

# NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL SUSTAINABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLAN

## "A SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL MAY NOT EQUAL A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY"

*Just over four hours drive north-west of Brisbane lies the North Burnett region covering 19,700 square kilometres of diverse Australian landscape. This picturesque countryside is home to six main townships and 25 villages and farming catchments.*

As a Local Government, it is our responsibility to deliver core community services while we also fill gaps in essential services at a grassroots level. It is a wide-ranging and holistic approach which extends far beyond the traditional view of "roads, rates, and rubbish." This is easier said than done, but this is not a Council which sticks its head in the sand. Our united and brave Council isn't afraid to get the job done and have the difficult conversations.

**The latest Queensland Audit Office Report on Local Government shows that one third of Queensland Councils are at a high risk of being financially unsustainable.**

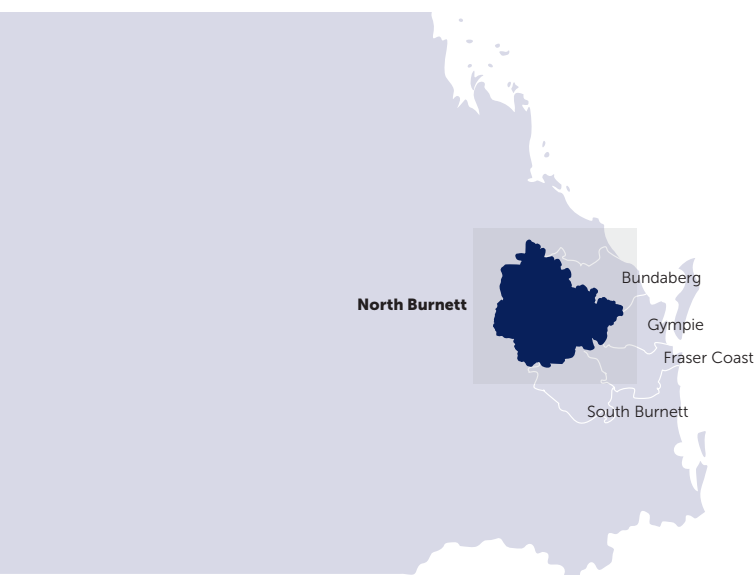
During April and May of 2020, Council embarked on a regional 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place' tour designed to educate the North Burnett community about our challenges and foster a clear understanding of the obligations and level of services we currently provide. Feedback from this tour helped us identify the community needs and establish key corporate objectives to safeguard the sustainability of our region.

The Sustainable Local Government Plan represents the basic needs of our region - roads, waste, water and waste water. The reliable delivery of these core services in a focused, efficient and effective manner will ensure our Council continues to work towards creating a prosperous future.

We have a long and proud history of development, prosperity, and resilience, facing many challenges including the tyranny of distance, drought, flood, and a low level of digital connectivity.

We are one of a handful of Councils which are falling through the cracks, with sustainability issues stemming from:

- A small, stagnant and aging population base – 10,599
- Low number of ratepayers – 6,291
- No readily available ability to generate income
- No regional centre in our area
- A lack of economies of scale
- A non-diversified industry (mainly agriculture)



# ALL ROADS LEAD NORTH A PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

*We maintain a network of 829 kilometres of sealed and 3,318 kilometres of unsealed roads within the region with a maintenance funding gap of over \$10 million.*



Backed by other levels of Government, we will continue to deliver the services our communities rely on. Not all communities are the same, and that's why we're asking for tailored support which reflects the highly unique and diverse nature of our region.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ASKS

1. Review the methodology of competitive funding model for rural/regional communities, especially the co-contribution levels.
2. Support regional Councils with investment in business cases and economic impact models to support projects that require funding.
3. Restore Financial Assistance Grants to one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to help fill the operational funding gap for Local Government.
4. Infrastructure investment needs to recognise that some communities require specific investment to address social, economic, cultural and locational disadvantages.

## STATE GOVERNMENT ASKS

1. To cost an acceptable Queensland standard of service delivery with regards to water, wastewater, roads, and waste within the next 12 months.
2. Ensure funding methodology is reviewed to ensure equitable, stable and socially just funding distribution (Grants Commission Methodology Review).
3. Infrastructure investment needs to recognise that some communities require specific investment to address social, economic, cultural and locational disadvantages.
4. Review methodology of W4Q policy objectives. The current model is based on levels of unemployment, not demonstrated need.
5. If the State wants Councils to use good asset management to drive decisions, then they need to fund good asset management planning.
6. If additional responsibilities are placed on Local Government, ensure these are funded and not just a cost- shifting exercise.
7. Work with our Council to review the implications of the Waste Levy on small regional Council's and their residents.

We're a proud Council that works hard to deliver for our local community. We look forward to the ongoing collaborations with the State and Federal Governments as we continue fulfilling this important commitment both now, and in the future.