



# Gympie Region

Perfectly Placed  
for Growth

Economic Development  
Strategy 2014—2019

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# 1. Mayor's message

The time is right for the Gympie region to benefit from considerable growth and prosperity given it is perfectly placed to deliver a sustainable local economy.

The high standard of business excellence, array of natural resources, enviable climate, access to technology and, importantly, our people form the foundation for delivering economic growth for the Gympie Region.

Council is building on the strength and diversity of what is already one of the Wide Bay Burnett region's existing leading regional centres and recognised as having a dynamic local economy.

The [Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy](#) provides Council with a clear direction regarding the Priority Enablers that need to be delivered but also identified key Game Changers that, once delivered on, will substantially change the economy of the region and, in doing so, to set the region in a strong economic position for the future.

As Mayor of Gympie Region I believe the time is right to pursue these game changer opportunities and that successful pursuit will require strong local leadership, not only at a local government level but in collaboration with business leaders and other levels of government. The role of all local leaders will be paramount in the marketing, promotion and communication of the opportunities and this will require a dedicated, planned approach as detailed in this Strategy.

The Strategy is designed to assist Council, other levels of Government and the business community in focusing resources and ensuring they are targeted at delivering on Game Changers and key Priority Enablers.

On behalf of the Gympie Regional Council, I thank members of the Gympie business community and business leaders for their support and guidance in working with us to deliver on the desired change for the future prosperity of our region.

I look forward to working with you to deliver a prosperous community for the future.



Cr Ron Dyne  
MAYOR  
GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL



# 2. Executive summary

To position the Gympie region for the future, we must continue to assist our established business and industry to grow and expand whilst we look to [capitalise on the identified Game Changers](#) for our future economy.

- The Gympie region covers an area of 6,898 sq. km and has a population of approximately 48,000 residents.
- Gympie, the economic hub of the Gympie region is located 160 km north of Brisbane, the State Capital and about a 40 minute drive from the Sunshine Coast.
- Also located in the Gympie region are a number of smaller towns and centres including Goomeri, Kilkivan, Woolooga, Gunalda, Curra, Cooloola Cove, Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach, Amamoor, Kandanga and Imbil.
- Gympie City is a strong regional centre servicing a wide area of rural properties.
- The Gympie region is uniquely located on key road, rail and air corridors.
- The region boasts a stable and skilled workforce.
- The region has a sizable business community with in excess of 4,500 businesses (including some major manufacturers) and in 2013 had an estimated gross regional product of around \$2.2 billion.
- The Gympie region has a very high level of educational facilities ranging from prep through to University, providing opportunities for both domestic and overseas students.
- The region has ample industrial land available for business establishment and business expansion in all areas of the region and is serviced by major existing transport infrastructure.
- The Gympie region has excellent utility services and a strong business network.



This strategy outlines the Gympie Regional Council's approach for facilitating future sustainable economic growth for the Gympie region and is the result of consultation with Council, business and industry leaders.

Recently, the region identified the need to develop a strategy that focused on the economic strengths/opportunities of the Gympie region and a means to capitalise on those strengths, now that a stable local platform has been established. Business and industry is successfully working with Council from an economic development perspective and the time is right now to engage other levels of government to assist in the economic growth of the region.

The Gympie region is blessed with many advantages and is uniquely placed to grow in a manner that could see the region become one of the 'economic hotspots' of Queensland and, indeed, Australia. It has a very strong regional centre surrounded by natural rural environments and a beach-to-bush feel about it. The strategic geographic location of the Gympie region is paramount in opportunistic thinking for future economic development, with urban pressures from the South-east corner of Queensland.

The 'Queensland Plan' has identified the Focus Area of Growing and Strengthening our regions, especially through regionalisation and this places the Gympie region in an ideal position.



# 2. Executive summary

Other advantages include the diversity of the region from a geographic, physical and economic perspective. The strength of agricultural industries, manufacturing industries and other large industries with a strong employment base has resulted in the existence of a diverse economy. The City of Gympie, positioned on the Bruce Highway, offers many opportunities whilst the coastal and rural sectors of the region could be attractive to emerging industry opportunities and enhanced tourism development.

In contrast to the advantages detailed above, the region has suffered from economic cycles that have not always been positive. On-going debate concerning the establishment of a large water-supply dam, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), a high Australian Dollar greatly affecting manufacturing and exports along with a series of natural disasters has challenged the resilience of the Gympie region community and has led to ongoing issues with managing essential infrastructure, retention of a skilled workforce and dealing with financial impacts as outcomes of the issues detailed above.

However, through adversity there has been a strong desire to work together and move forward. Consultation with business leaders has identified that it is 'we' that need to do something about capitalising on the opportunities. There is a feeling of stability within the economic community of the Gympie region, but there is also a feeling of a need to do something proactive to secure future economic sustainability.

This strategy is designed to encourage proactiveness. Whilst there will always be a need to deliver the standard role of business development and business support, business leaders and Council are keen to implement Game Changers; projects that will substantially change the economy of the region. This is to set the region in a strong economic position for the future.

## Game Changers

We have identified the top 6 projects and focus activities that will make a 'game-changing' difference to the region's future. These Game Changers are consistent with the goals identified in this economic development strategy.

The Game Changers are a select group of specific activities identified as the most effective steps to progress the Gympie region towards its envisioned goals. The Game Changers are not independent of each other and should not be thought of in isolation.

There is no particular priority or order to the Game Changer list; they will all be catalysts for growth and change of our region's economy and demographics, through:

- delivering identifiable and sustainable regional benefits with a knock-on effect on the wider region
- Council advocating to State Governments and collaborating with other councils in order to implement
- resulting in further direct investment
- addressing larger regional issues and changing views.



# 2. Executive summary

The Game Changers are:

- actively lobby for the Bruce Highway upgrade commitments
- progress implementation of the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy
- flood mitigation for business and industry
- progress the development of the Rainbow Beach Masterplan
- develop a strategic partnership with regional education providers
- market the Gympie region as an industry hub for both emerging and established industries.

## Definitions

1

### Strategic Levers

Overarching strategies which will enable a stronger, more diversified economy.

2

### Game Changers

Link directly to Strategic Levers and act as catalysts for changing the economy and demographic of a region.

3

### Priority Enablers

Actions which assist in driving and implementing Game Changers and Strategic Levers.

4

### Goals

Used to focus efforts and ensure resources and effort is allocated to all activities to ensure the most effective initiatives are implemented.

There is a view that the time is right to pursue these opportunities. Successful pursuit will require strong local leadership, not only at a local government level but in collaboration with business leaders and other levels of government. The role of all local leaders will be paramount in the marketing, promotion and communication of the opportunities and this will require a dedicated, planned approach.

It is hoped that this strategy will allow for better control and influence the end result and provide an ability to work in a systematic manner with government and private investors to deliver a sustainable economy for our region.

The Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy is a five year vision for the region and has been built on research with business leaders and members of the Gympie region community. The Vision is to [establish Gympie region's economic future through the pursuit and delivery of key Game Changers and strategic opportunities.](#)



# 2. Executive summary

## Strategic Levers

To enable the successful delivery of the game changers, four strategic initiatives or 'levers' have been developed, with Advocacy and Leadership being the overarching strategic lever, of the Game Changers.

The Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy identifies four Strategic Levers for the future which include:

- Advocacy and Leadership
- Positioning the Region
- Enabling Infrastructure
- Industry Development and Attraction.

These Strategic Levers will enable a stronger more diversified economy for the region – one that has capitalised on the 'Game Changer opportunities'.



## Advocacy and leadership

Comments provided during the consultation phase reinforced that delivery of these projects will occur through advocacy and leadership as a result of the existing strong partnership and collaboration between the Gympie Regional Council and the business community/leaders. It was agreed that everyone has a role to play.

## Positioning the region

Positioning the region seeks to capitalise on the Gympie regions geographic location. The region is located next door to South-East Queensland and importantly, the Sunshine Coast Airport. It is within close proximity to the University, has a high portion of industrial land available, is well positioned for telecommuting and niche business opportunities, and has opportunity for business and industry international relations and for the marketing of Gympie as a true regional centre. This Strategy seeks to provide clarity of focus in terms of the main reasons for which the Gympie region can clearly market all it has to offer given its ideal geographic location.

## Enabling infrastructure

Well-targeted investment in infrastructure can underpin productivity and economic growth. Enabling infrastructure is a fundamental key to unlocking the full potential of the Gympie region because with investment in infrastructure comes growth which then has the potential to act as the real engines of economic development and be the catalyst to the much needed business investment into our region and assist in improving a presently poor jobs to population ratio.

Ultimately, investment in increased infrastructure will serve to support the opening up of areas which will accommodate the region's population growth, as well as foster the development of commercial, business and employment districts in the outer suburban areas and other towns and villages of our region.



# 2. Executive summary

## Supporting established business and industry

This will continue to form a key part of the Strategy for the next five years as the bulk of businesses in the Gympie region are small businesses. Initiatives progressed will need to continue to work alongside these existing businesses and, where possible, target specific industry attraction opportunities, e.g. difficult to locate industries, agribusiness industries, creative and knowledge based industries and continue to explore existing business and industry expansion opportunities.

To realise the vision and deliver on the levers, the strategy identifies the following targets for successful economic development (Figure 1).

This strategy represents a fresh opportunity for stakeholders to collaborate and work together to achieve a shared vision. It is suggested that this is the beginning of a process for the economic future of the Gympie region, not the end.

It is essential that all industry sectors embrace the strategy and advocate for the opportunities it creates. The key to achieving the desired goals of this strategy will be through strong leadership and effective and ongoing partnerships.

### TARGETS

- Increase Gross Regional Product (GRP)
- Increase the Employment Participation Rate
- Increase Average Wage and Salary Income Growth
- Increase the Value of Goods Exported from the Gympie region
- Strengthen Population Growth
- Strengthen Employment Growth
- Decrease the Unemployment Rate

Figure 1

# 3. About this strategy

## Our strong foundations

The Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy has been developed with consideration for the current economic position of the Gympie region and an understanding of how the region needs to establish itself for the future. Whilst the current regional economy is relatively strong, the region cannot rest on its laurels. Today, more than ever we need to be ahead of the game. By being ahead of the curve when it comes to growth for Australia and the region we will be competitive locally and have a good chance of establishing a sustainable regional economy, able to withstand external pressures.

In the consultation phase of development of this strategy, it became apparent there is already an established strong partnership between Council and the business leaders/ community and this is working extremely effectively. Feedback received has highlighted that the 'operational' activities of Council's economic development portfolio are working very well and appear to be well-tailored to meet the needs of most of the business community. In saying this, it is also recognised that having the support of industry is critical and not something to be taken for granted.

Council recognises the economic importance of building and maintaining local networks for communication, consultation and information sharing. Importantly, these networks are integral for forming lasting relationships and partnerships for the good of the community. Ultimately, this strategy recognises the fundamental reliance on our people as the foundation of a vibrant and innovative economy. [Governments alone don't create prosperity; business and industry do.](#)

### 3.1 Consultation

The consultation process resulted mainly in business leaders reinforcing the need for the region to focus on [capitalising on the position of the Gympie region](#) and [advocating, marketing and communicating externally](#) about the strategic issues. This process has identified a number of [Game Changers](#) for the Gympie region that should be analysed in detail and plans established to take these forward in a proactive way. It is these Game Changers that will strategically change the economic future of the region.

### 3.2 Implementation

The process for strategy implementation will be via the implementation of Priority Enablers that come from the identified [Strategic Levers](#). Whilst the Strategic Levers and Priority Enablers have been recognised as the focus to enhance the region's future economy, the Game Changers detailed in Advocacy and Leadership section will require [Advocacy Plans](#) to be developed. Development of these plans and the need to be able to professionally lobby and advocate for the strategic Game Changers will require consideration by Council in terms of future resourcing.



*“Economic development can be defined as “a sustained community effort to improve both the local economy and the quality of life by building the area’s capacity to adapt to economic change”.”<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Loveridge and Morse (1997, Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program. NERC RD Publication)



# 4. A vision for the economic future

The Gympie region has a long history of being a well-established, stable community. Over recent years, decisions concerning amalgamation of local governments, decisions not to proceed with some major infrastructure projects (e.g. Traveston Dam) and diversification of its industry base has changed the 'look and feel' of the region.

From an economic perspective, it is important that there is a defined vision for the region, so that local decision-makers are confident they are progressing towards an agreed outcome and that the community is aware of where we are trying to economically position the region.

## 4.1 Vision

The Vision for the Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy is to **establish Gympie region's economic future through the pursuit and delivery of key Game Changers and strategic opportunities**. The Vision will be achieved through:

- vigorously working towards implementing the game changer projects
- successfully positioning the region to capitalise on its location
- facilitating strategic regional infrastructure investment
- supporting established regional business and industry to grow and expand.

## 4.2 Goals for the Perfectly Placed Growth Strategy

To ensure the Strategy delivers on the desired change, the following goals will be used to focus efforts and ensure resources are allocated to implementing the right initiatives.

Goals for the Changed Economy	
2014 <sup>3</sup>	2019
Economic Growth: Gross Regional Product: \$2.2b (2012—2013)	Gross Regional Product: \$2.8b (Target annual growth rate of 5%)
Population Growth: Current Population Growth: 1.3% (2012—2013)	Population Growth: 1.9% (Equal to Queensland Growth Rate 2012—2013)
Employment Growth: Current Annual Employment Growth: -6.0% (year to December Qtr. 2013)	Annual Employment Growth: 1.0% (Equal to Queensland Growth Rate year to December Qtr. 2013)
Employment: Current Unemployment Rate: 8.1% (December Qtr. 2013)	Unemployment Rate: 5.9% (Equal to Queensland Unemployment Rate December Qtr. 2013)

<sup>2</sup>National League of Cities, 2010 The Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development  
<sup>3</sup>Gympie Region Economic Brief December 2013



# 4. A vision for the economic future

Goals for the Changed Economy	
2014 <sup>3</sup>	2019
<b>Employment:</b> Employment Participation Rate: 58.9% (2012)	Employment Participation Rate: 65% (Queensland Participation Rate 67.4%, 2012)
<b>Personal Income:</b> Average Wage & Salary Income Growth: 5.2% (\$40,276pa – 2010—11)	Average Wage & Salary Income Growth: 6.0% (Equal to Queensland Average Wage & Salary Income Growth 2010—2011)
<b>Exports:</b> Value of Goods Exported from the Gympie region: \$1.2b (2012—2013)	Value of Goods Exported from the Gympie region: \$1.8b (Target annual growth rate of 5%)

<sup>3</sup>Gympie Region Economic Brief December 2013



# 5. Strategic lever: advocacy and leadership

## Advocacy and leadership

Fortunately for the Gympie region, not only are there strong partnerships with other Councils across the Wide Bay Burnett region via the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC) but also locally/regionally with businesses/business leaders from within the Gympie region.

At a regional level, since 2000 the Councils that make up WBBROC have sought to implement a regional structure to guide service delivery, particularly in the areas of roads, sport and recreation and economic development. The WBBROC has accepted a leadership role on behalf of its regional community to increase economic prosperity and the benefits that flow from this by attracting people and businesses to move to the region. Gympie Regional Council is an active member of WBBROC and is a firm believer that Councils working regionally is very effective through the pooling of priorities, skills and funding.

While the partnership at the immediate Wide Bay Burnett regional level with other Councils is strong Gympie Regional Council has an excellent opportunity to forge a relationship with the 'Council of Mayors (SEQ)' and also Noosa Shire Council and Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Major issues such as road and transport infrastructure are examples of a mutually beneficial advocacy role for all Councils.

At a local level the Gympie Regional Council has, over the last few years, made good progress in bringing like-minded business people together to discuss, proactively plan and shape the future, despite barriers where competing interests, lack of financial means, identity and even geographical distance may bring challenges to regional communities and businesses. Whilst this has been beneficial in the creation of partnerships, the time for action is now and the strengthening of business/community/council partnerships is paramount to now actually 'making it happen'.

While there is strong leadership, confidence and motivation across there equally needs to be effective policies of government to spur regional growth and improvements in living standards. In this regard, when coupled with key infrastructure projects and the know-how existing in our region, it is the people and their skills that combine to make a powerful tool to unlock new business opportunities in markets at home and outside the region.

Even though the ingredients are right to support the future growth of the Gympie region it is always important that strong leadership includes ensuring the broader community understands and is sufficiently engaged in any approach which will require strong advocacy and negotiation.



“Competing in the global economy requires regional leadership models that drive growth and prosperity.”<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup>2012 VECCI Regional Business Convention "Importance of regional leadership, connectivity and collaboration outlined at 2012 VECCI Regional Business Convention"



# 5. Strategic lever: advocacy and leadership

A 'Changed Regional Demographic' is seen as an important outcome of this economic development strategy and to achieve this we need to seriously look at ways and means of 'creating the scene' so that we can attract people, business and industry that will positively affect the demographic.

This could be achieved for example, through promotion and marketing the Gympie region's lifestyle and liveability and potential as an hub for industries including education and creative and knowledge-based sectors.

Knowledge gained from the consultation phase for development of this Strategy repeatedly reinforced that firstly, there is a strong partnership between Gympie Regional Council and the business community/business leaders and, secondly, there is an agreed clear identification of the strategic priorities that are fundamental to ensure future economic prosperity is secured.

Thirdly, and most importantly, as agreed by all parties during development of the Strategy the focus needs to be directed towards placing more emphasis on advocacy/lobbying work to continually market and promote what the Gympie region has to offer – doing so will capitalise on Gympie region's geographic location. Advocacy Campaigns (refer section 6) need to be developed for each game changer priority identified below.



## 5.1 Advocacy and leadership Game Changers

The Game Changers are seen as the catalysts for changing the economy and demographic of the Gympie region. This by no means lessens the importance of established business and industry and the need to assist those companies to grow and expand, but the Game Changers have been nominated as the key projects to be pursued to change the region's economy, for the sustainable future.

### 5.1.1 Actively lobby for the Bruce Highway upgrade commitments

In relation to [actively lobbying for the Bruce Highway upgrade commitments](#), this project involves a 61km upgrade and realignment of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra, including a bypass of Gympie and is among Queensland's highest priority road projects<sup>5</sup>.

The upgrade will have benefits both economically and socially for the Gympie region. The Bruce Highway is well over capacity in terms of vehicle movements for both private and commercial purposes. Proposals to develop industrial land or residential developments along the Highway, particularly within a 10km radius of Gympie city are subject to very stringent Queensland Government planning requirements.

Sections C and D of the upgrade – Traveston Road to Keefton Road and Keefton Road to Curra, including the Gympie bypass – are critical to the completion of the upgrade, however, the future design and construction time-frames are subject to funding.

<sup>5</sup>Department of Transport & Main Roads website 2014 ([www.tmr.qld.gov.au](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au))



# 5. Strategic lever: advocacy and leadership

## 5.1.2 Progress implementation of the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy

The [Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy](#) was developed in mid-2012 and defines the plan to revitalise the Mary Valley business and farming communities. While development and delivery of the Strategy is ultimately the responsibility of the Queensland Government, Gympie Regional Council can assist with implementation of the Strategy by working closely with the Queensland Government to promote industry opportunities, work with those preparing expression of interest (EOI) applications for the purchase of Government owned properties, and liaise with subsequent businesses established in the Mary Valley.



## 5.1.3 Flood mitigation for business and industry

In relation to [flood mitigation for business and industry](#) Gympie Regional Council, with significant funding from the Queensland Government, commissioned Aurecon to prepare a report that identified a number of projects that would provide flood mitigation for the region. A number of solutions have been proposed which will help mitigate the impact of flooding in the Gympie central business centre and across other regional localities. However, implementation of these solutions is in part reliant on securing funding from government sources and Gympie Regional Council will continue to seek Government support to progress with implementing the outcomes of the report.

## 5.1.4 Progress the development of the Rainbow Beach Masterplan

The Rainbow Beach Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association have been working with Council to facilitate development of a [Rainbow Beach Masterplan](#) for the Rainbow Beach Township. The Queensland Government is consulting with Gympie Regional Council to prepare a draft master plan for the entire Inskip Peninsula in collaboration with other key stakeholders. Successful implementation of the approved Masterplan will see future industry and residential development opportunities created and also encourage tourism product development to value-add the current tourism-base of the township.

## 5.1.5 Develop a strategic partnership with regional education providers

The partnership opportunities resulting from the development of strategic links with the [University of the Sunshine Coast](#), [TAFE East Coast](#) and other education providers, in a number of professions are anticipated to result in increased employment and training opportunities for Gympie region students including students enrolled in nursing, allied health and other associated courses. In particular, workforce planning is well under way for the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital and it estimated the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service will grow 69 percent by 2016<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup>Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital recruitment ([www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au))

<sup>7</sup><http://www.health.qld.gov.au/scuhs/hospital/>

# 5. Strategic lever: advocacy and leadership

## 5.1.6 Market the Gympie region as an industry hub for both emerging and established industries

While it is acknowledged that nurturing and facilitating the growth of established industries provides a solid economic base for future regional growth and development [marketing the Gympie region as an industry hub for both emerging and established industries](#) has also been recognised as being able to make an important contribution to the development of a region. As reflected in the 'Emerging Industries Strategy'<sup>7</sup> for the Queensland Government, Queensland's future economic growth lies in strengthening our four pillars (agriculture, tourism, resources, construction) and developing new and dynamic industries.

The established Gympie region Economic Development Reference Group will play a key role in assisting Council to implement the actions required from this strategy. Whilst the will is present to change the economy of the region, it will be necessary to continually drive implementation responsibilities. Council has a desire, the business community has a desire and the community in general has a desire to see the economy of the Gympie region change and grow. It will be up to those people charged with the responsibility, to 'make it happen' over the next five years.



### Priority enablers

The main Priority Enablers required to assist in driving the Game Changers mentioned above include the following.

#### Priority Enablers

Continue to strengthen the 'Gympie Region Economic Development Reference Group' to ensure there is a strong partnership between the business community and council to work together to "make it happen".

Review the process to best advocate and lobby for 'Game Changer Projects', including resourcing of economic development responsibilities.

Establish a relationship with Council of Mayors (SEQ), Sunshine Coast Regional and Noosa Shire Councils.

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

## 5.2 Positioning the region

The Gympie Regional Council in partnership with local businesses is committed to using the region's comparative advantage (i.e. geographic location) to build a competitive advantage, which provides an efficiency advantage, or underpins development of a range of initiatives for the region.

There are a number of aspects of the region's location which contribute to a genuine strength.

- Proximity to Brisbane and its international port and airport. With a travel time of two hours from the Brisbane CBD, and freeway access with only one set of traffic lights between Gympie and the Australia TradeCoast area, Gympie City and surrounds presents opportunities for the development of transport and warehousing hubs (enabling truck drivers to do return trips without impacting on required travel breaks). Similarly, the easy travel time presents opportunities for day trippers from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast to visit the region.
- Position on the rim of the South East Queensland growth region.
- Location on the main north-south highway and rail network.
- Within access of the Surat Basin and its associated coal seam gas developments.

These attributes can influence the types of economic activity that are likely to be successful in a region. How this attribute is used can also have implications for development initiatives, which are generally more effective where they build on an existing strength.

The Gympie region is uniquely placed to become one of the linchpins of South East Queensland. It is predominantly rural, but with a strong and growing regional centre. It is physically and economically diverse offering attractive lifestyle and business location options. It is strategically positioned to provide excellent access to the south east market and beyond, and to provide linkages between the south east and the north, north-west and south-west.

This Strategy recognises that in an increasingly globalised economy, value and future prosperity of the Gympie region will be driven by its unique points of difference and the greater personalisation and promotion of this 'competitive advantage' to other levels of government and the community.

*“ A region's comparative advantage can stem from various sources, such as its geographic location, availability of natural resources, climate, and the existence of industry clusters or access to infrastructure. ”*



# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

## 5.2.1 Telecommuting opportunity

Opportunities for telecommuting and telework are being explored and developed by regional localities in areas such as Coffs Harbour. These opportunities are dependent on the effective, high speed connectivity and focus on NBN as the Game Changer of 'seamless virtual connectivity'.

There are currently businesses in the region based both in metropolitan and outlying areas who are successfully operating 'virtual' businesses engaged in document preparation, tender writing and other online based businesses.

As part of the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the number of people currently living in the Gympie region and physically working in other centres will be quantified.

The industries they are working in, their requirements if they desire to telecommute and importantly, is there support from their employers to help facilitate this move? It will also be important to assess the requirements for self-employed people to work from home and their needs in terms of technical/social support to help make telecommuting a reality.



## 5.2.2 Niche industry clusters

The Gympie region is ideally placed to attract, promote and capitalise on niche and emerging industry clusters.

### Food processing

Food processing and speciality food production are coming to the fore as emerging industry clusters. The development of this industry cluster and promotion of networking and industry development opportunities is being facilitated by the Gympie Gold Regional Produce initiative, aided in no small part by the engagement of the Gympie region's first Food and Culinary Tourism Ambassador – Matt Golinski.

### Equine industry

The potential for the development of niche clusters based on the equine industry was previously identified in the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy prepared in 2011. This opportunity has recently gained momentum with the announcement of a major quarter-horse racing facility based in the Mary Valley.



# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

## Health care and social assistance

The health care and social assistance industry sector is coming to the fore as an emerging sector in its own right<sup>8</sup>. This is being actively facilitated by the zoning of specialist and medical precincts in and around Gympie city.

This Strategic Plan also has the potential to facilitate the planning and development of actions to identify emerging industry clusters and niche industry sectors which can facilitate the diversification of the Gympie region economy and contribute to increased employment opportunities.

### 5.2.3 Business international relationships

The establishment of global business relationships is an increasing opportunity for regions such as Gympie, which are well recognised in the industry sectors of agriculture, horticulture and manufacturing. Any form of trade or export from a region has far reaching benefits across the economy and it is therefore necessary to target actions that build on the existing global relations and trade networks. The Federal and State governments continue to focus on trade opportunities with Asia and provide resources and channels to enter markets and form strong commercial relations. There would already be some established export markets through manufacturing, horticulture food and agri processing, so the region is well positioned to identify and capitalise on the strong demand for Australian products and services.

It is suggested that effort should be applied to working with targeted business and industry personnel who are currently working in the international trade and export environment to investigate ways of growing those opportunities for the Gympie region, possibly through the establishment of a Trade and Investment Strategy.

### 5.2.4 Gympie as a regional centre

The Gympie region and Gympie City specifically is a 'true regional centre'. The City services a large area with products and services, provides community infrastructure such as education and health and has a wealth of professional services that attract local clientele and also customers from outside the region. Being a regional centre brings many advantages for economic development, especially for growing regional businesses. Factors for growing regional business normally include<sup>9</sup>:

- cheaper land and housing than in cities
- lower labour costs, less absenteeism and more stable workforces
- lifestyle advantages, open spaces, less pollution
- incentives to relocate or initiate a business.



<sup>8</sup>Gympie Region Economic Profile December 2013

<sup>9</sup>Aust & New Zealand Regional Science Association International (ANZRSIA), Submission to Regional Business Development Analysis. 2001

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

A survey of regional businesses<sup>10</sup> found that the five (5) most important factors in the decision to locate in a regional area related to lifestyle, family, labour force stability, access to good roads and proximity to markets (Figure 2). The Gympie region is geographically well located, on the doorstep of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast and has the attributes to be attractive for businesses wishing to locate in the regions.

As a true regional centre, with most required services easily accessible, it is suggested that the Gympie region should promote business attraction as an economic development opportunity as part of the Perfectly Placed for Growth Strategy based on the Regional Area Location Factors.

## 5.2.5 Sport and recreation

The Gympie region has a wealth of sporting facilities across a wide range of disciplines. Council is actively promoting the region as a destination to host sporting events at local, state and national levels of competition and has partnered with organisations such as Sports Marketing Australia to attract events such as this and secure hard to locate events.

Planning Strategy and Major Projects administers Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Internal Working Group. Council is obviously also a member of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Council's (WBBROC) Sport and Recreation Committee. This Committee holds meetings once every three months and is more interested in region wide projects, spanning over more than one Council area.

Current projects being discussed include, but are not limited to, Corella Range Shooting Facility, Gympie Region Tracks and Trail Strategy to name a few. There are other individual projects relevant to individual directorates, however the purpose of this group is to provide strategic direction as to what is occurring from an Open Space, Sport and Recreation perspective throughout the entire region. The above listed projects provide a snapshot of the type of work that this group is focused upon.

## 5.2.6 Queensland Plan regional initiatives

The Draft 'Queensland Plan: a 30 year vision for Queensland' identifies the State Government's desire to have at least half the state's population living outside the South-east corner over the next 30 years. The Plan also identifies that Queenslanders want regions to be strong and prosperous and capitalise on unique regional opportunities and assets. The Premier has publicly stated that under a strong regionalisation model, if fifty percent of the state's population is living outside South-east Queensland, then it stands to reason that government must deliver services in those regions. It then follows that there are a number of opportunities to pursue, if this draft plan is to be implemented; not the least the chance to locate public servants in regions such as Gympie, which has available facilities and a lifestyle that would be attractive to relocating families, etc. Therefore, it is suggested that an engagement and attraction strategy be developed to capitalise on the opportunities out of the current Queensland Plan.

### Regional Area Location Factors

- 1 Lifestyle
- 2 Family
- 3 Labour force stability
- 4 Access to good roads
- 5 Market proximity

Figure 2



<sup>10</sup>Aust & New Zealand Regional Science Association International (ANZRSAI), Submission to Regional Business Development Analysis. 2001

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014 – 2019 – Game Changer Projects and Supporting Actions Summary				
Game Changer	Success Indicator/Goal	Timeline	Link to Gympie Regional Council Corporate Plan	Link To The Queensland Plan Goals
1. Lobby for Bruce Highway Upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section C – completed</li> <li>Section D – funded and designed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2017</li> <li>By 2018</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2 - Improve the quality and safety of our road network for existing users and plan for future growth requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>G28 - Our infrastructure fits our changing population and demographics</li> <li>G29 – Our regions, businesses and communities reach their full potential</li> <li>G32 – Infrastructure provides connectivity and accessibility across the state</li> </ul>
2. Progress Implementation of the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing sustainable, profitable business development in the Mary Valley</li> <li>Sustainable population and employment growth in the Mary Valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.4 - Plan for the growth of the region through the implementation of the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>G9 – We capitalise on unique regional opportunities and assets</li> <li>G11 – We value and invest in local businesses and workers</li> <li>G13 – We are focused on industry development and diversification</li> <li>G14 – Queensland has the best job opportunities in Australia</li> <li>G29 – Our regionals, businesses and communities reach their full potential</li> </ul>

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014 – 2019 – Game Changer Projects and Supporting Actions Summary				
Game Changer	Success Indicator/Goal	Timeline	Link to Gympie Regional Council Corporate Plan	Link To The Queensland Plan Goals
3. Flood mitigation for business and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strategic flood mitigation solutions identified, costed and prioritised</li> <li>■ Funding secured for implementation</li> <li>■ Solutions implemented</li> <li>■ Disaster resilience plan established</li> <li>■ Flood and disaster mitigation works catered for in GRC annual budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ By 2014</li> <li>■ By 2015</li> <li>■ Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1.4 - Plan for the safety of our community and protect our region with the continuation of flood and other disaster mitigation programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ G11 – We value and invest in local businesses and workers</li> <li>■ G21 – We protect the environment</li> <li>■ G31 – Infrastructure is designed and built with longevity in mind</li> </ul>
4. Progress the development of the Rainbow Beach Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Draft Master Plan developed</li> <li>■ Opportunities for residential expansion and future tourism development identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ By 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2.3 Plan for the future with master plans that give our businesses and residents a clear direction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ G13 – We are focused on industry development and diversification</li> <li>■ G28 - Our infrastructure fits our changing population and demographics</li> <li>■ G29 – Our regions, businesses and communities reach their full potential</li> </ul>

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014 – 2019 – Game Changer Projects and Supporting Actions Summary				
Game Changer	Success Indicator/Goal	Timeline	Link to Gympie Regional Council Corporate Plan	Link To The Queensland Plan Goals
<p>5. Develop a strategic partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast, TAFE Queensland East Coast and other regional education providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strategic partnerships developed with University of the Sunshine Coast, TAFE Queensland East Coast and other stakeholders</li> <li>■ Tangible further education programs delivered.</li> <li>■ The Gympie region marketed as a hub and centre of excellence for the provision of educational services to both the domestic and international markets</li> <li>■ Relationships developed with international stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ By 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2.1 - Advocate for locally based further education options and pathways</li> <li>■ 2.1.1 - Develop strategic partnerships with further education providers offering services to the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ G1 – Our curriculum is flexible and future-focused</li> <li>■ G4 – Education is valued as a lifelong experience</li> <li>■ G15 – Our centres of excellence drive innovation</li> <li>■ G27 – We attract bright minds to Queensland</li> </ul>

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014 – 2019 – Game Changer Projects and Supporting Actions Summary				
Game Changer	Success Indicator/Goal	Timeline	Link to Gympie Regional Council Corporate Plan	Link To The Queensland Plan Goals
6. Market the Gympie region as an industry hub for both emerging and established industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gympie Region Economic Development Reference Group's role and objectives strengthened to ensure there is a strong partnership between the business community and council</li> <li>Industry development review undertaken</li> <li>Preparation of marketing collateral – Investment Prospectus and industry information to promote and market the Gympie region's comparative advantage</li> <li>Niche industry clusters developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.4 Plan for the growth of the region through the implementation of the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>G8 – Our regions are strong and prosperous</li> <li>G9 – We capitalise on unique regional opportunities and assets</li> <li>G11 – We value and invest in local businesses and workers</li> <li>G13 – We are focused on industry development and diversification</li> <li>G29 – Our regions, businesses and communities reach their full potential</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Enablers</b>				
Continue to strengthen the Gympie Region Economic Development Reference Group to ensure that there is a strong partnership between the business community and Council to work together to 'make it happen'.				
Review the process to best advocate and lobby for 'Game Changer Projects', including resourcing of economic development responsibilities.				
Establish a relationship with Council of Mayors (SEQ), Sunshine Coast Regional and Noosa Shire Councils.				



# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

## 5.2.7 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a generational reform that will deliver a national system of disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability. The NDIS will provide people with disability reasonable and necessary supports to live life their way, achieve their goals and participate in social and economic life<sup>11</sup>.

Every state in Australia currently has a trial occurring for NDIS with the exception of Queensland where the trial was initially to occur in Gympie, however, as an agreement could not be secured between the State and Commonwealth Government this did not occur.

Roll out of the full scheme in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory will commence progressively from July 2016<sup>12</sup>. As such, the Gympie region still has an important role to play on two fronts to ensure not only the residents requiring disability services but also the business community are well positioned once the full scheme is introduced nationally.

Firstly, given people with a disability will have the choice regarding the service provider they want to use, the Gympie Regional Council in collaboration with relevant State and Commonwealth agencies needs to facilitate the up skilling of existing not for profit organisations to ensure they are well positioned to compete in a rapidly growing market that will result in existing large corporate organisations actively marketing their services to people with a disability.

Secondly, given the NDIS will enhance the element of choice for people with a disability the link between disability service providers and employment agencies will need to be more directly encouraged and supported to ensure opportunities for employment are actively being presented to the particular client. Once again, Gympie Regional Council in partnership with State and Commonwealth Governments will encourage the establishment of enhanced communication between disability service providers and employment agencies.

## 5.2.8 Educational Hub

The Gympie region has a strong ability to be recognised as providing a 'one-stop shop total package' educational experience given its close proximity to the Sunshine Coast and south-east Queensland. From a secondary, university, research and vocational training perspective the Gympie region has an abundance of choices for any student wishing to study while experiencing the many benefits contemporary country living has to offer.

In collaboration with key stakeholders from the educational sector, the Gympie Regional Council via this strategy has the ability to ensure the full economic benefit of education and training being delivered in the region is achieved. To ensure this success study tour packages and accommodation options should be developed to offer the 'one-stop shop total package' educational experience.



<sup>11</sup>[http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/about\\_us/strategies/national\\_disability\\_insurance\\_scheme](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/about_us/strategies/national_disability_insurance_scheme)

<sup>12</sup><http://www.ndis.gov.au/roll-out-national-disability-insurance-scheme>

# 5. Strategic lever: positioning the region

A focus of economic development activities for the Gympie Regional Council and the business community will be to work with key stakeholders to maximise the opportunities from the region's existing economic base together with the planned investments in significant infrastructure projects. The following table lists Priority Enablers where effort should be directed to highlight the competitive advantage of the Gympie region and, in doing so, deliver on specific initiatives that will deliver enhanced economic development outcomes.

## Priority Enablers

Develop marketing material that can be used in local or regional (WBBROC The Perfect Place At Your Perfect Pace project) to promote the many benefits of the Gympie region's geographic location e.g. Sunshine Coast Airport, University connectivity, next door to SEQ, industrial land availability, etc.

Gain an enhanced level of understanding regarding the current extent of telecommuting across the Gympie region and actively promote the benefits to existing and potential businesses that may be interested in establishing/relocating to the Gympie region.

Facilitate and co-ordinate development of niche industry clusters with immediate priorities of creative industries, equine industry and agribusiness/food producers.

Review the opportunity for business and industry to establish international relationship(s) with other countries.

Market and promote the Gympie region as a true regional centre given the provision of health, professional, educational service providers.

Undertake a review of and subsequently investigate potential to improve/upgrade sport and recreation facilities for major sporting event attraction.

Capitalise on Regionalisation Initiatives as identified in the Queensland Plan.

Promote that the Gympie region could be considered as part of the trial opportunities for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Market the Gympie region as an Educational Hub to regional localities in the Wide Bay Burnett population catchment, Queensland, Australia wide and international markets.



# 5. Strategic lever: enabling infrastructure

## 5.3 Enabling infrastructure

Investment is critical to economic growth. Investment enables innovation to reach the marketplace, which in turn has a positive impact on employment and gross regional product and produces a boost to economic confidence.

Attracting investment is about promoting the economic advantages of the region and convincing prospective investors to partner with Gympie Regional Council in favourable investment opportunities. In addition to traditional private sector investment, this strategy includes increasing government business, public-private investment partnerships and potentially philanthropic funding for projects in the Gympie region. Increased investment in the region would have a positive effect on the gross regional product and therefore it is a critical strategy for economic development.

### 5.3.1 Infrastructure

Infrastructure that supports economic activity means the facilities, installations, networks and knowledge systems that support economic interaction and growth. Gympie Regional Council considers transportation routes, communications systems and public institutions to be at the heart of the region's economic development and therefore essential to building a strong and resilient economy.

The Gympie region will benefit from infrastructure which expands options for business. Infrastructure which enables economic activity will be widely accessible, practical and tailored to meet the needs of the Gympie region's economy.

### 5.3.2 Digital economy

A sophisticated digital economy has been shown to contribute to economic prosperity. In particular, high-speed broadband access is a demonstrated economic accelerator. Digital technologies will create opportunities to overcome issues of remoteness and will enhance the delivery of education, the provision of health and financial services and the facilitation of trade throughout the region. A fully-integrated digital economy is the future for the Gympie region and this strategy seeks to ensure this is delivered sooner rather than later.

### 5.3.3 Natural gas

Other infrastructure priorities should include a feasibility assessment for the supply and provision of large volumes of Natural Gas for business and industry. To encourage immediate and long-term business development and attraction for the Gympie region the implementation of natural gas infrastructure (pipeline) represents a major opportunity, given the ever-increasing business overhead costs.



*A positive investment climate creates an economic culture which benefits the entire region, not just investors and investees.*



# 5. Strategic lever: enabling infrastructure

## 5.3.4 Gympie's geographical location

Previously mentioned in the strategy is the importance of Gympie's geographic location, especially relevant to South-east Queensland (SEQ). Capitalising on this position as a key service provider to SEQ should see some significant economic benefits for the region. Availability of good quality industrial land offers many opportunities, as does the future upgrading of the Bruce Highway via the Cooroy–Curra bypass. The opportunity to be recognised as the gateway to SEQ from the north and north-west lends itself to possible establishment of a major transport/logistics facility. Working with some of the major national freight operators, offering encouragement to establish in the region should be seen as a priority for the region, in terms of enabling infrastructure for future growth.

## 5.3.5 Upgrading of the Coastal Connection Road

In addition, upgrading of the northern link between Boreen Road and Tin Can Bay road opens up opportunities for the growth of the Gympie region's coastal economy through the development of increased tourism visitation opportunities and enhancing the investment and liveability attractiveness of this location.

## 5.3.6 Raise the existing Lake Borumba wall

For the Gympie region, the need to raise the existing Lake Borumba wall is another example of critical infrastructure project as it would help contribute to increased capacity of this water storage and contribute to increased water security for the Sunshine Coast and Gympie regions. The construction project would have benefits economically for the Gympie region and may also contribute to increased tourism opportunities for use of the water storage facility.

## 5.3.7 Private investment into infrastructure

Encouraging economic development is a direction to pursue when opportunities have been identified. It is not only governments that invest in infrastructure. For example, the establishment of retirement and aged care facilities in areas such as Tin Can Bay and/or Cooloola Cove will result in substantial benefit to the region not only in terms of the economy but also in terms of establishment of associated health services etc. This would bring further private investment to the region and also attract a certain level of professional provider, once again assisting in the change of the regional demographic. It is suggested that identification of possible private infrastructure investment opportunities be performed with a view to following up with an investment attraction strategy.



# 5. Strategic lever: enabling infrastructure

Understanding that investment in any infrastructure is beneficial to a region's economy, to attract and enable industry and enterprise investment in the Gympie region over the next five years, this strategy is focused on the following priorities.

## Priority Enablers

Facilitate Broadband Network Roll-out to assist in digital economy opportunity development.

Perform a Natural Gas Feasibility Assessment.

Encourage the establishment of a Transport and Warehouse/Distribution Hub.

Identification of private infrastructure investment opportunities, e.g. retirement/aged care facilities in Tin Can Bay/Cooloola Cove.

Actively lobby for the upgrade of the Coastal Connection Road.

Progress discussions to raise the existing Lake Borumba wall.

# 5. Strategic lever: industry development and attraction

## 5.4 Industry development and attraction

The Gympie region is presented with notable opportunities for investment attraction, economic growth and development. The region has large tracts of industrial land available for occupation or development and is uniquely placed near enough to Brisbane without the urban challenges faced in SEQ. Gympie city, Southside and regional localities including Widgee, Goomeri and Tin Can Bay are existing industrial centres that cater for a broad range of manufacturing, fabrication, processing and warehousing activities. Vacant industrial land is available for development across the Gympie region in various localities and under various zonings. Further information is available through Council's Planning Scheme and through commercial real estate agents.

The relatively small land holding parcels in the Mary Valley and its natural environment make it well suited to niche and/or intensive agribusiness development providing water rights are available, and providing the land use planning environment supports on-farm value adding. In this regard, the Mary Valley provides significant opportunities and is currently being scoped for future potential by Gympie Regional Council.

Despite the availability of commercial and industrial land, it is considered the business profile of the City of Gympie is dominated by microbusinesses and small businesses, with few companies in the Gympie region employing 200 or more workers. In this context, there is significant scope to promote the Gympie region's industrial land attributes to potential business investors in South-East Queensland, particularly given the close proximity to the capital city, available industrial land and the many attributes the Gympie region has to offer prospective investors.

As mentioned previously, in the consultation phase of development of this strategy, it became apparent there is already an established strong partnership between Council and the business leaders/community and this is working effectively. Feedback received has highlighted that the 'operational' activities of Council's economic development portfolio are working very well and appear to be well-tailored to meet the needs of most of the business community. As such, the Priority Enablers that will be implemented from an industry development and attraction perspective will be progressed in a complementary approach to the current operational priorities (e.g. training courses, mentoring and business development programs, industry forums and business leaders events) that have been welcomed and supported by local business and industry.

The positive impact of tourism and the continued development of tourism and visitation is an important component to the Economic Development of the Gympie region.

The council recently created Destination Gympie Region (DGR) as the pre-eminent tourism organisation for the region. DGR works closely with neighbouring tourism organisations and Tourism Events Queensland.

“ Attracting investment and investment opportunities requires promotion, advocacy and partnerships. ”



# 5. Strategic lever: industry development and attraction

Sunshine Coast Destination Limited, as the Regional Tourism Organisation that covers the Gympie Regional Council area, works with DGR in the design and implementation of state, national and international marketing strategies and campaigns.

The Destination Tourism Plan, looking forward to 2020, have recently been developed, the plan identifies the key strategic tourism priorities for the Gympie region. The 10 priorities identified are:

- digital marketing and industry skills in digital marketing
- road access to the region, including Bruce Highway
- increase air access and route development
- industry education and engagement
- event development and acquisition
- develop new nature based experiences
- invest in interstate marketing
- prepare a niche market and product development strategy
- grow business events
- PR and content push via ambassador program.

Council, in partnership with the State Government has recently been successful in encouraging private investment into a \$60M quarter-horse race track and equestrian/residential development in the Mary Valley. The development is planned to include a six-star tourist facility and training and stabling for 400 horses, within an equine-focused acreage residential development. Focus should now be directed to the identification of business development and tourism development value-added opportunities that will create significant economic spin-offs for the region.

To achieve the desired outcomes in relation to industry development and attraction, the following Priority Enablers will be progressed.

## Priority Enablers

Target specific industry attraction opportunities e.g. difficult to locate industries, agribusiness industries, creative and knowledge based industries (Investment Opportunity Prospectus).

Continue to work with existing business and industry through Mentoring and Business Support Programs for future expansion and development opportunities.

Progress tourism development opportunities identified through the region's Destination Tourism Plan.

Identification and pursuit of business and tourism development opportunities as value-adds to the proposed quarter-horse industry establishment in the Mary Valley.



# 6. Advocacy campaigns

Planning an advocacy campaign is a dynamic process. It involves identifying the issue, developing solutions, building support, and bringing issues, solutions and political will together to ensure the desired change takes place. While the Council has a well-developed relationship with local State and Federal Members of Parliament, a strategic campaign is required to deliver the best possible outcomes for our community for specific priority issues.

In relation to the game changer priorities identified in Section 4, developing an advocacy campaign on each priority (i.e. issue) is the way to make an impact. Advocacy is about strategic pursuit of an outcome that will deliver change for the business community and community in general across the Gympie region.

By being proactive and adopting a planned approach via development of Advocacy Campaigns the Gympie Regional Council and business leaders who are supportive of this Strategy will automatically be strengthening their outreach and potential alliances with policymakers and other third parties.

The following steps (slightly modified from Ten Common Elements of Successful Advocacy Campaigns by Pat Libby) seek to ensure that with each game changer priority a planned approach is used to deliver the desired outcome.

- 1 Identify an issue**  
This step has been completed given the list of game changer issues that have been identified.
- 2 Research the issue**  
Involves searching for facts and figures from expert sources that support your Game Changer issue. A Position Paper should be developed which explains in simple terms why this issue is important, why there is a need for the change as proposed, identify the partners who support the game changer and why.
- 3 Create a fact sheet**  
The fact sheet is a summarised easy-to-read version of the Position Paper and is no longer than two pages (double sided).
- 4 'Brand' the issue**  
The way the campaign is framed and how the key issues are highlighted. How the issue is presented is directly linked to with how well it will 'sell' in the marketplace of ideas. The key is to make sure how the issue is packaged in such a way that when people are hearing it for the first time they will understand it and remember what it's all about.

# 6. Advocacy campaigns

## 5 Map out possible supporters and detractors

You need to think carefully about which people and organisations are represented along the continuum of possible supporters and detractors. By mapping this information you will be able to determine who are the hard-core believers that will drive the effort, those that will do something to help, people who might be willing to pitch in, and those that agree with the cause but not to the extent that they'd do any heavy lifting (although they might lend their name to the effort).

The aim is to see if you can figure out arguments that will move those middle people over to support the issue. You'll also fill in the names of people and organisations you think will never come to see things the way you do, but might be willing to move closer to your viewpoint if you deal with their concerns. If you are able to be honest with yourselves and think carefully about the arguments the opposition might have, you may be able to put together research to refute or address their objections.

## 6 Form a coalition

When forming a coalition this should consist of the broadest possible array of stakeholders to show that it is more than just the "usual suspects" that support the game changer issue.

## 7 Develop educational materials

This will include simple talking points and strategies that advocate the issue and can be readily forwarded to relevant parties as required.

## 8 Launch a media campaign

At this stage the brand is used to communicate why the issue is important and what action needs to take place to make it right.

## 9 Approach elected officials

At a state and federal government level to affect the required policy/operational change.

## 10 Monitor progress on the issue

This will occur once a path (potentially a person) is identified who will support and drive the required change. The task will involve ensuring they are supported and provided with any required information.

Ultimately, Gympie Regional Council in partnership with business/business leaders and other stakeholders will strategically name and frame each game changer issue in such a way that it quickly conveys a message about what the game changer issue is about in a way that appeals to a wide range of people.

# 7. Game plan monitoring

To ensure this strategy maintains its relevance and direction, it is essential that mechanisms are applied to regularly monitor and review key strategic directions.

As with any Strategic Plan, its success will depend on Gympie Regional Council and the business community/leaders working together to review and measure progress towards achieving the goals detailed previously which include those shown adjacent (Figure 3).

Progress towards achieving these goals is measured on a quarterly basis via the Local Economy Dashboard which provides a graphical illustration of the key economic indicators and associated changes.

The Gympie Regional Council Local Economy Dashboard can be downloaded from <http://lawrenceconsulting.com.au/le/e0b1b32f-3ac4-441e-a00d-99aa1e5a0cac/dashloader.html>

To deliver on the desired goals the monitoring and review process will involve:

- preparing a detailed action plan to guide implementation on an annual basis
- regular monitoring of progress against targets and quarterly assessment of new and/or remedial actions using data released from Gympie Regional Council's economic profile
- biannual and annual progress reports to Council's Economic Development Reference Group, Business Leaders Forum and Gympie Regional Council to oversee progress
- external communication of key elements in the Progress Report to all members of the Gympie region community via Council's website and other means of communication.

2019



Gross Regional Product – \$2.8b  
Employment Participation Rate – 5%  
Average Wage and Salary Income Growth – 6.0%  
Value of Goods Exported from the Gympie region – \$1.8b  
Population Growth – 2.0%  
Employment Growth – 1.9%  
Unemployment Rate – 5.9%

Figure 3

