs

WBBROC, DSD
Local Government, WBBSEDAG

DSD, RTOs
Local Government

10.4 Tourism

Tourism is a significant driver for growth throughout the region. Tourism involves a complex set of activities and providers, and an equally complex consumer demand. While the general image of tourism in the region centres on the key beach and island-related activities, tourism is now expanding throughout the whole of the region, particularly in the caravan and camping sector, inland impoundment recreational fishing opportunities, cuisine experiences and as a result of regional airport expansions. This is impacting on all local government areas and influencing the economies and development patterns of areas which have, until recent years, seen declining populations. Drivers for tourism relate significantly to consumer opportunity and disposable income; consumers are often well informed and respond to effective marketing and packaging. Many of the natural tourism advantages of the region are under-developed, under-packaged and under-promoted. Small operators typify much of the region's tourism operations, yet the continued growth of the industry depends on a high profile regional and sub-regional identity and effective promotion and marketing.
Objective: To effectively capitalise on the region's natural advantages and current trends and patterns in tourism, in order to promote a sustainable, prosperous tourism industry through enhancing viability, innovation, efficiency and market awareness.

Policy Principle

10.4.1 Having regard to the long-term preservation of the region's key natural assets, identify opportunities in tourism which builds on the region's natural advantages, promotes cooperation in tourism packaging and branding, while supporting the most cost-effective application of marketing and promotional funds.

Policy Actions

a  Utilising demographic trend studies, develop sub-regional plans to identify competitive advantages for developing new tourist sectors. Plans should:
   • clearly identify management and implementation processes;
   • focus on more routine, on-ground opportunities as well as ‘headline’ projects;
   • incorporate sustainability principles;
   • identify options for cross-regional collaboration; and
   • acknowledge and respect the priorities of Traditional Owners.

b  Assist in the development and promotion of a range of niche tourism products including ecologically sustainable, nature-based and cultural tourism activities (such as recreational fishing) to broaden the tourism industry beyond its traditional retiree and family-based domestic tourism market.

c  Ensure preparation and implementation of management plans in accordance with ecologically sustainable principles for identified nature-based and cultural tourism features in the region.

d  Promote availability of funding under a range of government programs to:
   • identify key skills and knowledge requirements;
   • apply employment and training opportunities to achieve sustainable environmental management; and
   • enable access to the region’s nature-based and Indigenous tourism features.

e  Encourage the development of international standard accommodation hotels in each of the regional centres and develop suitable facilities of various sizes in the district and local centres.

f  Identify and protect scenic landscapes and natural assets considered necessary for the preservation of rural character.
10.5 Inwards Migration

A significant driver for growth throughout the region is the aggregation of patterns of migration to and within the region. These changes provide significant opportunities for further economic growth yet many are not well understood; planning in response to them tends to be under-informed and reactive. While business activities associated with many of these changes will largely flow as market-driven outcomes, there is a need for improved understanding of the dynamics of these changes. This will support identification of impediments and opportunities (other than market-driven opportunities) to improve planning and delivery of services to support these changes. The region should also be developing strategies to attract skilled migrants from a range of demographic and cultural sectors.

**Objective:**

To effectively plan for and capitalise on current demographic trends and patterns of inwards migration to the region.

**Policy Principle**

10.5.1 Having regard for the long-term preservation of the region’s key assets such as balanced settlement patterns and renewable resources; evaluate the impact of new population movements and demographic patterns at the local and sub-regional levels, identify opportunities and constraints generated by these drivers, encourage the development of planning strategies to address constraints, and to access economic development opportunities.

**Policy Actions**

a. With reference to studies outlining threats to regional and sub-regional economic performance due to demographic changes, prepare and implement a high level action plan which targets:
   - increasing inwards migration of skilled personnel (global knowledge workers) from elsewhere in Australia and overseas; and
   - slowing the rate of ageing through attraction of families.

b. Consult at the sub-regional and local levels to assess the impacts of predicted changes in population on infrastructure, service and supply industries, and then identify factors that limit or impede expected growth.

c. Prepare plans and expedite actions to address constraints that limit or impede expected economic growth.

d. Identify methods, including the ‘Regional Portal’ project and other means, to:
   - improve information dissemination about the ‘lifestyle’ benefits of the region to prospective new residents and retirees;
   - assist in the smooth integration of new settlers into established communities;
   - improve awareness of, and access to, community services and businesses;
   - improve identification of migrants needs and aspirations - to inform planning, service delivery and business opportunities; and
   - develop a regional ‘Skills Database’ that encourages migrants entering the region to register their skills.

e. Promote the development of businesses that provide quality services to the region’s growing population including ageing population, and ‘sea-change’ and ‘tree-change’ migration.
10.6 Cultural, Creative and Lifestyle Industries

Cultural, creative and lifestyle industries are emerging as strong economic drivers throughout the region, that often relate to the individual characteristics of sub-regions and local areas. These emerging trends are strongly related to tourism, inwards migration and retirement. There are significant opportunities for further economic growth in these sectors. Business growth in many of these industries will largely flow as market-driven outcomes; however, there is positive value in identifying opportunities and improving planning and delivery of services to support these opportunities.

Objective: To effectively capitalise on current and projected future trends and patterns in cultural, creative and lifestyle industries in the region.

Policy Principle

10.6.1 Identify, promote and support opportunities relating to the creative, cultural and lifestyle industries.

Policy Actions

a. Encourage plans at the sub-regional and local levels to identify and develop:
   - opportunities for creative, cultural and lifestyle business growth, placing particular emphasis on the engagement of young people; and
   - synergies between lifestyle and tourism related opportunities.

b. Promote availability of funding under a range of government programs to increase employment and training opportunities in creative, cultural and lifestyle industries.

c. Encourage the development of plans to optimise identified synergies between lifestyle and tourism related opportunities.

d. Promote the development of businesses that provide quality services to the region’s growing creative and cultural industries.

e. Promote the development of creative industries including knowledge industries and sustainable technologies development.
Common themes emerging from consultation across the region highlight the need for enhanced and targeted skills training. Mismatches seem to abound between training providers and businesses, with lack of openness and consultation on both sides. Compared with training unemployed people, there has been an under-emphasis in resources for training directed at business and industry needs; the balance can be redressed in a way that serves both, through concerted consultation and planning. A related skills issue is the relatively low adoption of technology; information about better use of technology needs to be promoted, encouraged and supported by access to relevant training.

**Objective:** To achieve adequate matching of existing skills, supply and demand, and new skills formation to meet the labour requirements of present and potential industries, to improve focus on areas of specific need such as trade training, training of unemployed youth and retraining of older workers, and to promote awareness and take-up of training in new technologies.

**Policy Principle**

**10.7.1** Growth in the supply of skilled labour should be encouraged by extended and meaningful consultation to better match the skills of the labour force with employment opportunities through the region and to better match the provision of skills development and training with the requirements and standards of existing and potential industries.

**Policy Actions**

a. Maximise the region’s potential for economic growth in the agricultural and aquacultural sector by supporting continued agricultural research and development, including long-term sustainability.

b. Encourage development of industries focussed on sustainable science- and technology-based products and services.

c. Encourage skills-based new industries, value-adding opportunities and the expansion of existing industries, particularly emphasising the need to promote a culture of innovation.

d. Encourage training and skills development in technology, creative, cultural and lifestyle industries.

e. Promote participation in the range of industry-specific apprenticeship and traineeship programs; improve alignment of apprenticeship and traineeship programs with current and future industry skilled labour demand.

f. Improve links between local industry and training providers to:
   - target skill shortages;
   - create a job-ready workforce;
   - improve employers’ understanding of available skills in the workforce; and
   - improve providers’ matching of offerings to requirements of industries.
Policy Actions

g  Promote improved business management, technology adoption, entrepreneurial and marketing skills, particularly within the business and agriculture sectors through a variety of means including the provision of information, training workshops, technology updates and the creation of networks and clusters between like businesses.

h  Strengthen and enhance channels that disseminate quality information on current best business practice and business improvement techniques and technologies, and that promote the benefits of business skills enhancement.

i  Assist in ensuring adequate funding for a network of business extension services in the region.

j  Consult with local government and others on infrastructure-related impediments to matching labour supply and demand, and assist in developing initiatives to resolve these impediments.

k  Promote continued responsiveness of the training and business sector to emerging industry opportunities, and the need to continuously update skills and knowledge.
10.8 Infrastructure for Economic Development

Infrastructure inadequacies are widely seen as impeding economic growth. As well as region-wide inadequacies, particular problems affect the North and South Inland sub-regions and inland-coast connections. Particular 'hard' infrastructure shortcomings arise through road and rail transport, water supply and electricity supply and reliability. Particular 'soft' infrastructure shortcomings arise through access to and reliability of information and communication technology services, information about local and regional businesses and lack of clarity in purpose, planning and delivery of economic development support and services.

Objective: To maximise and facilitate economic growth and investment activities through the coordinated planning, funding and provision of key 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure.

Policy Principle

10.8.1 Regional and sub-regional partnerships, coordinated planning policies and collaborative funding partnerships should be used to optimise transport, water and energy infrastructure initiatives that support the most effective regional economic development strategies.

Policy Actions

a. Having regard to the ‘Settlement Pattern’ and ‘Environmental Value Protection’ sections, facilitate the location of major employment generating industries in and adjacent to the major urban centres and in other locations where there is clearly a benefit for the industry to locate in close proximity.

b. Recognise and support the development of Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gympie and Kingaroy as major business and service centres, consistent with the ‘Regional Settlement Pattern’ section. Also recognise that other smaller centres in the region play a key role as community centres providing services such as business administration, health, etc.

c. Encourage economic activity in rural centres to provide goods, facilities, services and employment, minimising the need to source from or commute to major centres.

d. With reference to the ‘Infrastructure Services’, ‘Natural Economic Resources’ and ‘Water Resources’ sections, identify and preserve future land requirements and infrastructure needs for industrial activities. Coordinate industrial estate planning and development amongst local governments and facilitate planning for timely investment in industrial land.

e. With reference to the ‘Regional Water Supply’ section, identify and plan for sufficient water storage and supply infrastructure to service the requirements of agriculture and industry while preserving long-term ecological health and functioning of aquatic ecosystems and with reference to the principles nominated in the Water Resource Plans and the recommendations of a Regional Water Supply Strategy.

f. Having regard to the ‘Settlement Pattern’ and to ‘Environmental Values Protection’, ‘Transport’ and ‘Infrastructure Planning’ sections, support the review and expansion of the Integrated Transport Plan for the region; ensure linkages between major transport networks are developed to provide efficient transport systems to facilitate export development and to link rural areas with coastal transport networks.
### Policy Principle

**10.8.2** Encourage regional partnerships with local government and the business sector to optimise the extension of 'soft' infrastructure services throughout the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Principle</th>
<th>Policy Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Actions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lead Agency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g Preserve land in the vicinity of major transport interchanges for future industrial activities.</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h Identify potential industrial land to cater for heavy industry users and incorporate into regional strategies and local government planning schemes.</td>
<td>Local Government, DSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>g</th>
<th>Local Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Local Government, DSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>Plan and facilitate a progressive roll-out of broadband services throughout the region.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Support the planning, development and promotion of awareness and use of a well-maintained and accessible system of information on the detailed capability and offerings of government service providers, business development support networks and individual businesses throughout the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Coordinate development of existing businesses and business attraction activities throughout the region with particular emphasis on the different sets of activities appropriate to the regional, sub-regional and local levels of engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Promote better understandings of the role that the availability of soft infrastructure services such as appropriate housing, schools, medical services, aged care and child care play in attraction and retention of staff for business, industry and government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Promote improved linkages between Universities' and TAFEs' research capabilities and other services to business and industry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>WBBROC, WBBSEDAG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>WBBROC, DSD, WBBSEDAG, WBBACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>DSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>WBBROC, WBBHSN, WBBACC, WBBSEDAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>DSD, DETA, Local Government, WBBACC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.9 Industry Sector Development and Enhancement

Many opportunities for growth and sustainability are provided through industry and business development and enhancement. Successful examples are already in place, have been commenced, or are under further development. Sector development and enhancement can take a variety of forms and includes technology adoption, business activity variation or extension, formation of operating or information networks, cooperation in marketing, supply chain development or extension, co-location and service coordination.

**Objective:** To achieve timely development and enhancement of industries and, through such development, achieve more sustainable agricultural, manufacturing and service industries, increased efficiencies and greater employment.

**Policy Principle**

10.9.1 Opportunities for development and enhancement appropriate to industry sectors need to be identified, selected, and supported at the local, sub-regional and regional levels.

**Policy Actions**

- **a** Where appropriate, and in consultation with peak industry bodies, actively support and contribute to local research throughout the region to identify industries, businesses and supply chains that should be encouraged for redevelopment and enhancement.

- **b** Assist in the development of a strong, sustainable and diversified agricultural sector that builds on and extends the region’s existing range of agricultural products, while ensuring long term ecological sustainability of resources.

- **c** Assist in the development of a strong, sustainable and diversified aquaculture sector that builds upon and extends the region’s existing range of products and infrastructure.

- **d** Promote the potential of horticultural industries and other intensive agricultural pursuits in the region that may lead to a greater diversity of agricultural products while ensuring long-term ecological sustainability of resources.

- **e** Identify opportunities for value-added processing and manufacturing, and promote networks and other systems to facilitate the development of those opportunities.

- **f** Identify and promote industry and business networks and clusters that will increase economic sustainability, support freight aggregation, encourage diversification and encourage sharing of knowledge.

- **g** Identify funding sources for industry sector development and enhancement, and assist targeted industries and businesses to access support funding.