

NORTH BURNETT

Queensland, Australia



ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN 2019 - 2023

Mayor's Foreword

This may be a region that, on the scale of other Council areas, does not have a large voting population however, astute governments understand the role of outer regional areas such as ours in the national economy. We are ready to work together with both State and Commonwealth governments along with our businesses, industry and community to deliver on a prosperous future.

Outer regional areas continue to be the cornerstone of the nation's economy. These primary producing areas have allowed growth in employment in areas such as food manufacturing, processing, distribution and retail and have led the way in export over many years. While agriculture contributes around 3% of GDP, this is not the result of any reduction in output (quite the opposite exists) but rather to the growth in manufacturing and the service-based sectors of the economy, many of which would not be able to grow without us. Not only are agricultural regions a significant part of the economy, we are also a significant part of every Australian's life. If we, and others like us, cease to exist, so does 93% of Australians' daily domestic food supply.

The North Burnett currently generates a total of **\$644M GRP, and is situated 250km from 3 international airports and 3 international sea ports and have arable soil and a water strategy in place to see the region's growth through many generations. It is also home to almost 1700 small businesses and has an emerging mining sector.** In order to best capitalise on these opportunities for a lifetime, we need to combine our efforts into achieving the outcomes listed within the timeframe of this plan.

We have the **5th** largest road network in QLD (excluding Brisbane) and the **12th** largest in Australia! With less than 7000 ratepayers, we also have one of the smallest rate payer ratios for the rate of road network. It is vital in our agricultural sector that paddock to plate timeframes meet customer expectations, meaning a safe and efficient road network which caters to the users of this infrastructure must be on our list of priorities and we are sure it's on your list too.

We seek for our telecommunications to be developed to a standard which will mean our highways around the region have connectivity. An expansion of coverage in our area would result in increased safety for our travellers and assist local industry.

The North Burnett Regional Council is aligned with both the ALGA and LGAQ's push to repair Federal Assistance Grants to **1%**. This would be a game changer. This extra funding would allow council to make considered decisions, maintain our assets to a safe standard and plan for the long term. It would significantly boost employment, liveability and industry right across the region. In the day of "you can't please everyone", with this one change, you could.

It's true – our votes may not matter in the grand scheme of things (except where elections are won by less than 7000 of them...), but it would be a mistake to forget about the North Burnett and how it contributes to Australian industries and the world's food security now and into the future.

As humans, we can go without many things, food isn't one of them.

Rachel Chambers



Repair Federal Funding to Local Government

The 2018/19 Federal Assistance Grants has seen a \$155,000 reduction since 2017/18. For our small community, this loss equates to a 2% rate rise in order to make up the shortfall. A restoration of the 1% of Commonwealth Taxation revenue would result in an increase of \$9.2m per annum invested into our community. As an example as to how this money would be spent, this year the funding would be utilised for the \$3.4m shortfall to maintain our road network at our current intervention levels (not even talking of improving the levels) and \$5.2m to replace or repair 15 bridges within the Region. The Government would be recognised for improving community road safety, employment and providing opportunities for regional economic growth. This money would not be wasted! In fact, by administering the money directly to local government many efficiencies are gained. Council also seeks the reinstatement of NDRRA funding for Water and Sewerage Assets damaged during flooding events.

The North Burnett Regional Council supports the ALGA and LGAQ's call for Federal Assistance Grants to be restored to 1% of Commonwealth Revenue.



Mobile Phone Coverage

When asked, our community ranked improved mobile phone coverage as a 10/10 priority. The main reasons cited were improving community safety and regional economic growth.

Council seeks a commitment by the Commonwealth government to co-fund a solution for 7 critical areas along our highways within the first year of term and a further 5 critical areas during the term of government.



Transport

NBRC has the 5th largest road network in Queensland (excluding Brisbane). Public transport is limited to a twice weekly bus service to Bundaberg and once a week service to Maryborough. Intra-region medical, sporting and social facilities are limited thereby increasing the need to travel by road for long distances in order to receive a standard of care many take for granted in Australia. The North Burnett Region needs the support of the Federal Government through funding programs like the R2R and Bridge Replacement programs to ensure that our roads are safe for all to travel on. The recently announced R2R funding resulted in a loss to the North Burnett of \$188,571 (from the last program), equating to more than a 2% rate rise. Council fully supports the Government's objectives of reducing the road toll in Australia – and we also understand that Australians have the same expectation of a safe and efficient road network regardless of who the road manager may be (and in many cases they have no idea which one of the three levels of government are responsible). Together we (Commonwealth and Local), along with the State have an obligation to all work together to achieve a safer network, fit for purpose across our nation.

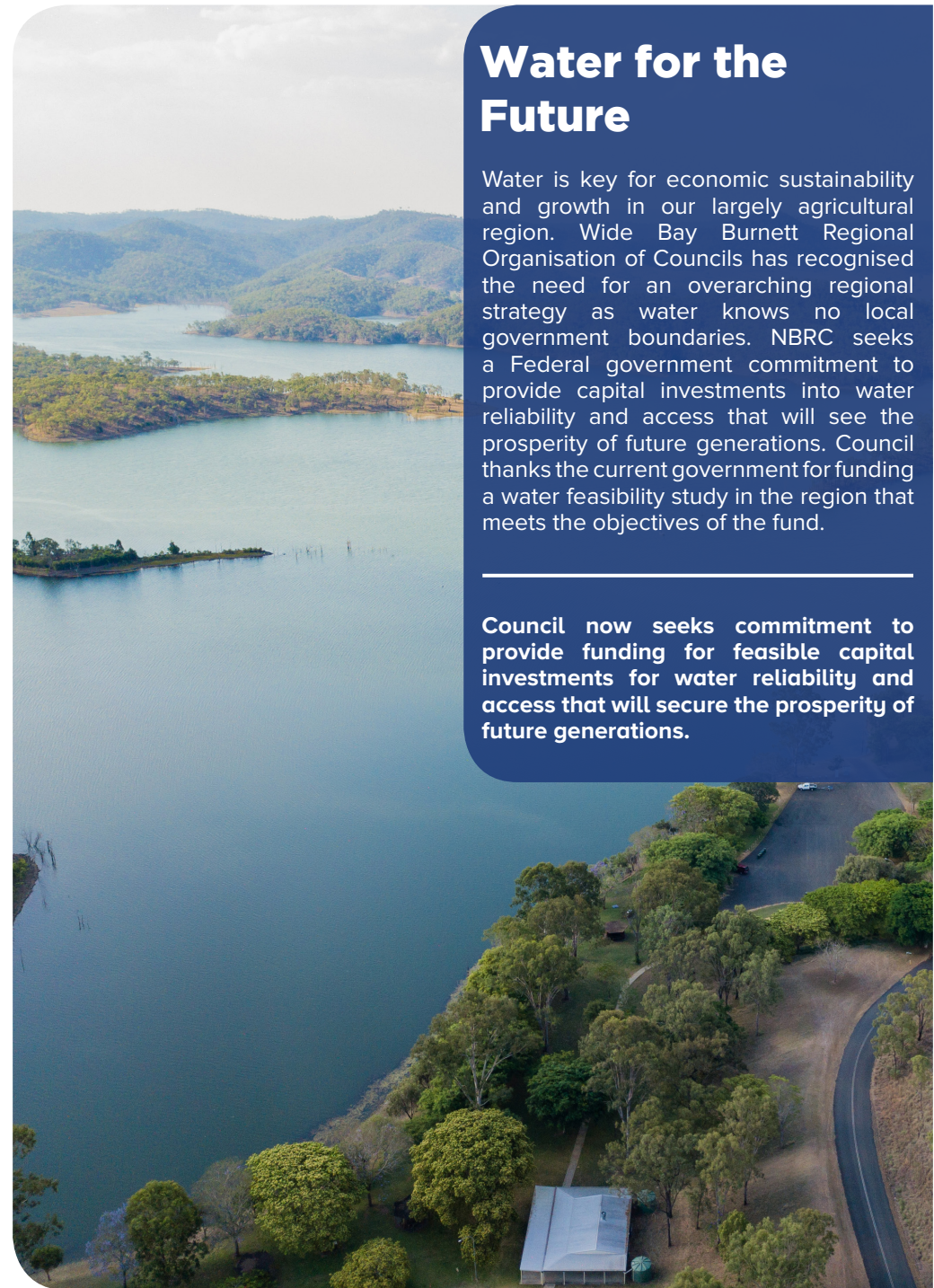
Council supports ALGA's request to increase funding in these areas and to establish a Fund for Higher Productivity Investment Plan to support the North Burnett commitment to first and last mile projects.



Water for the Future

Water is key for economic sustainability and growth in our largely agricultural region. Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils has recognised the need for an overarching regional strategy as water knows no local government boundaries. NBRC seeks a Federal government commitment to provide capital investments into water reliability and access that will see the prosperity of future generations. Council thanks the current government for funding a water feasibility study in the region that meets the objectives of the fund.

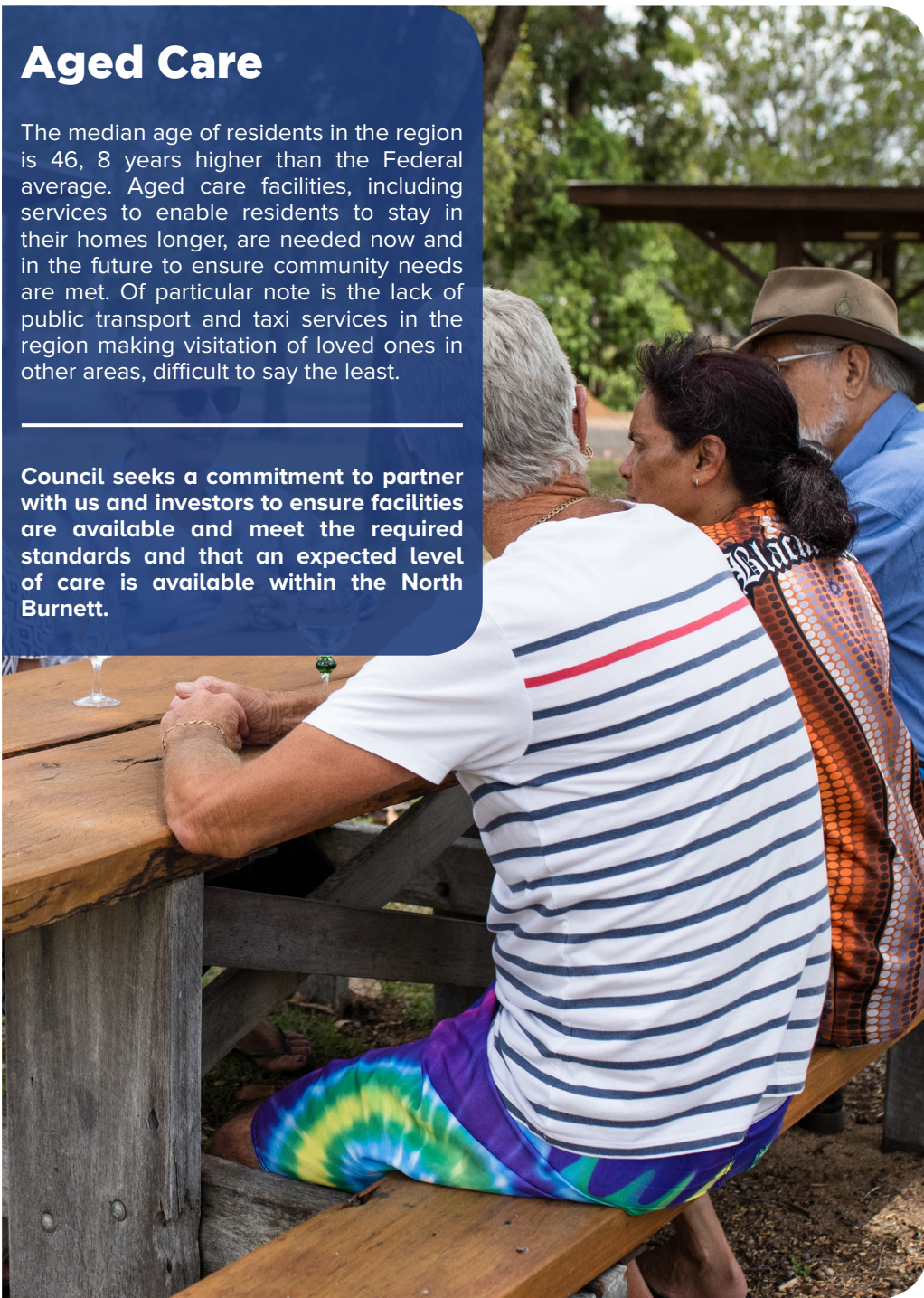
Council now seeks commitment to provide funding for feasible capital investments for water reliability and access that will secure the prosperity of future generations.



Aged Care

The median age of residents in the region is 46, 8 years higher than the Federal average. Aged care facilities, including services to enable residents to stay in their homes longer, are needed now and in the future to ensure community needs are met. Of particular note is the lack of public transport and taxi services in the region making visitation of loved ones in other areas, difficult to say the least.

Council seeks a commitment to partner with us and investors to ensure facilities are available and meet the required standards and that an expected level of care is available within the North Burnett.



Tourism

The North Burnett Region has a wealth of untold history of the First Australians. We stand aligned with the Federal Government's commitment to 'Close the Gap' by seeking funding to safeguard culturally significant sites and to educate and celebrate the significance of First Australian's history within our community.

Council seeks \$300k in the first year of the new term and ongoing funding to develop a celebration of our indigenous history at the award winning RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre and Ban Ban Springs.



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