

# My Darling Downs South West

## Actions for a stronger region

### Building stronger regions

The Queensland Government has released the *Queensland Regionalisation Strategy (QRS)* to ensure population growth is well managed and its benefits are shared across the state.

The QRS aims to encourage economic development across Queensland's regions and strengthen and diversify local economies. To do this, it identifies a range of actions to be implemented across the state.

The statewide actions are supported by a set of actions for each region. The actions contained in this document are a snapshot of projects that will support and encourage economic growth in the Darling Downs South West region and sustain its enviable lifestyle.

Together, the QRS, these regional actions and the regional plans and frameworks that encompass the area, will maximise future opportunities for the region, setting strong foundations for regional growth and development.

### Darling Downs South West region

The Darling Downs South West region has one of the fastest-growing economies in Australia. Positioned across three expanding economic zones, the region has a strong foundation in agriculture and tourism, with new expertise being developed in mining and energy. Darling Downs South West is well placed to broaden and diversify its industries, with strong links to markets in South East Queensland and overseas. Developing skills in local communities and leading innovation across all sectors will see this region remain globally competitive into the future.

Opportunities to mix work, leisure and family life in the Darling Downs South West region make it attractive to new residents.

The region's prospects for growth across its industries means that population growth is forecast to continue. The rate of projected growth for the region is 1.6 per cent each year to 2031, however non-resident workers associated with resource development will add to the local population.

Long-term priorities identified to sustain the growth of the Darling Downs South West region include:

- supporting innovation in manufacturing, agriculture and tourism
- supporting growth in the resource sector
- balancing growth with liveability
- providing training to strengthen the region's knowledge base
- linking local businesses into new supply chains
- increasing road safety and strengthening transport corridors
- working with partners to provide more housing.

Capitalising on the region's natural advantages is the key to future success:

- The Darling Downs South West region is experiencing rapid growth from the expansion of the energy and resources industry. The region holds over 20 per cent of Queensland's coal deposits and an estimated 65 per cent of Queensland's coal seam gas (CSG) reserves. There is potential for clean energy development with the abundance of solar energy and established infrastructure. Building the capability of local firms to participate in these global supply chains will be essential for the region's future.

- The region's climate, soils and available water supply support diverse and well-established agricultural production, and associated food and wine industries. Adding further value to the region's agricultural produce and increasing the industry's productivity will capitalise on the world's growing demand for high-quality food.

- Tourism is also an important part of the economy, particularly in the south west of the region. Investment in new and renewed tourism products and experiences are critical to the industry's competitiveness and also builds local amenity.



A strong and growing skills base is fundamental to realising these opportunities for Darling Downs South West. The region's tertiary sector is finding innovative solutions to upskill the workforce and address skills shortages. Working with industry to provide training pathways is vital to ensure everyone has access to the opportunities that growth brings.

Maintaining the liveability of population centres and ease of access throughout the region is an essential part of development. Finding new solutions to housing, timing the upgrade and expansion of roads and rail infrastructure and developing community amenity are all priorities for the long-term growth for Darling Downs South West.

Prosperous economies and communities rely on strong infrastructure. New opportunities in the Galilee and Surat Basins will place further importance on west-east connections as goods travel to global markets. Ease of access within the region is also a priority as both industry and the population grow.




Key actions that are included in this document support the priorities for the Darling Downs South West region.

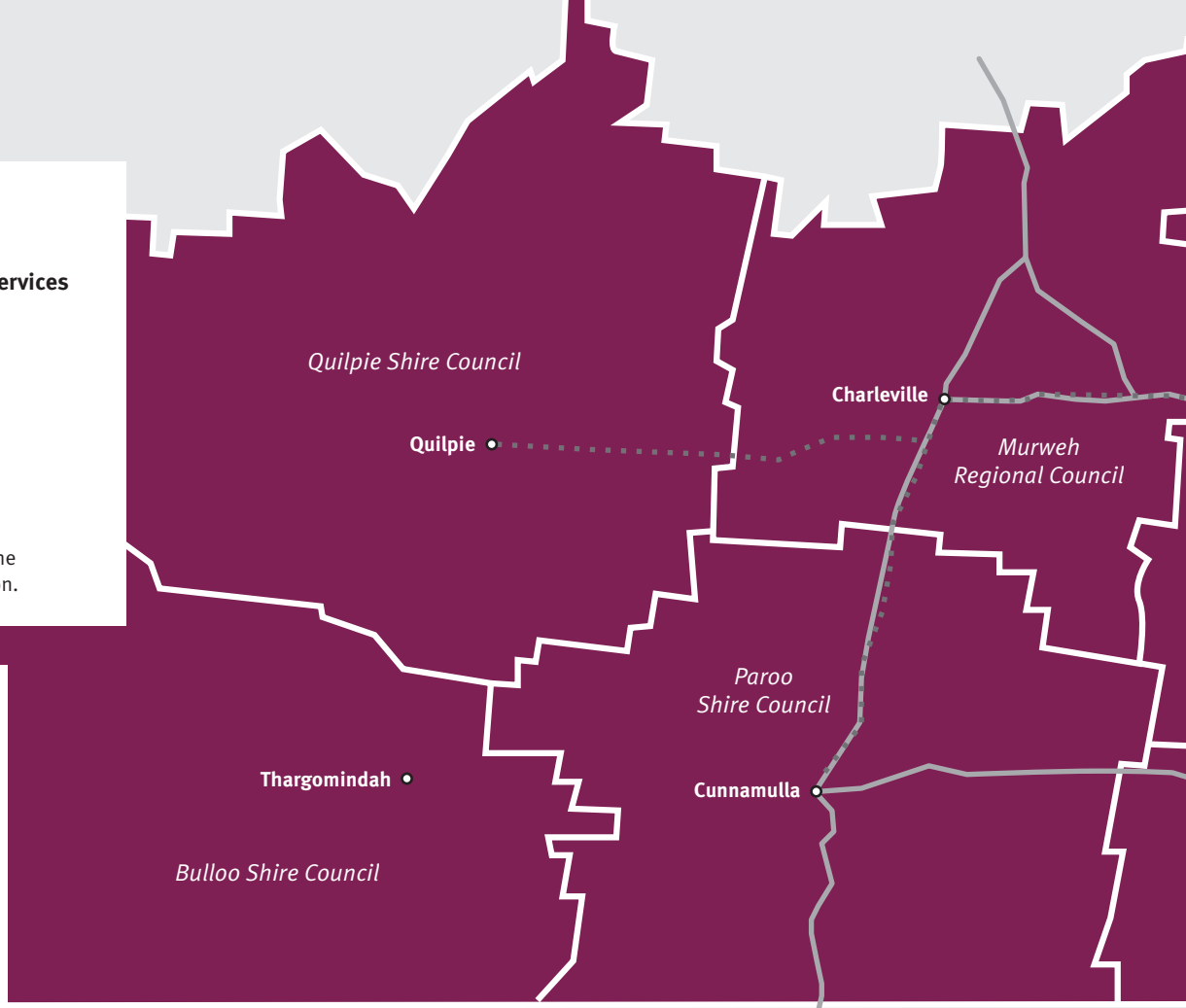
## Action categories

-  Infrastructure and services
-  People
-  Business
-  Partnerships

These icons represent some of the planned actions across the region.









## Key

-  Port
-  Airport
-  Defence Force base
-  Railway
-  Highway or road

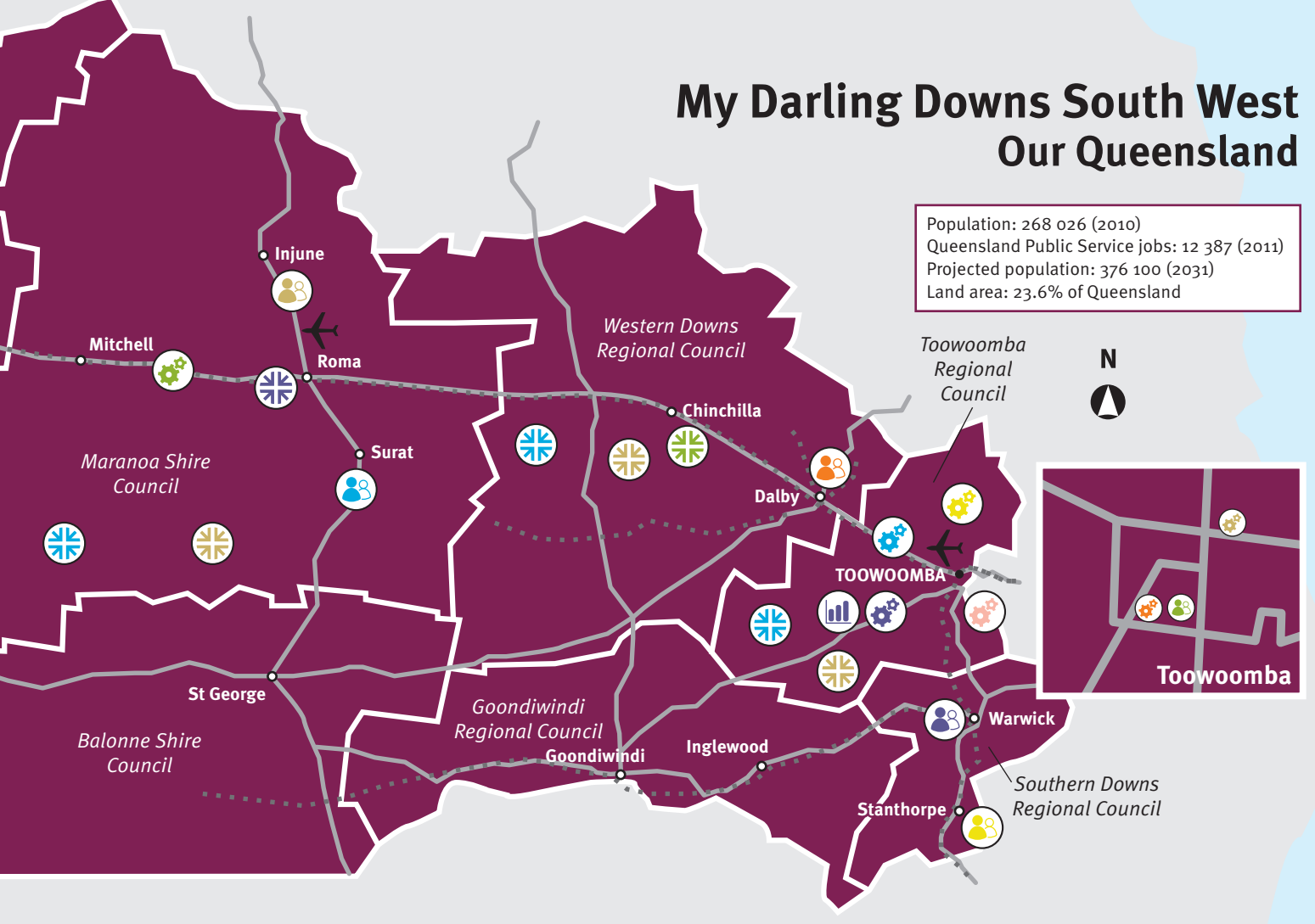


## Regional actions for Darling Downs South West






The Queensland Government in partnership with business, industry and other levels of government will deliver on the actions in this plan. **These are just some of the actions planned or underway in the region in the short, medium and long term.** To find out what other projects are happening in your region visit [www.waytogrow.qld.gov.au](http://www.waytogrow.qld.gov.au)

Action	What	Why	When	
	<b>Infrastructure and services: Ensuring regional Queensland emerges more resilient from natural disasters and anticipates future growth to improve productive capacity and sustain long-term growth.</b>			
	Ergon Energy—reinforce supply to Toowoomba	Establish a new 110 kilovolt substation at Westbrook.	Improve reliability of electricity supply to meet the demands of growing industries and population.	1–4 years
	Warrego Highway Roma to Mitchell upgrades	Upgrade roads between Mitchell and Roma, including a new bridge across the Maranoa River at Mitchell, to extend road train access from Mitchell to west of Roma.	Improve freight efficiency and road safety.	1–4 years
	Warrego Highway Toowoomba to Oakey duplication—stage 1	Upgrade a 6 km section to four lanes west of Toowoomba between Nugent Pinch Road and Charlton.	Improve freight efficiency and road safety linking Toowoomba to the developing Surat Basin Coal and Energy Province.	1–4 years
	Ergon Energy—reinforce supply at central Toowoomba	Reinforce supply at central Toowoomba zone substation.	Improve reliability of electricity supply to meet the demands of growing industries and population.	1–4 years
	New England Highway—widen sections	Widen and seal a section of the New England Highway south of Crows Nest (Munro Road to Pioneer Road).	Improve road safety, traffic flow and freight efficiency.	1–4 years
	Toowoomba urban intersection safety improvements	Minor safety improvements through Toowoomba from Kitchener Street to Ruthven Street and at the intersection of Bridge and Tor Streets.	Improve road safety and ensure the intersections operate more efficiently.	1–4 years
	Toowoomba second range crossing	Planning and construction of the Toowoomba second range crossing.	Improve system capacity, network safety and freight and commuter travel time savings.	1–10 years
Region wide action	Surat Basin road upgrades	Upgrade of key road routes including New England, Leichhardt and Carnarvon highways to support the development of the Surat Basin Coal and Energy Province.	Improve freight efficiency and road safety. Support the development of the Surat Basin Coal and Energy Province.	5–20 years

# My Darling Downs South West Our Queensland



Action	What	Why	When	
	<b>People: Promoting regional communities as centres offering residents the full range of opportunities in life through career and education, as well as the amenities that contribute to liveability.</b>			
	Warwick Hospital Dental Clinic expansion	Provide a 4-chair dental clinic to provide dentistry, oral health therapy and dental technology.	Improve access to health services, to support a healthier community.	1–4 years
	Surat Multi-purpose Health Service	Convert Surat Hospital to a multi-purpose health service.	Facilitate community access to centralised health services.	1–4 years
	Injune Multi-purpose Health Service	Convert Injune Hospital to a multi-purpose health service.	Facilitate community access to centralised health services.	1–4 years
	Granite Belt and Border Trade Training Centre	Build new trade training centre facility at Stanthorpe State High School.	Provide tertiary training for school students to gain employment in industries with skills shortages.	1–4 years
	Refurbish Dalby Pool	Construct a six-lane, 25-metre heated, indoor swimming pool.	Increase opportunities for sport and recreation.	1–4 years
	Toowoomba regional cancer care initiative upgrades	Provide 24 new bed wards for multi-day inpatient care and expanded Oncology Day Unit with four additional chemotherapy chairs at Toowoomba Hospital, Toowoomba Oncology Day Unit and St Andrew's Toowoomba Hospital.	Expand the capability of Toowoomba hospitals to deliver effective cancer care to rural and regional patients.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Surat Basin Workforce Development Plan	Implement the Surat Basin Workforce Development Plan.	Ensure the future prosperity of the region, support ongoing workforce needs and mitigate the impacts of rapid industry growth on communities within the Surat Basin.	1–4 years and ongoing
	<b>Business: Supporting businesses to attract new investment to generate sustained employment opportunities and strengthen the economic base.</b>			
	Wellcamp industrial area	Investigate and facilitate the development of the Wellcamp industrial area to meet the needs of high-impact and difficult-to-locate industry requirements for the region.	Ensure a supply of land for industrial purposes, supporting the expansion and diversification of industry in the region.	1–4 years
Region wide action	Marketing regional Queensland	Work with regional leaders to promote the benefits of living and working in Darling Downs South West.	Attract residents into the region to provide the labour needed by local industry.	1–4 years
Region wide action	High-speed broadband and the digital economy	Provide information to companies on new technologies and ways of doing business in a digital economy.	Improve the productivity and competitive advantage of local businesses.	Ongoing

	Action	What	Why	When
Region wide action	Investment attraction	Complement investment attraction activities with new regional website content that provides investors with information on the areas of industry growth and investment opportunity in Darling Downs South West.	Diversify and grow the regional economy to improve the resilience of the region.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Streamlined investor access to government	Provide investors with streamlined access to government to attract investment and facilitate business expansion in Darling Downs South West.	Support diversification and growth of the regional economy and improve the resilience of the region.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) business opportunities	Provide support to build the capacity of regional industries and local businesses which could include business-to-business mentoring and training in developing tender documents.	Support diversification and growth of the regional economy, building the capacity of local businesses to meet the supply demands of the growing energy sector.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Business innovation	Deliver tailored business innovation services to targeted regional firms aimed at improving business performance, resilience, productivity and supply chain integration with the focus on key areas of economic interest and opportunity.	Improve the productivity and competitive advantage of local businesses.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Tourism opportunity plans	Support implementation of <i>Queensland's Outback, Gulf and Western Downs and South-East Queensland Country Tourism Opportunity Plans</i> .	Assist the tourism industry to grow and remain competitive into the future.	Ongoing
	<b>Partnerships: Fostering partnerships at the local, state and national levels to promote coordination and drive local leadership.</b>			
	Solar Dawn	Build a 250 megawatt solar thermal gas hybrid power plant near Chinchilla. Expected to be the largest solar generation project in the southern hemisphere.	Enables up to 250 megawatts of renewable energy to be produced in Queensland and connected into the National Electricity Market, supporting increasing energy needs.	1–10 years
	Darling Downs South West Nation Building Social Housing Initiative	Construction of dwellings at Roma under the Nation Building Social Housing Initiative.	Increase supply of social housing across Darling Downs South West and generate additional employment in the construction industry.	Ongoing
	Surat Basin Economic Development	Implement the <i>Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy</i> which contains action plans to support growth in agriculture, energy, education, heavy engineering, food processing and tourism sectors.	Support diversification and growth of the regional economy and improve the resilience and liveability of the region.	Ongoing
	<i>Surat Basin Regional Planning Framework</i>	Implement a regional planning instrument which aims to sustainably manage regional growth by setting direction and establishing principles to inform future decision making and policy relevant to the Surat Basin.	Address the challenges and opportunities that will emerge in the Surat Basin as a result of growth in the resource sector.	Ongoing
Region wide action	<i>South East Queensland Water Strategy</i>	Implement the <i>South East Queensland Water Strategy (2010)</i> .	Continue the strong partnership approach to the long-term planning of Darling Downs South West residential, commercial, rural and industrial water needs to achieve the best possible environmental, social and economic outcomes.	Ongoing
Region wide action	Regional planning	Implement the <i>South West Regional Plan</i> and the <i>Maranoa–Balonne Regional Plan</i> including a boundary review of the Maranoa–Balonne plan to potentially encompass all of the Darling Downs.	Provide a clear direction for the region's environmental social and economic priorities.	Ongoing

## Implementing the QRS and regional actions

The QRS statewide actions and regional actions represent existing and new actions which together will help meet the Queensland Government's commitment to building stronger, more resilient and prosperous regions. The benefits of regionalisation will be realised in the short, medium and long term.

While many actions will be led by the Queensland Government, local partnerships with business, industry and other levels of government will be critical to their success. The Queensland Government will work with these groups throughout implementation and as part of the review process to ensure actions best meet local

priorities and needs. The actions will be reviewed and adjusted as needed to take account of progress and to address any significant social or economic changes.

The Queensland Government will keep the community informed about progress in implementing both statewide and regional actions.

### Darling Downs and South West Regional Development Australia Committee

The Regional Development Australia committees (RDAs) are a joint Australian and Queensland Government initiative to enhance the growth and development of Queensland's regions. RDA committees

champion development activities to bring the greatest benefit to their region and provide critical advice to government on priorities for regional development.

The Darling Downs and South West Regional Development Australia Committee provides a link between the three levels of government and builds partnerships with other regional development bodies, community and not-for-profit groups and the private sector. The committee identifies and progresses regional priorities. Areas of focus for the Queensland RDA network include economic recovery, regionalisation, developing regional workforces and capitalising on the National Broadband Network.

## Community feedback

The QRS has been developed to share the benefits of growth across the state and support the economic growth and liveability of each region.

Public consultation was held from July to September 2011 to learn about the Darling Downs South West community's vision and ideas for the region. Key issues raised included: addressing the impacts of resource development projects and their workforces; maintaining a strong agricultural sector; supporting the liveability of the region; upskilling the local workforce; and finding solutions to the strain on infrastructure and services particularly land, transport, water and housing.

This document has been developed to set the course for government investment into the future and to build a shared vision and plan of action with industry, other levels of government and regional leaders.

## Building on solid foundations

It is vital that regions have the infrastructure, services and other support they need to realise the benefits of growth, while maintaining the unique characteristics and lifestyle that regional Queenslanders value about their local areas.

The Queensland Government has already undertaken a number of projects in the Darling Downs South West region to achieve the outcomes the community wants for the region. These include:

- refurbishment of the Toowoomba Courthouse
- construction of the Toowoomba pipeline linking Wivenhoe Dam with Cressbrook Dam to secure water and connect Toowoomba to the South East Queensland Water Grid
- the purchase of land for the new Highfields State School
- improved electricity supply through new powerlines and substations
- opening of the new birthing centre at Toowoomba Hospital and ongoing redevelopment of the hospital
- the redevelopment and upgrade of the Kitchener Street Fire and Rescue Station in Toowoomba
- reconstruction repairs to the Toowoomba range road crossing and Western rail line.

These projects, some completed and others ongoing, reflect the positive work already underway to build liveable, strong and vibrant communities in Queensland's regions. They provide a solid platform for the proposed regional actions which will build on this work to advance regional development.



## Building local, going global

Regional Queensland has been a recruitment gold mine for Toowoomba based company Wagners.

The regions have supplied a very loyal workforce, including engineers from the local university, which has contributed greatly to the company's growth. This growth over the years has resulted in long-term career paths for its workers. Employees have progressed into management roles in the company and

are handling major projects around the globe.

Wagners is an internationally recognised group of companies that are collectively seen as a leader in the fields of concrete, quarries, transport, cement and fly ash, composite fibre technologies and project services. It has expanded its business around the world, exporting to locations such as the United States, Russia, Malaysia and Brazil.

The company has major plants in Toowoomba, Townsville and Brisbane and smaller plants at 20 places in South East Queensland. In 2010 it formed Wood Group Wagners – a joint venture with international services company Wood Group to service the Queensland coal seam gas industry.

## A coordinated approach to planning for the region

The QRS and the actions in this document are closely connected to other plans and activities being undertaken for the region. These include:

### Regional plans and frameworks

The Darling Downs South West region is covered by both statutory and non-statutory regional plans. Statutory plans include the *South West Regional Plan* covering the Bulloo, Murweh, Paroo and Quilpie shires, the *Maranoa—Balonne Regional Plan* and the *South East Queensland Plan 2009—2031* which covers Toowoomba city. There is also a non-statutory regional planning framework

covering the Surat Basin, an initiative of the *Surat Basin Future Directions Statement*.

These plans will guide land use and development in the region over the coming decades. They provide a framework to help sustain the region's communities, strengthen its economy, inform the delivery of social services and infrastructure, and protect its environment. The plans support the QRS by providing the preferred pattern of land use and development within the region. Visit [www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/regional-planning](http://www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/regional-planning) for more information.

### Queensland Infrastructure Plan (QIP)

The QIP—one of the statewide actions of the QRS—guides planning, prioritisation and sequencing of infrastructure across the state. It outlines the infrastructure needed to support and further encourage growth across Queensland's major regional economic zones. It is therefore strongly connected to the QRS and provides detail on the infrastructure which will help meet the outcomes for each region. Visit [www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/qip](http://www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/qip) for more information.

## Queensland's food policy

Queensland's food sector has a bright future, and every Queenslanders owns part of it. The food value chain, worth \$18.7 billion and supporting 267 000 Queensland jobs, makes a strong economic contribution and is important to our lifestyle.

*Food for a Growing Economy—an economic development framework for the Queensland food industry* recognises the complex, dynamic value chain that affects every aspect of Queenslanders' lives. The food value chain describes the steps between food production and consumption. It includes the layers of employment and

economic activity associated with food growing and harvesting, storage and transport, processing, sale, preparation and service.

An initial allocation of \$2 million has been made to support food value chain initiatives across the state.

Melissa, Michael and their children, Toowoomba



Image: Roy Cash Photography

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