

# REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY 2024

Darling Downs, South West  
and South Burnett



**Queensland**  
Government



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

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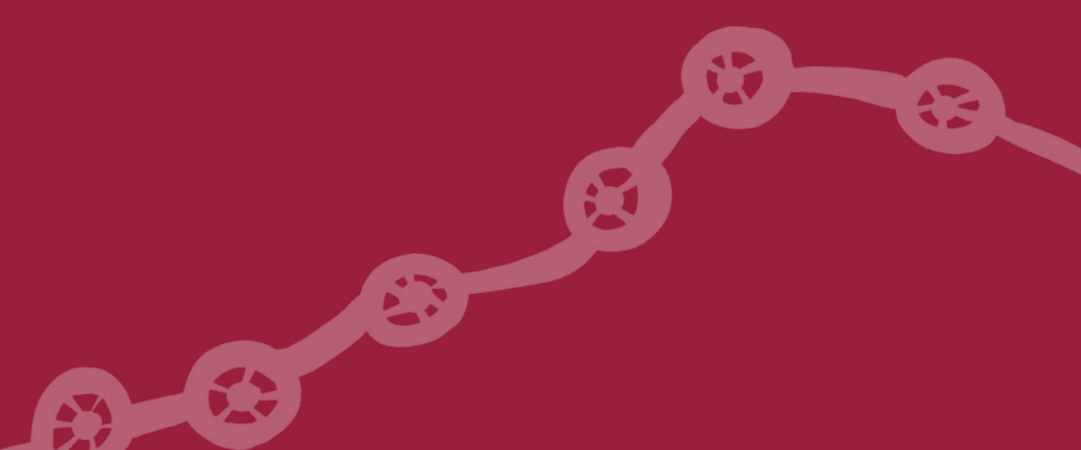
The Department of State Development and Infrastructure (DSDI) acknowledges the Country and people of Queensland's First Nations. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders – their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledges and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea, sky and Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture.

This Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being.

We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of First Nations peoples and commit to shaping our state's future together. DSDI recognises the contribution of First Nations peoples and communities to the State of Queensland and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly.

The transformation priorities for the region have been developed in close consultation with the community and are intended for the benefit of all people in the region.







Queensland  
Government

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# FOREWORD

The global economy is undergoing a historic shift from carbon-intensive industries to a cleaner, decarbonised economy. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly evident, governments and investors around the world are transforming their economies at an unprecedented scale. This is changing how economies source their energy, where investors allocate capital, and the products customers buy.

The Queensland Government is committed to working with industry, local governments and the regions to harness opportunities that this transformation presents.

**The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan** (released in 2022) outlines the Queensland Government's plans to transform Queensland's energy system to deliver clean, reliable and affordable power and achieve 80 per cent renewable energy by 2035. The Plan also targets the Queensland Government's plans to reduce emissions to 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025.

**The Queensland New-Industry Development Strategy** (released in 2023), identifies the key industries where Queensland is likely to have a competitive advantage in a decarbonised global economy.

**The Regional Transformation Strategies** build on these state-wide initiatives to identify specific opportunities for four regions – North West Queensland (including the corridor to Townsville), Greater Whitsunday, Central Queensland, and Darling Downs, South West and the South Burnett (DDSWSB).

These regions are home to traditional, primary industries that today are a significant source of economic activity and jobs. However, they also have unique opportunities to support new industries like critical minerals, renewable energy, and low-carbon fuels such as hydrogen and biofuels, which will thrive in a decarbonised global economy.

The DDSWSB Regional Transformation Strategy (RTS) aims to build on the unique strengths and advantages of the region to support its long-term transformation.

Harnessing the region's world-class agriculture industry and abundant land and natural assets, a growing manufacturing base and an emerging health and research capability, the RTS identifies key opportunities for jobs and investment growth in a

low-emissions economy. These include value-added agriculture, growth in solar, wind and battery supply and componentry, advanced manufacturing and health research and services. Some of these specifically harness opportunities associated with decarbonisation; others provide diversification opportunities as the region transitions over time from carbon-intensive industries.

The RTS sets out specific priorities to sustainably grow these industries and support resilient regional economies. It aims to ensure the DDSWSB region has a strong future in a low-carbon economy, with a resilient economy, sustainable industries and thriving communities.

These priorities build on the significant investment already underway in the region, including more than \$5 billion of renewable energy projects since 2015 as part of the Southern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone, more than \$1.3 billion in health precinct developments and significant investment to support local manufacturing.

The RTS details the range of support currently available to the regions to support transition. This includes the \$200 million of funding under the Regional Economic Futures Fund to support specific regional transition and the \$415.5 million Industry Partnership Program.

The objectives and priorities that underpin this RTS have been developed in partnership with local government, industry and the wider community.

As implementation occurs the Queensland Government will continue to consult and partner with communities in the region.

The region has a strong, vibrant future – and the Queensland Government is committed to supporting its transformation towards a world-class, low-carbon economy.

# QUEENSLAND REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION OBJECTIVES

Resilient regions with diversified, value-adding industries and a highly skilled workforce

Sustainable regions with innovative industries that lead the way in a net zero economy

Thriving, liveable and inclusive regions that attract and retain people, businesses and investment

## Darling Downs, South West and South Burnett Priorities



### Value-add and circular economy in agriculture

Development of the circular economy in the region through conversion of agricultural waste and by-products

Development and commercialisation of research and development (R&D), technology, new industry innovation and skills development and attraction to support a globally competitive agricultural industry

Reliable and secure water supply for higher-value agricultural enterprises (including exploring potential water security, capture and re-allocation from the winding-down of water-intensive coal-fired power stations)

Enhanced capability for tourism operators, including local governments, primary producers and First Nations peoples for high quality agri-tourism and outback/country tourism experiences

Growth in sustainable land management practices through elevating First Nations peoples' knowledge, increasing biodiversity, recognition of natural capital and supporting local communities with carbon farming opportunities and challenges, especially those related to cumulative social impacts and absentee landholders



### Health and pharmaceuticals

Partnering with First Nations communities to investigate the development of traditional bush foods and use of medicinal plants

Supporting the growth of collaborative health, science and community precincts, including training and research

Growing of the region's role in producing and processing pharmaceutical products, such as duboisia, heparin, collagen and keratin



### Clean and sustainable energy

Investigation of community-owned initiatives that provide green energy generation and storage at a local level (e.g. wind, solar, battery storage and bioenergy production), including service maintenance hubs

Investigation of opportunities to support supply chain resilience and improve network capacity and access within the Southern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) region as well as other areas in the region

Development of industrial and agricultural precincts using alternative fuel sources, including bioenergy and green hydrogen

Investigation of opportunities to repurpose future disused infrastructure from carbon-intensive industries for alternate uses



### Strengthen advanced manufacturing capabilities

Establishment or scale-up of clean, industrial precincts to strengthen the capability of the manufacturing industry

New or enhanced local training, education and vocational programs in advanced manufacturing and renewable energy production

Improvement of freight transport connectivity within the region (such as the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and the Port of Bundaberg) to unlock opportunities for downstream agricultural processing, transportation of components for renewable projects and advanced manufacturing

Supporting the circular economy in the region through R&D of waste recycling and remanufacturing, including batteries and other renewable energy components

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFORMATION IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

## Why transformation matters

As Australia and nations around the world prioritise the decarbonisation of their economies, regional Queensland has an important role to play in the future industries that will underpin a low-emissions global economy. Adapting to that global shift and harnessing regional Queensland's distinctive strengths is key to ensuring that our state is globally competitive and home to vibrant regional communities that continue to prosper.

Being resource rich and trade-oriented, regional Queensland faces significant change over the coming decades. The global economy is undergoing a generational shift in response to the growing impacts of climate change, with an increasing focus on decarbonisation. In response, governments and industry around the world are shifting away from carbon-intensive supply chains towards new, low-carbon industries.

Regional Queensland is well positioned for this new economy. This is through a vast endowment of the minerals needed to support low-carbon industries, abundant land and resources suitable for sustainable agriculture and renewable energy generation and expertise in world-leading industries, such as mining.

Transformation relies on continued investment in economic and social enablers, such as diverse

housing, water, energy, health, education and transport infrastructure, a skilled workforce and digital connectivity.

Transforming the region around the key industries of agriculture, mining, renewable energy and tourism will require working across government and with local governments and the community to have the right land use and infrastructure in place. Of particular importance to the region will be the protection of land for its best use. In some circumstances, multiple land uses can be navigated to achieve sustainable coexistence. Other times, competing land use must be assessed to ensure any identified adverse impacts are appropriately avoided, minimised or mitigated, to support and strengthen the region's ongoing competitive advantage.

That is why the RTS is designed to align with other government policies as well as federal and local government policies. The RTS will also support the national and Queensland emissions targets, as outlined in Figure 1 (page 8).

Queensland's agricultural, forestry and fishing, mining and manufacturing industries contributed

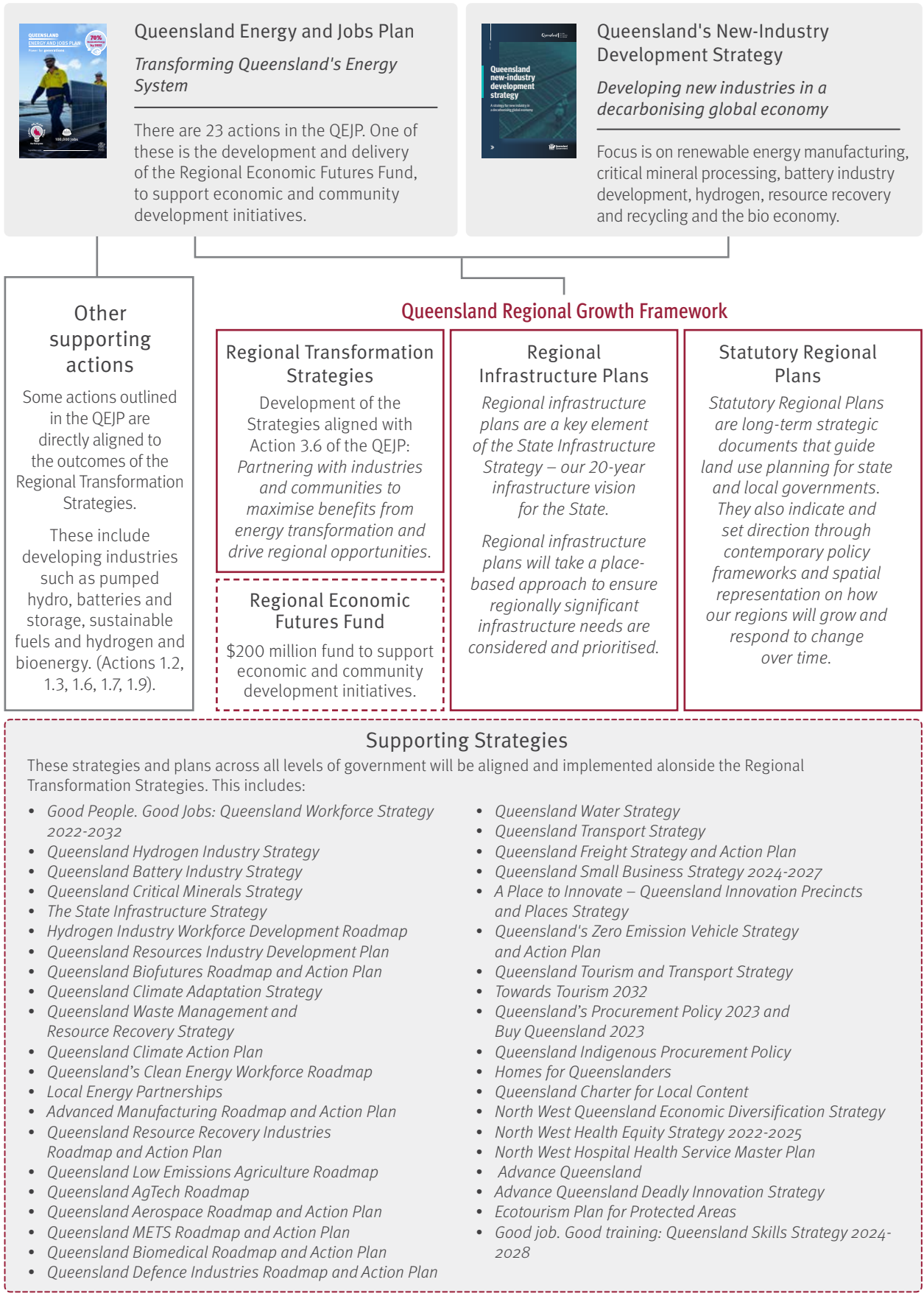


### Notes

<sup>1</sup> As of 2022, Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022, Release 1.

Figure 1: Queensland regional transformation policy context.

## AUSTRALIA AND QUEENSLAND'S TARGETS: NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050





# Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and the Queensland New-Industry Development Strategy

The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP) outlines how Queensland's energy system will transform to deliver clean, reliable and affordable energy for Queenslanders. It outlines key renewable energy targets and actions for Queensland, including:

- a new renewable energy target of 70 per cent by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035.
- a commitment to convert all of Queensland's publicly owned coal-fired power stations into clean energy hubs by 2035, backed by a Job Security Guarantee for workers.
- substantial investment across the state, with 95 per cent of clean energy infrastructure investment anticipated to be in regional Queensland.

The QEJP will harness Queensland's existing natural resources and skilled workforce to transform the state's electricity system and deliver clean, reliable and affordable power to Queensland's energy system. This will include around 25 gigawatts (GW) of large-scale wind and solar, foundation pumped hydro assets plus additional storage and firming technologies and new transmission.

## Queensland's natural advantages in renewables

Queensland has natural advantages in its high-quality renewable resources, including:

- **Solar** – Queensland has abundant solar resources and is well positioned for large scale solar generation, particularly in areas located near existing network infrastructure and major population centres.
- **Wind** – Queensland has high quality and nationally competitive wind resources, underpinned by recent improvements in wind turbine technology.
- **Biomass** – Queensland's strong agricultural industry generates substantial amounts of biomass. Using biomass to generate bioenergy (green electricity) and sustainable liquid fuels could contribute significantly to Queensland's renewable energy capacity.
- **Hydro-electricity** – There is significant potential to expand and build upon Queensland's opportunities.



*Solar farm, regional Queensland*



Flow battery, National Battery Testing Facility

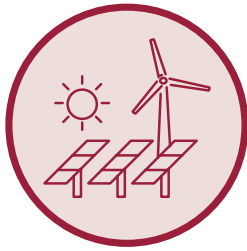
### Other focus areas of the QEJP that will assist with regional transformation

These RTS are one action of the QEJP (Action 3.6 – partner with industries and communities to maximise benefits from the energy transformation and drive regional opportunities). Other actions under the QEJP that will help facilitate regional transformation include:

- Developing industries and technology such as pumped hydro (Action 1.2), batteries and storage (Action 1.3), future renewable hydrogen (Action 1.6), sustainable liquid fuels (Action 1.7) and bioenergy futures (Action 1.9)
- Continuing to support the Uniform Tariff Policy, ensuring regional Queenslanders can access affordable energy (Action 2.7)
- Implementing a \$150 million Job Security Guarantee to support affected energy workers in Queensland’s publicly owned coal-fired power stations and associated coal mines (i.e., Kogan Creek and Meandu mines) (Action 3.2)
- Delivery of Queensland’s Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap, which was released on 25 October 2023, and \$192 million for Powerlink to develop Transition and Training Hubs in Townsville and Gladstone (Action 3.3)
- Committing \$11.6 million to build capacity in the manufacturing industry and encourage local content in Queensland to grow the renewable energy supply chain in Queensland (Action 3.4)
- \$10 million to deliver a Queensland Microgrid Pilot Fund to support network resilience for First Nations communities and ensure an inclusive SuperGrid (Action 3.5).

The Queensland New-Industry Development Strategy (QNIDS) sets out the Queensland Government’s approach to proactively develop the industries that are critical to the global shift to a net zero economy. QNIDS outlines the impact of decarbonisation in reshaping commodity demand, and opportunities for Queensland to capitalise on manufacturing opportunities to build the infrastructure and products required to transition towards renewable energy sources. The six key industries identified by QNIDS are outlined in Figure 2 (page 11).

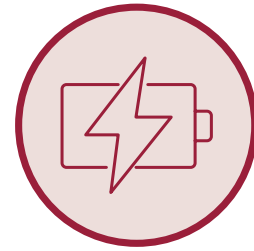
Figure 2: QNIDS industry priorities.



**Renewable energy manufacturing and infrastructure development**



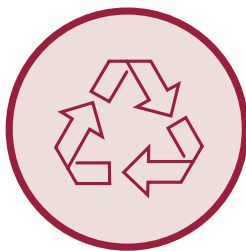
**Critical mineral processing, manufacturing and product development**



**Battery industry development**



**Green hydrogen**



**Circular economy including resource recovery and recycling**



**Bioeconomy including biofuels and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)**

## The Regional Economic Futures Fund (REFF)

The REFF is a \$200 million program to support communities, which will be directly impacted by the transition to a low-emission economy, to seize industry development opportunities presented by global decarbonisation.

The objectives of the REFF are to support long-term community prosperity by facilitating sustainable employment and increasing investment in economic development and diversification projects. The REFF supports activities which:

- create new jobs and a stronger workforce,
- strengthen regional supply chains,
- support decarbonisation and the QEJP,
- build or identify a region's strengths, and/or
- support renewable energy precinct development.

The REFF is a component of the QEJP and QNIDS. The RTS provide a coordinated approach to delivering state government programs, including REFF.

### How does the RTS align to these priorities?

The RTS identifies key economic strengths and future industry priorities for those Queensland regions likely to be most impacted by the shift to a decarbonised global economy, based on the unique geography, resources and workforce skills of these regions. This will enable these regions to have a targeted and place-based approach in line with the statewide strategic priorities outlined in the QNIDS, and the renewable energy targets outlined in the QEJP. The industry priorities in the RTS have been developed to align with both existing strengths and several of the industries identified in both QNIDS and QEJP.

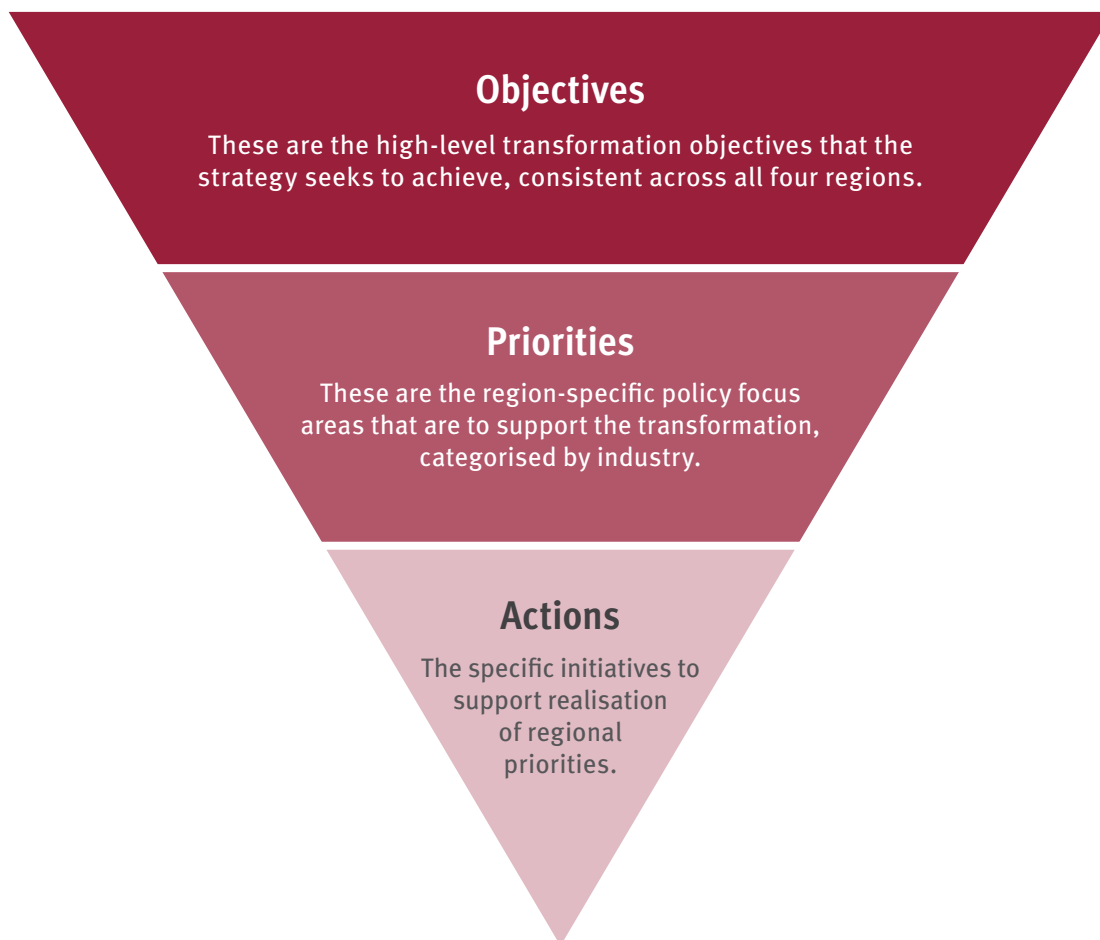
# Framework for the Regional Transformation Strategies

The development of the RTS is based on a practical, outcome-based framework and provides a clear link between the strategic opportunities of each region and future actions and outcomes. It has been underpinned by extensive community and industry consultation. Their input is fundamental to these strategies, which have been developed with a 10–20 year horizon, acknowledging that advancing global decarbonisation and energy transition in the regions during this period will be critical to meeting the Queensland Government’s renewable energy target of 70 per cent by 2032, and 80 per cent by 2035.

## The approach to the Regional Transformation Strategies

The strategy framework outlines how the overarching transformation objectives for regional Queensland are supported by region-specific priorities and targeted actions. The overarching objectives provide a long-term vision for all of Queensland’s regions that are the focus of transformation. They recognise the important relationship between sustainable, resilient and prosperous economies and thriving, liveable and inclusive communities.

Figure 3: Regional Transformation Strategy Framework.





## The objectives for regional transformation

Through close consultation with communities, a vision for regional Queensland has been developed that is encapsulated in three objectives.

Figure 4: Queensland Regional Transformational Objectives.

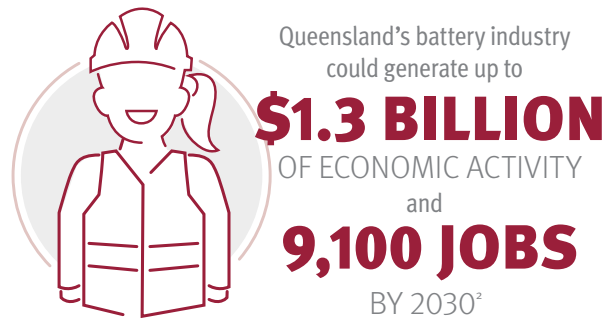


### OBJECTIVE 1: Resilient regions with diversified, value-adding industries and a highly skilled workforce

The future of regional Queensland is one of resilient communities, underpinned by a diverse economy, value-adding industries and a highly-skilled workforce. In this context resilience means being ready to harness the opportunities of a decarbonised global economy. It is this proactive approach that will underpin the long-term future of our regions – a future with competitive industries and well-paid, highly-skilled jobs and a lifestyle to match.

Traditional industries, such as mining and agriculture, have and continue to underpin the economic prosperity of regional Queensland. They provide well-paid jobs for communities and produce high-quality exports for domestic and global markets. These industries are making significant investments to reduce their carbon footprint, and they will continue to play an important role in the Queensland economy.

While demand in these industries will continue for some time to come, and low-emissions producers will have a critical role in a transformed economy, the long-term economic resilience of our regions will depend upon having a range of industries. This will better insulate our economy against changes in global commodity prices, reducing the risk of ‘boom and bust’ economic cycles.



Value-adding industries will have a key role in our resilient regional economies, by helping to capitalise on our strong resource base while also providing well-paid jobs for communities. A shift to boosting sovereign processing and manufacturing capability in a more uncertain world is adding to the case for ‘moving up the value chain’ in areas where our regions will be competitive. A mix of primary and other industries will provide regional communities with highly skilled jobs, helping to attract and retain both people and investment.

#### What does this mean for the DDSWSB region?

- An economy that continues to be underpinned by a world-leading agricultural industry, but also harnesses this advantage to generate new, value-added agricultural products in sustainable ways.
- Strengthening existing value-adding industries. This includes strengthening the capability of the region’s existing advanced manufacturing industry for emerging needs and supporting the expansion of health and pharmaceutical products from the region’s rich agricultural sector.
- Capitalising on the transition to renewable energy by building capability in wind, solar and battery power supply and componentry.

#### Notes

<sup>2</sup> Accenture (2023, January 17). Battery industry opportunities for Queensland.

## OBJECTIVE 2: Sustainable regions with innovative industries that lead the way in a net zero economy

The future vision for regional Queensland is one underpinned by sustainable and innovative industries that will lead the way in a net zero economy. By leveraging existing economic strengths and natural endowments, each region can be well positioned to meet growing demand for sustainable products. This will involve both the decarbonisation of existing industries and the emergence of new, clean energy industries.

The QNIDS outlines the government's approach to proactively developing the industries that will be in demand in a decarbonising world. At the same time, we are transforming our energy system.

With a highly-skilled workforce, critical mineral deposits and abundant natural resources, Queensland's regions will be at the forefront of these strategic initiatives. This means the regions being underpinned by clean industries will be competitive in a world where supply chains and trade agreements place a growing emphasis on low emissions. Existing industries, such as manufacturing, resources, agriculture, transport and tourism, will play a key role in this. Businesses in these industries are already leading the way in reducing emissions. Innovative future industries will have an increasingly key role in our regions. A more circular approach to consumption and production will be prioritised, where we are recycling, re-manufacturing, re-designing and re-using products and materials at their highest value for as long as possible.

Preserving and ensuring the ongoing sustainability of our natural environments will be critical, particularly with the challenges brought by climate change. An important part of this will be recognising and elevating First Nations peoples' deep knowledge systems in land and sea management practices. Management of climate risk, including by adapting to expected climate change impacts and mitigating further change, is vital to ensure the sustainability of the region, economically, socially and in terms of assets and infrastructure.

### What does this mean for the DDSWSB region?

- Harnessing the region's abundant wind and solar resources and manufacturing capability to strengthen its renewable energy industries.
- Strengthening circular economy principles in the region's agriculture and manufacturing industries to facilitate more innovative and sustainable products.



### OBJECTIVE 3: Thriving, liveable and inclusive regions that attract and retain people, businesses and investment

At the heart of the transformation of our regions and their future prosperity will be the communities within them. Retaining people and attracting new residents will be key to strengthening our communities and providing a sustainable future. There is immense opportunity for investment and jobs in Queensland's regions as the world continues to decarbonise. However, this will only be possible if our communities are thriving, liveable and inclusive.

Fit-for-purpose and quality enabling infrastructure, such as diverse housing, water, energy, transport and digital connectivity, that is planned and built with consideration of the changing climate, is fundamental to support thriving, liveable and inclusive communities. This will support the wellbeing of residents and ensure regional communities provide the services that will attract and retain a competitive workforce. This will also ensure families have access to the services needed to provide future opportunities.



Highlighting the economic opportunities for communities in regional Queensland.

To make Queensland a location of choice for businesses, opportunities offered by transformation will need to be provided for all people in the regions.

Making up over 97 per cent of all business enterprises in Queensland, small businesses are the foundation of our communities<sup>4</sup>. They employ around 42 per cent of the private sector workforce and play an important role in the supply chain of new industries, as well as continuing to support the growth of traditional industries<sup>5</sup>.

First Nations peoples have unparalleled cultural resources and traditional knowledge of the lands and waters in the regions and are central to the nation's identity and history.

#### What does this mean for the DDSWSB region?

- Ensuring local opportunities for businesses and communities in renewable energy generation and storage infrastructure, particularly wind and solar.
- Upskilling the workforce through training programs for local and long-term jobs in renewable energy projects, particularly wind and solar.
- Prioritising enduring infrastructure that will support the community and economy.
- Attracting new workers and business investment to the region.

#### Notes

<sup>3</sup> Jobs Queensland. Data portal for the projection period 2021-22 to 2025-26. Net new jobs. Excludes Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan – Beaudesert, Moreton Bay – North, Moreton Bay – South and Sunshine Coast. Accessed on 18 September 2023.

<sup>4,5</sup> Queensland Small Business Outlook – Beyond the pandemic, 2023, Queensland Small Business Commissioner, accessible at : < [https://qsbcc.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/QSBC\\_Beyond-the-pandemic\\_Accessible-web.pdf](https://qsbcc.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/QSBC_Beyond-the-pandemic_Accessible-web.pdf) >

## How the RTS has been developed

The RTS has been informed by the outcomes and findings of extensive consultation processes with key regional stakeholders, including industry bodies, businesses, community members and organisations, local governments and other Queensland Government departments and agencies.

Consultation identified a diverse range of opportunities for each region and broadly supported the strategic direction of the underpinning

Queensland policy frameworks to help Queensland transition to a decarbonised future. Stakeholders also acknowledged that it will be important that regional transformation will need to be undertaken in a manner that is inclusive, sustainable and supports the liveability of our regions, with continued stakeholder input. Key stakeholders will continue to be periodically engaged through the regional **Local Economic Opportunity (LEO) Network**.



A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for each region provided advice and feedback on a range of issues specific to each region. These consultations informed the development of the RTS by identifying key strengths and opportunities for the region, transformation objectives, key priorities and potential actions that would support the transformation of the region. These forums will continue to have a role supporting the implementation of the RTS for the region.

Targeted consultations have been undertaken with a range of stakeholders across each region to explore their insights on the economic strengths of the region, opportunities for economic transformation and actions that may support the transformation objectives and priorities.

A targeted survey was conducted to obtain stakeholder insights on key economic opportunities and challenges relating to economic development and transformation in each region.

Public consultation has been undertaken to obtain feedback from people who live, work, or own a business in one of the four targeted regions. This was done through a range of media channels and an online survey.



# ABOUT THE REGION

The Darling Downs, South West and South Burnett region encompasses three sub-regions:

- Darling Downs sub-region – located to the west of the Great Dividing Range and immediately adjacent to South East Queensland (SEQ). Includes Toowoomba, which is the major administrative and commercial centre of the DDSWSB region and home to major construction, manufacturing and agricultural industries. Located 132 kilometres west of Brisbane, Toowoomba and the Darling Downs sub-region is strategically linked by major highways, railway lines and the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport. This part of the region plays an important role in transport and logistics, including road, rail and air. The proposed Inland Rail alignment also traverses this sub-region and its proximity to existing rail, the Wellcamp Airport and existing key industries, may provide further regional transformation opportunities.
- South West sub-region – located to the west of the Darling Downs sub-region, the South West represents around 80 per cent of the region’s land area. It is characterised by rural and natural landscapes, with agriculture and oil and gas being the key economic industries.
- South Burnett sub-region – located north of the Darling Downs sub-region, South Burnett is the southern gateway to the Wide Bay Burnett

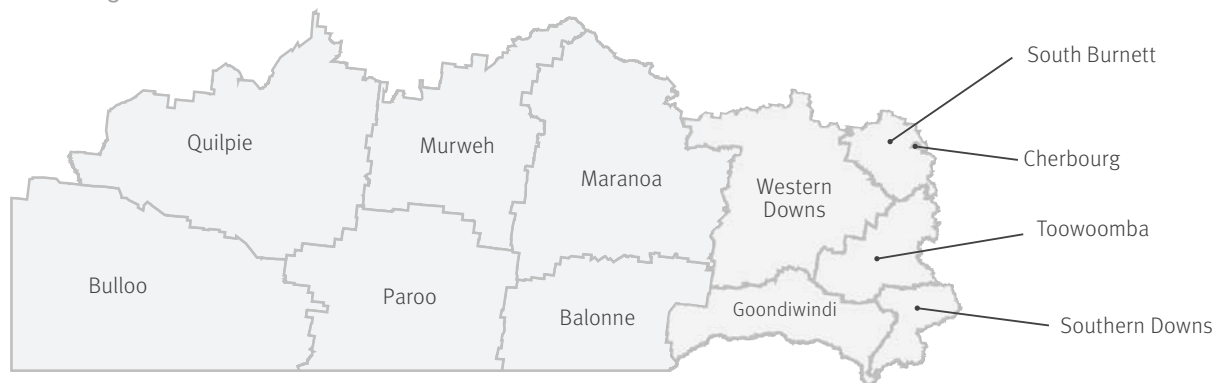
region. Kingaroy is the key administrative centre of the sub-region, which is home to a significant agricultural industry. Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council also forms part of this sub-region.

The DDSWSB region has a total land area of 404,940 square kilometres<sup>6</sup>, representing 23 per cent of Queensland’s total land mass. It comprises 12 local government areas (LGAs): Bulloo, Quilpie, Paroo, Murweh, Maranoa, Balonne, Western Downs, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, Southern Downs, South Burnett and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire.

The region is well represented by a number of organisations which provide support at both a regional and industry level. One of these is the South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC), which is supported through the Queensland Government’s Remote Area Board program.

The region is home to the Kullilli, Bunthamurra, Budjiti, Mardgany, Baakandji, Bidjara, Madandanji, Kooma, Bigambul, Barunggam, Iman (Yiman), Wakka Wakka, Jarowair, Githabul, Jagera, Giabal and Wulli Wulli Nations, who are recognised as the Traditional Custodians of its lands and waterways, having lived in the region for many thousands of years and retained strong connections to the region. The region is home to the Bunya Mountains, a site of significant cultural and environmental significance for First Nations peoples, considered to be the regional meeting point for local communities. For many thousands of years, First Nations peoples from New South Wales and

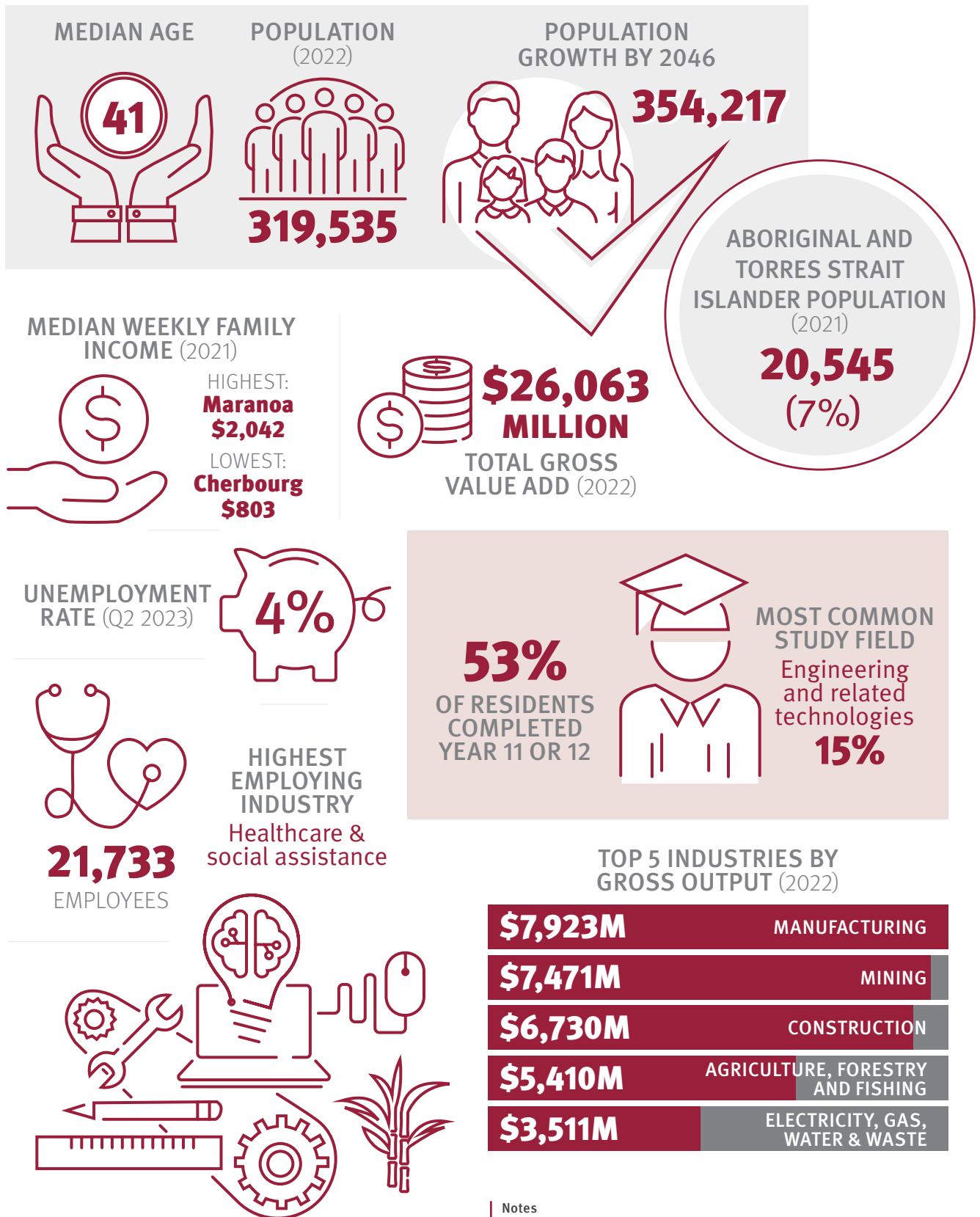
Figure 6 Map of the DDSWSB region



**Notes**

<sup>6</sup> Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (2021) Custom Regional Profile generated 3 July 2023

Figure 7 Statistical overview of the region <sup>7</sup>

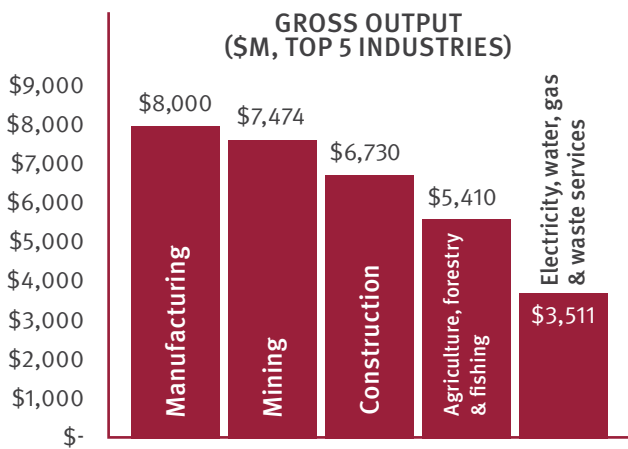


Notes

<sup>7</sup> Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

# Economic overview

Agriculture, mining and manufacturing (particularly food processing) are key industries that underpin the DDSWSB region, in addition to health and education services. One quarter of Queensland’s agricultural output is produced from this region.<sup>8</sup> These industries collectively contribute 40 per cent of gross regional output<sup>9</sup> and employ almost a fifth<sup>10</sup> of the region’s workforce.



## Mining

With coal and coal seam gas (CSG) extraction from the Surat Basin and oil and gas extraction from the Cooper/ Eromanga Basins, the mining and gas extraction industries are the largest contribution by value-add to the DDSWSB regional economy. Mining accounts for \$6.8 billion of exports and \$4.6 billion of regional value-add.



## Construction

The construction industry is the second largest by number of registered businesses in the DDSWSB region and employs 8.1 per cent of the region’s workforce. House construction has been a key driver of economic activity for the regional economy, with increases in industry specialisation over the last ten years.



## Electricity, gas, water & waste services

Historically, the DDSWSB region’s resource extraction industry has enabled the location of several gas and coal-fired power plants in the region, as well as transmission infrastructure. This has also enabled a growing renewable energy sector, particularly in wind and solar.



## Agriculture, forestry, and fishing

The industry is tied to the DDSWSB region’s identity, which began from First Nations peoples practising a form of sustainable agriculture. Today, the region produces at least 22 per cent of Queensland’s cattle, 75 per cent of Queensland’s wheat crop and 85 per cent of Queensland’s cotton. The region is also home to Australia’s single export-certified pork abattoir.



## Manufacturing

The largest industry by gross output at \$7.9 billion, manufacturing in the DDSWSB region supports other core industries (agriculture and energy) through food processing, manufacturing farm equipment, metal and composite products for the energy and gas industries.



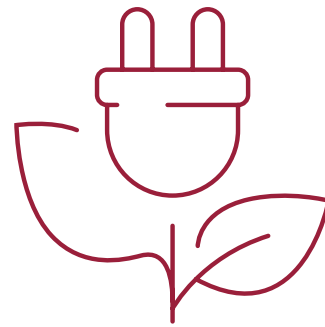
### Notes

<sup>8</sup> 2022 data. Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

<sup>9</sup> Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

<sup>10</sup> Queensland Government Statistician’s Office, 2021, Custom Regional Profile generated 3 July 2023

There is an opportunity to promote advanced manufacturing activity in the region, such as through leveraging artificial intelligence, automation, and other Industry 4.0 technologies.



#### Emerging industries in the DDSWSB region

By promoting advanced manufacturing activity in the region, such as through leveraging artificial intelligence automation, and other Industry 4.0, we can improve the efficiency of manufacturing, allowing businesses to explore greater value-add opportunities.

Businesses implementing advanced manufacturing technologies indicated there is a need to upskill and increase staffing to manage new technologies and process greater outputs.

The transition to renewable energy in the DDSWSB region is a key focus of the Queensland Government. The Western Downs and Southern Downs LGAs are home to two Queensland Renewable Energy Zones (REZs).

These in-flight zones are already progressing with developing renewable energy capability under the current, ‘open access’ generation practices under National Electricity Rules.

These zones have a combined 4,000-5,200 megawatt (MW) of expected installed energy generation, with the region more broadly home to 57 operational, under construction, or proposed renewable energy projects. These are resulting in more construction, maintenance and support roles for local energy production in a rapidly growing renewable energy industry.

## Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

The DDSWSB region is underpinned by abundant and high-quality agricultural land and an attractive climate. It hosts a diverse agricultural industry, with key strengths in livestock (such as cattle, wool, pig and goat farming), broadacre cropping, dairy and horticulture. Livestock rearing is the most specialised industry in the region, with a specialisation index of 4.17,\* while being the third largest industry by exports.

In addition to Queensland and other domestic markets, products are exported to international markets, particularly East and South-East Asia, through key ports, such as the Port of Brisbane and

the Port of Bundaberg, and airports, such as the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport. The core export, processed meat, is underpinned by the region’s highly accredited processing and production facilities.

**OUTPUT: \$5,410 million**

**VALUE ADD: \$2,133 million**

**EXPORTS: \$3,326 million**

REMPPLAN 2018-2022

\*The employment specialisation ratio measures how much more or less the region’s population is employed in a given industry compared to Queensland. This is measured as the ratio of the percentage of people employed in a given industry in the region to the percentage of people employed in that industry across the state. For example, a specialisation ratio of greater than one indicates that the region has a larger share of employment in that industry as compared to the broader state.



# Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry is the largest in the DDSWSB region by output, contributing \$7,923 million or 15 per cent of gross output in 2021-22.<sup>11</sup> It employs 6.7 per cent of the region's workforce<sup>12</sup> and supports several other industries, including agriculture and mining<sup>13</sup>. Technical expertise in agriculture, mining, civil construction and CSG contributes to the strength of the industry.

The manufacturing industry is the second largest exporter for the region, with a gross output of \$3,998 million or 21 per cent of total exports.<sup>14</sup> Over the four-year period to 2021-22, it expanded significantly as a major export industry, increasing in export value by \$1,129 million over the period.<sup>15</sup>

The industry is centred around food and metal-related products<sup>16</sup>, particularly in the Darling Downs sub-region, which is one of Australia's largest for manufacturing of broadacre farm equipment.<sup>17</sup> Direct access to food producers in the region and a strong supply chain network, particularly in the Western Downs, Maranoa, Toowoomba and South Burnett LGAs, is a key strength of the industry.

There are major abattoirs and meat processing plants in Warwick and Oakey, given the significant presence of privately-operated grazing systems throughout the region. The cattle sale yard complexes in Roma, Dalby and Toowoomba are some of the largest in Australia. Most pigs produced in the Darling Downs and South Burnett are transported to an abattoir and processing facility in Kingaroy, which is the only export-certified pork abattoir in Australia.

Building on existing strengths in food and metal production, there is an opportunity to develop advanced manufacturing precincts within the DDSWSB region, particularly around hubs that are linked to local universities, schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Advanced manufacturing, or Industry 4.0, involves the manufacturing of products using smart, innovative technology, such as cloud computing, autonomous robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data. Due to Toowoomba's strategic location, transport connections and education hubs, such as University of Southern Queensland and TAFE campuses, there is the potential for the regional centre to become a site for advanced manufacturing clusters and a manufacturing hub for the aerospace and defence industry, such as the Agtech and Logistics Hub in Toowoomba, which is Australia's home of digital agriculture and agribusiness innovation space.

**OUTPUT: \$7,923 million**

**VALUE ADD: \$1,370 million**

**EXPORTS: \$3,998 million**

REMPAN 2018-2022



*Big Tyre, Toowoomba*

## Notes

<sup>11</sup> Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

<sup>12</sup> Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2021) Custom Regional Profile generated 3 July 2023

<sup>13</sup> Regional Development Australia (2019) Final Economic Indicators Report. Accessed at: <https://rdafcw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Final-Economic-Indicators-Report-December19-compressed.pdf>

<sup>14,15</sup> Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

<sup>16,17</sup> Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (2021), Analysis of the Darling Downs Manufacturing Sector. Accessed at: [https://www.tsbe.com.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/field\\_f\\_content\\_file/manufacturing\\_report\\_online.pdf](https://www.tsbe.com.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/field_f_content_file/manufacturing_report_online.pdf)

## CASE STUDY: TOOWOOMBA ENTERPRISE HUB

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The Toowoomba Enterprise Hub is a significant transport, logistics and business hub, co-located at the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport, the AATLIS Industrial Precinct, and InterLinkSQ, a major freight facility. This is a significant precinct, and it has a potential role to play in the decarbonisation of Queensland's economy with manufacturing of renewable energy components and high-tech agriculture components. Activities to be undertaken in the precinct include the development of agricultural processing machinery and technologies to support greater value-add activities, AgTech hubs, co-location of a data centre and an aerospace and defence manufacturing hub through Boeing Defence Australia.





# Electricity and Gas

The DDSWSB region is well positioned to play a key role in the transformation of Queensland's energy system. Historically, coal and gas production in the region has attracted the development of several power stations that generate electricity using these inputs. These power stations are concentrated in the Western Downs, Toowoomba, Maranoa, South Burnett and Bulloo LGAs.

The region is emerging as a key location for renewable energy generation, with plentiful solar and wind resources. The Southern Queensland REZ region is located within the DDSWSB region, identifying numerous locations with attributes most suited to the establishment of new commercial-scale solar and wind facilities. Currently, there are 57 renewable energy projects being planned, under construction or in operation, using solar, wind and battery storage<sup>18</sup>, including Coopers Gap Wind Farm and Kogan Creek Energy Hub, and there is potential to generate significantly more renewable capacity in the DDSWSB region in the future. Upgrades to the existing transmission infrastructure will be necessary to support this.

The Queensland Government is working with government-owned energy companies, including Stanwell Corporation, to develop long-term strategic plans to gradually convert all publicly owned coal-fired power stations, including Tarong and Tarong North, into clean energy hubs by 2035. A key component of the energy transformation in this region will be to ensure these projects support and deliver lasting legacy capacity and benefits to existing industries and communities.

**OUTPUT: \$3,511 million**

**VALUE ADD: \$1,189 million**

**EXPORTS: \$1,407 million**

REMPAN 2018-2022

## Notes

<sup>18</sup> Department of Energy and Public Works 2023. Accessed on 9 August 2023 at: <https://electricity-generation-map.epw.qld.gov.au/>



*Solar Farm, Regional Queensland*

## CASE STUDY: CS ENERGY - ENERGY HUB AT KOGAN CREEK

CS Energy, a Queensland Government owned energy company, is developing a renewable energy hub next to the Kogan Creek Power Station, located in the Western Downs LGA. This includes the Kogan Renewable Hydrogen Demonstration Plant and Chinchilla Battery. The Chinchilla Battery is a \$150 million project to add grid-scale energy to the Darling Downs sub-region and will support a greater uptake in renewable energy through enabling stable energy supply from renewable solar energy. The project is one of several landmark battery projects in Australia and is paving the way for the scaling-up of renewable energy storage in the region.

The Renewable Hydrogen Demonstration Plant is being developed in a joint venture with Senex Energy. It will include the co-location of a solar farm, battery, hydrogen electrolyser and a hydrogen fuel cell next to the Kogan Creek Power Station. Hydrogen refuelling facilities will be located at Chinchilla and Charlton to support hydrogen-powered transportation in the region.

## Mining

Mining is the second largest industry in the DDSWSB region by economic output, contributing \$4,616 million or 20 per cent of Gross Value Add (GVA) in 2021-22.<sup>19</sup> Over the four-year period to 2021-22, the mining industry experienced the largest increase in GVA, increasing by \$1,776 million.<sup>20</sup> This has been driven by substantial activity in the Surat Basin, which is located across the Maranoa, Western Downs and Toowoomba LGAs. This supports CSG production and thermal coal mining, which underpins the region's electricity generation. The Cooper/Eromanga Basin stretches across the Bulloo and Quilpie LGAs,

producing oil and gas. The mining industry is the largest contributor of exports for the DDSWSB region, accounting for 35 per cent of total exports by dollar value.<sup>21</sup>

**OUTPUT: \$7,471 million**

**VALUE ADD: \$4,616 million**

**EXPORTS: \$6,829 million**

REMPPLAN 2018-2022

### Notes

<sup>19</sup> Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2021) Custom Regional Profile generated 3 July 2023

<sup>20</sup> Data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022

<sup>21</sup> \*Data presented for the Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services industry. Data applicable to energy generation is thus smaller than reported

<sup>21</sup> Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2021) Custom Regional Profile generated 3 July 2023



# Economic and social enablers

Future transformation of the region is underpinned by strong, vibrant communities. This requires certain economic and social enablers to ensure that the region is best placed to harness future opportunities. These enablers, which include diverse housing, transport and social infrastructure, water, energy, utilities and a well-skilled workforce, are essential

to support the economic prosperity of the region, its liveability and its ability to attract and retain people.

There are both challenges and opportunities in relation to these enablers and the Queensland Government is investing heavily at both a state and regional level to address these, as outlined below.

ENABLER	HOUSING
OVERVIEW	<p>With vacancy rates in the DDSWSB region down to 0.78 per cent<sup>22</sup>, increasing the housing supply to improve availability and affordability will help attract and retain the local workforce and build stronger communities. Housing (purchase and rental) and short-term accommodation needs a place-based response in each township for regional transformation to be successful.</p>
KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS	<p>With housing stress felt across the nation, multiple funding programs and plans are currently being delivered at a state and federal level to address housing affordability and availability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Employee Housing supports the attraction and retention of frontline staff such as police, health workers and teachers through the provision of suitable, good quality and safe housing. The demand for new housing increases each year, driven by the expansion of agency services in regional and remote communities. The program will build up to 439 homes and maintain an existing portfolio of approximately 2,900 homes for essential frontline workers in regional and remote communities.</li> <li>• The DDSWSB region falls across three Quickstarts Qld regions: Wide Bay/Burnett, Darling Downs and the Outback.</li> <li>• Under QuickStarts Qld and Social Housing Accelerator, the State has committed to commence 253 social homes in the Wide Bay/Burnett region, 154 social homes in the Darling Downs Region and 181 social homes in the Outback region by 30 June 2025.</li> <li>• From 1 July 2015 to 31 May 2024, 217 social homes have been delivered in Wide Bay/Burnett, 260 social homes have been delivered in Darling Downs and 92 social homes have been delivered in the Outback, including through QuickStarts Qld and the Social Housing Accelerator.</li> <li>• The new Homes for Queenslanders will work across the broader housing spectrum – bringing together private and public housing delivery, planning reforms, local government partnerships, state development, and significant infrastructure and public works as part of an additional \$3.1 billion investment across Queensland to support social and affordable housing and housing and homelessness outcomes.</li> <li>• The Queensland Government is also supporting federal housing initiatives, such as the Help to Buy scheme.</li> </ul>

**Notes**

<sup>22</sup> SQM vacancy data, February 2024, access at: <https://sqmresearch.com.au/vacancy.php>

<b>ENABLER</b>	<b>TRANSPORT</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<p>The DDSWSB region relies on the National Land Transport Network and Nationally Accredited Key Freight Routes to enable its economy. These routes include the Warrego Highway, Gore Highway, Cunningham Highway, New England Highway, Landsborough Highway, Leichhardt Highway and the Carnarvon Highway, and are supported by other state-controlled roads and the local transport network. There are three key regional airports located in Toowoomba, Charleville and Roma, and a number of aerodromes in the region. The West Moreton rail system provides connectivity for bulk freight, such as coal and agriculture, with ports such as the Port of Brisbane and the Port of Bundaberg being key destinations. Maintaining reliable freight routes is critical to ensuring communities and local industries can efficiently access inputs and export goods to demand centres.</p>
<b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b>	<p>The Regional Transport Plans for this region prioritise supporting economic growth, enhancing liveability, improving transport safety and improving network resilience. Regional planning actions have been developed to support these priorities. The Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program change to 2024-25 to 2027-28 lists the following program highlights within the Darling Downs, South West and South Burnett districts and areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1 billion funding commitment for the Inland Freight Route (Charters Towers to Mungindi) (jointly funded with the Australian Government)</li> <li>• \$361.7 million funding commitment for the Warrego Highway (jointly funded with the Australian Government)</li> <li>• \$52.4 million towards Gore Highway (Millmerran - Goondiwindi), Wyaga Creek, upgrade floodway (jointly funded with the Australian Government)</li> <li>• \$27 million Toowoomba - Cecil Plains Road, improve safety</li> <li>• \$15.4 million Cunningham Highway (Ipswich - Warwick), Tregony to Maryvale, improve safety (jointly funded with the Australian Government)</li> </ul>
<b>ENABLER</b>	<b>WATER</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<p>The DDSWSB region has an extensive dam network, with total water reserves amounting to 852 gegalitres (GL) across nine dams. In addition to rainwater and local streams, remote areas rely on water from local aquifers, predominantly the Great Artesian Basin. Water plays a key role in local mining, agricultural and manufacturing industries for ore processing, irrigation and cooling. The region is within the head waters of the Murray-Darling Basin which is Australia's most significant river system.</p>
<b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b>	<p>The DDSWSB region faces challenges in ensuring a sustainable and secure water supply to sustain its communities and industries in the face of increased climate variability. Increased available water has the potential to unlock investment and increase higher-value horticulture in the region. Plans and initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment - to review water security options</li> <li>• Bundaberg and Burnett Regional Water Assessment - to identify solutions to maximise water supply and drive economic growth</li> <li>• The Water Plan (Great Artesian Basin and Other Regional Aquifers) 2017 - provides a framework for the sustainable management of water of the Queensland section of the Great Artesian Basin and considers availability of water and future water requirements</li> <li>• Great Artesian Basin Rehabilitation Program - an initiative (grant program) delivered by the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) with State, Commonwealth and industry funding - to reduce water wastage, improve pressure and deliver social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits</li> <li>• Central Queensland Water Assessment - to identify options for new water storages to support economic growth.</li> </ul>

<p><b>ENABLER</b></p> <p><b>OVERVIEW</b></p> <p><b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b></p>	<p><b>POWER</b></p> <p>The DDSWSB region has a prominent electricity industry, with several major power stations located in the east. Major coal and gas-fired electricity generators include Tarong. There are a number of large-scale wind and solar projects in development on the existing transmission infrastructure.</p> <p>Queensland's south, including the Darling Downs and Wide Bay Burnett regions, have unique advantages and opportunities for REZ development to support Queensland's energy transformation.</p> <p>Action plans in the QEJP that will support the DDSWSB region's transition towards renewable energy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Strategic REZ Readiness Assessment for REZ Development to look at workforce, housing and infrastructure needs and other matters to understand community needs</li> <li>• investment to begin building the Queensland SuperGrid, which will ensure vast amounts of power can be moved efficiently across the state</li> <li>• investment to deliver world-class pumped hydros, including the Borumba pumped hydro in southern Queensland</li> <li>• \$500 million for community and large-scale battery projects, to store excess rooftop solar and improve network resilience</li> <li>• \$25.5 million to replace and refurbish existing infrastructure at Kogan Creek Power Station to ensure continued reliability of supply.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENABLER</b></p> <p><b>OVERVIEW</b></p> <p><b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b></p>	<p><b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b></p> <p>The DDSWSB region has a wide education network and is home to multiple higher-education campuses, including Griffith University, TAFE Queensland, and University of Southern Queensland.</p> <p>Closer proximity to social amenities like education and employment would support residents' ability to live in the region and train the future workforce. State and federal funding includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023-24, \$64.2 million for education to maintain, improve and upgrade schools in the Darling Downs, with \$30.3 million allocated for education to maintain, improve and upgrade schools for Outback Queensland</li> <li>• Free kindergarten education for all eligible-aged children attending a government-approved kindergarten program</li> <li>• Funding is provided to organisations throughout the region for the provision of Early Years Services</li> <li>• \$2.1 billion infrastructure investment allocated across Queensland schools in 2023-2034</li> <li>• \$290 million allocated annually across Queensland State Schools as part of Investing for Success</li> <li>• \$48.3 million for teacher housing in rural and remote areas of Queensland</li> <li>• Approximately \$8.1 million in capital upgrades to the Toowoomba TAFE campus to establish the Rural Centre of Excellence, nurse training rooms and new general learning areas</li> <li>• \$600,000 expansion to the Gateway to Industry Schools program to cover a dedicated renewable energy focus, and additional funding to support the development and implementation of online resources to support Queensland teachers to deliver clean energy content and student learning</li> <li>• Up to \$10 million investment across the state to uplift state owned training infrastructure to support the skills needs of the clean energy workforce</li> </ul>

<b>(CONTINUED)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$66.9 million to establish 20 more Regional University Study Hubs, with one to be located in Chinchilla</li> <li>• \$120 million over four years to implement the Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy, which includes \$40 million to attract and retain Early Childhood Teachers in outer regional, remote and very remote communities</li> <li>• \$5.04 million investment across Queensland to strengthen partnerships between schools and industry through the Regional School Industry Partnership Program.</li> </ul>
<b>ENABLER</b>	<b>HEALTH</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	Proximity to healthcare services is key for attraction and retention of a skilled workforce in the region, including allied and mental health professionals. This has important flow on effects for encouraging regional investment and economic development.
<b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b>	<p>The recent budget includes \$28.9 billion allocated to Queensland Health, with the majority to be spent on Hospital and Health Services across Queensland. This includes redevelopment of three health care buildings and a hospital in the region, and construction of a new hospital in Toowoomba.</p> <p>A total of \$1.5 billion has been allocated in 2024–25 for the Darling Downs and South West Hospital and Health Services.</p> <p>Planning for a medical health precinct is underway in the South Burnett LGA, leveraging the proximity of the recently redeveloped Kingaroy Hospital and Lady Bjelke-Petersen Community Hospital, the latter of which has already been identified as an anchor tenant of the precinct.</p>
<b>ENABLER</b>	<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	Access to digital connectivity is essential to growing business and adopting technologies. While satellite internet does provide coverage across the entire region, it is cost prohibitive for many residents and businesses who rely on cellular networks instead.
<b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b>	<p>The Queensland Government is delivering training and capacity-building programs to assist businesses to undertake digital transformation activities.</p> <p>In 2023 the Queensland Government committed to investing \$200 million over three years to grow the state’s digital economy and improve digital connectivity.</p> <p>Connectivity is also being addressed through state initiatives, such as the under development Digital Infrastructure Plan, and Australian Government initiatives, such as the Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation program.</p> <p>The Better Connectivity Plan is a key Australian Government initiative that will invest upwards of \$656 million across five years to improve connectivity in regional Australia, including coverage on regional roads, place-based connectivity infrastructure, on-farm connectivity and more.</p> <p>The Queensland Government has announced a \$250 million investment to upgrade the Queensland Capacity Network (QCN) and support electricity distribution networks in regional areas which will improve digital connectivity, support high-paying tech jobs and provide connections needed for advanced manufacturing jobs.</p>
<b>ENABLER</b>	<b>WORKFORCE</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	Developing industry and the economy will require an increase in the available workforce to support the development and ongoing operation of new industry.

<p><b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b></p>	<p>The Queensland Workforce Strategy Action Plan (2022-2025) includes a focus on local solutions. It contains actions to implement locally focused and led workforce planning and coordinate efforts across industry, the community and government at all levels. In part of this region, the Toowoomba Regional Jobs Committee brings together local stakeholders and is a key mechanism in supporting the delivery of the strategy.</p> <p>The Queensland Workforce Strategy builds on a suite of programs that have together powered the state's significant economic growth. This includes a \$200 million Future Skills Fund.</p> <p>Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap recognises and supports regional Queensland to prepare for growth associated with energy transformation. Key actions out of this \$30 million strategy that will be delivered in regional Queensland include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$500,000 to develop and implement a digital energy skills passport app, addressing workforce mobility barriers in Queensland's renewable energy sector by establishing agreed skills, qualifications and competencies required for the trade workforce for applicable projects in Queensland</li> <li>• a \$600,000 expansion to the Gateway to Industry Schools program to cover a dedicated renewable energy focus, and additional funding to support the development and implementation of online resources to support Queensland teachers to deliver clean energy content and student learning</li> <li>• up to \$10 million investment across the state to uplift state owned training infrastructure to support the skills needs of the clean energy workforce.</li> </ul> <p>The Hydrogen Industry Workforce Roadmap 2022-2032 sets a clear path for industry and government to work together to deliver a strong and adaptable workforce for a safe and thriving Queensland hydrogen industry. This includes an \$800,000 investment in the Gateway to Industry Schools project for the hydrogen industry.</p>
<p><b>ENABLER OVERVIEW</b></p>	<p><b>REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS</b></p> <p>Planning and regulatory frameworks are constantly evolving in response to emerging markets and challenges – to achieve economic, social and environment objectives. Project proponents must consider planning and environmental regulations under the relevant Australian, Queensland and local government legislation applying to the site, including the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> and State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP). Wind farms must be lodged and assessed against State Code 23: Wind farm development of the SDAP, while solar farm proposals require liaising with local government.</p>
<p><b>KEY INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN THE REGION TO ADDRESS THIS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Queensland Government is delivering on a commitment to review the planning framework for renewables, specifically the State Code 23: Wind farm development and the associated planning guidance. This includes working with government agencies, communities, local governments and stakeholders to provide more certainty and ensure individuals, communities and adverse impacts are considered in relation to local haulage routes, on-site construction camps and decommissioning of wind farms.</li> <li>• The proposed changes to State Code 23 underwent community consultation from 7 August 2023 to 4 September 2023.</li> <li>• The Coordinator-General, under the <i>State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971</i>, provides significant support to the coordination of major projects, evaluation and responsible management of regional impacts.</li> <li>• Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) is the Queensland Government's land use planning and property development agency.</li> <li>• On 18 April 2024 the Queensland Parliament passed the <i>Clean Economy Jobs Act 2024</i> and the <i>Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024</i> to secure Queensland's spot at the centre of a global energy transformation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› The <i>Clean Economy Jobs Act 2024</i> sets out a pathway to decarbonisation that will support jobs in the state's key traditional industries, including agriculture, resources and manufacturing, and unlocking investment in new industries including renewables, manufacturing, critical minerals, hydrogen, and sustainable aviation fuel.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# TRANSFORMING THE DARLING DOWNS, SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH BURNETT REGION

The DDSWSB region has several key industries which are a significant source of economic activity and jobs. The region is also uniquely positioned to strengthen existing, and develop new, industries to harness the opportunities as the world transitions to net zero.

The transformation of the DDSWSB region will be underpinned by industries that leverage the region's

strengths and have significant growth potential, whilst supporting long-term economic growth, diverse economies and sustainable jobs.

Figure 7 sets out the region's distinctive strengths by industry, while specific transformation priorities, in these current and emerging industries, are outlined on the following pages.

Figure 7 DDSWSB's key industry strengths

## AGRICULTURE (RAW PRODUCTS AND VALUE-ADDED)



- The region is a significant agricultural producer, producing one quarter of Queensland's agricultural output
- Natural capital, including prime agricultural land, which supports a diverse agricultural sector
- Strong food processing facilities and value-added activities throughout the region
- Proximity to domestic and international markets through SEQ
- Abundant raw materials and products to support future circular economy opportunities

## RENEWABLE ENERGY



- Suitable geographic and environmental conditions for wind and solar
- Existing transmission infrastructure to expand renewable energy generation
- The Southern Queensland REZ region identifies locations with suitable attributes for commercial-scale solar and wind facilities
- Land available for development and attractive to investors

## ADVANCED MANUFACTURING



- Technically skilled workforce that supports the agriculture, mining and construction industries
- Location and proximity to markets, major renewable projects, freight and logistics infrastructure
- Various educational precincts in the region to support skilling of the workforce
- Land available for development and attractive to investors

## HEALTH AND PHARMACEUTICALS



- Diverse and rich agricultural lands and circular economy opportunities support new and further expansion of pharmaceutical products
- Construction of the new Toowoomba Hospital precinct and redevelopment of the Kingaroy Health precinct to support co-location of health, education and community clusters

## How the transformation will provide opportunities for First Nations peoples in the DDSWSB region

Several priorities have been identified with a specific focus on facilitating economic participation for First Nations peoples as the region transforms. These include:

- **Priority 1.4** – Enhanced capability for tourism operators, including local governments, primary producers and First Nations peoples for high quality agri-tourism and outback/country tourism experiences – this includes opportunities to promote cultural understanding, economic development and sustainable tourism practices for First Nations businesses and individuals. These opportunities should be collaborative and respectful to the rights and traditions of First Nations peoples.
- **Priority 1.5** - Growth in sustainable land management practices through elevating First Nations peoples' knowledge, increasing biodiversity, recognition of natural capital and supporting local communities with carbon farming opportunities and challenges, especially those related to cumulative social impacts and absentee landholders – this recognises the vital role and recognition of Native Title rights of First Nations peoples in land management practices, having extensive history in managing the lands and waters for thousands of years.
- **Priority 2.1** – Investigation of community-owned initiatives that provide green energy generation and storage at a local level (e.g. wind, solar, battery storage and bioenergy production), including service maintenance hubs – in particular, this supports powering microgrid communities in isolated areas of the region (including First Nations communities).
- **Priority 3.2** – New or enhanced local training, education and vocational programs in advanced manufacturing and renewable energy production – this would include supporting jobs and skilling outcomes for First Nations peoples. It will be important to provide capability building and procurement support to promote equitable participation for First Nations businesses in advanced manufacturing and renewable energy projects.
- **Priority 4.1** –Partnering with First Nations communities to investigate the development of traditional bush foods and use of medicinal plants – Not only are these natural resources culturally important, there is significant potential for First Nations communities to play a key role in the sustainable harvesting and production of bush foods and medicinal plants. It is vital that efforts be made to protect traditional knowledge and practices and ensure economic benefits with these growing markets flow back to First Nations peoples.

These priorities have been identified through consultation with First Nations stakeholders in the region. It is essential that the transformation of the region drives improvements in economic participation outcomes for First Nations peoples to support diverse and stronger economies and communities for all.

The Queensland Government is developing a First Nations Economic Strategy that will support agencies to engage with First Nations peoples, communities and businesses to address barriers and explore economic opportunities and pathways to jobs, skills and training, education, business development and entrepreneurship in current and emerging industries and sectors.

These priorities will also be supported by other government initiatives including the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy. A Queensland Indigenous Business Network has also been established and led by First Nations peoples to support First Nations-owned small businesses to grow and thrive.

# Priority 1: Agriculture

Strengthen existing and expand value-adding activities in agriculture, including processing of primary produce and development of by-products.



Agriculture (raw products and value-added)

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**Priority 1.1:** Development of the circular economy in the region through conversion of agricultural waste and by-products.

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**Priority 1.2:** Development and commercialisation of research and development (R&D), technology, new industry innovation and skills development and attraction to support a globally competitive agricultural industry.

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**Priority 1.3:** Reliable and secure water supply for higher-value agricultural enterprises (including exploring potential water security, capture and re-allocation from the winding-down of water-intensive coal-fired power stations).

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**Priority 1.4:** Enhanced capability for tourism operators, including local governments, primary producers and First Nations peoples for high quality agri-tourism and outback/country tourism experiences.

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**Priority 1.5:** Growth in sustainable land management practices through elevating First Nations peoples' knowledge, increasing biodiversity, recognition of natural capital and supporting local communities with carbon farming opportunities and challenges, especially those related to cumulative social impacts and absentee landholders.

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The agricultural industry is a significant driver of economic growth for the DDSWSB region. The region is renowned for producing high quality food and other agricultural products and provides a quarter of Queensland’s total agricultural output.<sup>23</sup> The region’s natural assets, climate and terrain, a strong supply chain, location on key transport routes and export-accredited meat production and food processing industries underpin its success. A growing population, particularly in Asian markets, will continue to fuel demand for the region’s products.

To maintain competitiveness on a domestic and global scale, reduce emissions intensity, strengthen resilience and adapt to climate impacts, it will be important to reduce the environmental footprint of the industry and expand value-adding activities, both before and after goods are produced and processed. This is the focus of the sub-priorities as outlined.

A key priority is developing alternative uses for agricultural waste and by-product, including new or different products.

Harnessing technology will support this, enabling better ways to repurpose waste, such as waste-to-energy technologies, or developing new compounds through bio-chemical manufacturing. The adoption of R&D or AgTech (agricultural technology) may also

improve efficiencies, increase output, or pave the way for new higher-value-adding horticulture and nutraceuticals with nutritional delivery a focus (such as microgreens, fresh cuts).

The availability and reliability of water will continue to be a critical issue for the industry, particularly with increased climate variability. More secure and reliable water supply can help unlock more diverse agricultural production and value-adding activities.

Appropriate management of land use competition is critical to ensure the region’s finite soil resources are available for agriculture to expand and capitalise on future opportunities in a dynamic global environment.

Regenerative land practices, including enabling local opportunities for carbon farming, will also contribute to the long-term vitality and sustainability of the DDSWSB region’s natural assets and ecosystems, including soil, vegetation, biodiversity and waters.

The recognition of First Nations peoples’ knowledge, having been custodians of the lands and waters for thousands of years, can also help improve land management practices. It will be critical to have appropriate policy framework and land-use planning mechanisms that support ongoing development of agriculture and associated value-added industries.

**Notes**

<sup>23</sup> 2022 data. Calculated from data sourced from REMPLAN, 2018-2022



## Queensland Government actions to support implementing this priority:

The **Regional Economic Futures Fund (REFF)** is a new fund that supports economic and community development initiatives. REFF funding that aligns to this priority is expected to be announced in 2024.

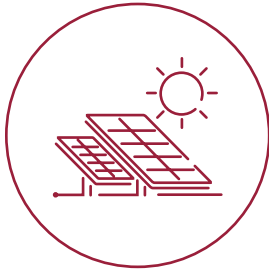
### Other activities include:

- The \$3 million Agtech and Logistics Hub in Toowoomba to future-proof the state's agriculture sector, and create opportunities for agribusiness, innovators, researchers, industry, manufacturing and investors to solve our agribusiness sector's biggest challenges and grow local capability and jobs (Department of Environment, Science and Innovation [DESI]).
- The Queensland Resource Recovery Industries Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (DESI).
- The Queensland Biofutures Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [DAF]).
- The Queensland AgTech Roadmap (DAF).
- Rural Economic Development grants - up to \$200,000 as a co-contribution grant to strengthen primary production sectors and bolster rural communities (DAF).
- Rural Agricultural Development (sheep and goats) grants - up to \$200,000 as a co-contribution grant to support economic development in relevant rural areas and support growth within the industry (DAF). Round 2 closed on 2 June 2023.
- The Works for Queensland program provided \$200,000 to the Goondiwindi Regional Council Water Main Upgrades, supporting an estimated 12 jobs (Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works [DHLGPPW]).
- Water initiatives (DRDMW) including:
  - Rural Water Futures program; \$7.1 million allocated over four years to enhance water modelling capacity to support water planning, water security and infrastructure assessments
  - Development of the Queensland Water Strategy and Queensland Strategic Water Infrastructure Plan and Pipeline
  - Construction of Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline
  - Regional Water Assessment Program including Southern and Darling Downs, and Bundaberg and Burnett Regional Water Assessments.
- Round 6 of Building our Regions has awarded \$10.4 million to projects in the Darling Downs South West part of the region, leveraging over \$5.2 million in additional contributions and supporting an estimated 104 jobs during construction to improve water supply and sewerage systems (DRDMW).
- Queensland's Land Restoration Fund supporting land-sector carbon projects and to increase participation in carbon farming by Queenslanders (DESI).
- The Queensland tourism industry strategy, Towards Tourism 2032 (TT32) – Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future, was developed in partnership with industry and released in November 2022. TT32 is Queensland's collective framework to guide industry and government's partnership to deliver long-term growth and success for Queensland tourism. Among activity under Phase 1 (2023-2025) of TT32 there are ongoing industry and government efforts to enable, develop and enhance tourism product, infrastructure and experiences, including promoting and integrating Queensland's farming and food tourism experiences (Department of Tourism and Sport [DTS]).



# Priority 2: Renewable Energy

Grow investment in clean and sustainable energy, particularly wind, solar, battery and bioenergy, to power industries and communities.



Renewable energy

**Priority 2.1:** Investigation of community-owned initiatives that provide green energy generation and storage at a local level (e.g. wind, solar, battery storage and bioenergy production), including service maintenance hubs.

**Priority 2.2:** Investigation of opportunities to support supply chain resilience and improve network capacity and access within the Southern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) region and other areas in the region.

**Priority 2.3:** Development of industrial and agricultural precincts using alternative fuel sources, including bioenergy and green hydrogen.

**Priority 2.4:** Investment in a sustainable ethanol industry, including for sustainable aviation fuels and other applications.

The DDSWSB region has a significant role to play in Queensland’s energy transformation. The existing transmission infrastructure and the region’s strong solar and wind attributes make it a prime location for the rapid expansion of renewable energy generation. This has the potential to support growth in manufacturing jobs, as outlined in Priority 3.

There is a strong pipeline of renewable energy projects being proposed or under construction. As of June 2023, \$11.1 billion has been invested since 2015 into large-scale, operational renewable energy projects across Queensland.<sup>24</sup>

The DDSWSB region hosts the largest wind and solar projects in Australia, being the 400 MW Western Downs Green Power Hub, the 453 MW Coopers Gap Wind Farm and the Macintyre Wind Farm (planned capacity of 1,026 MW). There is a clear opportunity to transform industries and communities in the DDSWSB region by providing clean and sustainable energy sources delivered via the grid.

At a local level, stand-alone power systems will allow regional communities to capitalise on the plentiful wind and solar resources available to access green energy. Localised battery storage will also be important when there are fluctuations in wind and solar energy production.

There is also an opportunity to investigate bioenergy sources from the region’s substantial production of biomass to power local industrial precincts and communities.

The region’s mining industry is also substantial, across coal, oil and gas, and in particular CSG. While the market will ultimately drive future investment decisions around these industries, over the long-term, as demand for carbon-intensive products decline, there is an opportunity to explore the use of legacy pipeline infrastructure for alternative use.

## Notes

<sup>24</sup> Queensland Government, Department of Energy and Public Works. Queensland’s renewable energy target. Statistics for large-scale (>5 MW) operational, under construction or financially committed projects since 2015. As of June 2023, accessed at: <https://www.epw.qld.gov.au/about/initiatives/renewable-energy-targets#:~:text=Queensland%20is%20accelerating%20towards%20its,under%20construction%20or%20financially%20committed>).

### Queensland Government actions to support implementing this priority:

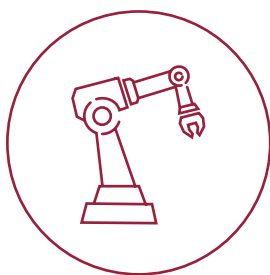
The REFF is a new fund that supports economic and community development initiatives. REFF funding that aligns to this priority is expected to be announced in 2024.

#### Other activities include:

- The Queensland Hydrogen Industry Strategy (DSDI).
- The Queensland Biofutures Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Battery Industry Strategy (DSDI).
- Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap (Department of Employment, Small Business and Training [DESBT]).
- Development of the Net Zero Emissions for Transport Roadmap (Transport Roadmap), a commitment under the Queensland Climate Action Plan. The Transport Roadmap will provide the foundational blueprint to reduce Queensland's transport sector emissions and contribute to achieving Queensland's emission reduction targets (Department of Transport and Main Roads [DTMR]).
- The Queensland Government will invest \$4.5 billion as part of the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund for government owned corporations to increase ownership of commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects, as well as supporting infrastructure, including in partnership with the private sector. In the DDSWSB region, allocations so far include the Wambo Wind Farm, Tarong West Wind Farm, Kogan Renewable Hydrogen Project and Brigalow Hydrogen Ready Gas Peaking Plant (Department of Energy and Climate [DEC] and Queensland Treasury [QT]).
- Supported by the new progressive royalty rates announced in the 2022-23 Budget, the Queensland Government is providing \$10 billion in funding to the government owned corporations and Queensland Hydro (QT).
- Business Growth Fund grants provide between \$50,000-\$75,000 in grant funding to purchase specialised equipment to unlock growth potential, increase production, expand the workforce and maximise economic returns. Special consideration is given to applications in, or part of, the supply chain for these priority industries (DESBT).
- The Queensland Low Emission Agriculture Road Map (DAF).
- The Queensland AgTech Roadmap (DAF).
- The Queensland Quantum Strategy has provided \$10 million to develop the quantum technologies to make renewable energy more efficient and cheaper (DESI).
- Launched the \$9.25 million Local Energy Partnerships initiative to create a framework for community participation and benefit sharing from the renewable energy transformation, including the expansion of the former GasFields Commission to Coexistence Queensland which will enable the commission to engage communities and support coexistence with other industries, including between the renewable energy and agriculture sectors (DEC).
- In the 2024-25 State Budget, the Queensland Government committed \$376.7 million for Stanwell towards the development of the 506 MW Wambo Wind Farm and \$424 million for its 100 per cent owned and operated 436.6MW Tarong West Wind Farm (DEC).
- The draft REZ Roadmap includes five potential REZs for development in the Southern Queensland Region - Southern Downs REZ (2,000-2,600 MW of expected installed generation), Western Downs REZ (2,000-2600 MW of expected installed generation), Woolooga REZ (1,800-2,400 MW of expected installed generation), Darling Downs REZ (1,600-2,000 MW of expected installed generation) and Tarong REZ (2,000-2,600 MW of expected installed generation) (DEC).
- The QEJP will create a pipeline of investment to help expand Queensland's share of the renewable energy supply chain and increase the use of local content on projects. A coordinated effort across the Queensland Government is underway to attract and secure foundational manufacturers to sites in Queensland and to support growth in local supply chains that will help deliver the infrastructure needed for the renewable energy transformation (DEC).
- Local Thriving Communities is a significant long-term reform that will embed change, resulting in a visibly different way of working alongside communities across the state to improve outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders, including the primary industry sector (Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts [DTATSIPCA]).

## Priority 3: Advanced manufacturing

Strengthen the capability of the advanced manufacturing industry, particularly in specialist renewable energy and aerospace and defence componentry.



Advanced Manufacturing

**Priority 3.1:** Establishment or scale-up of clean, industrial precincts to strengthen the capability of the manufacturing industry.

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**Priority 3.2:** New or enhanced local training, education and vocational programs in advanced manufacturing and renewable energy production.

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**Priority 3.3:** Improvement of freight transport connectivity within the region (such as the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and the Port of Bundaberg) to unlock opportunities for downstream agricultural processing, transportation of components for renewable projects and advanced manufacturing.

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**Priority 3.4:** Supporting the circular economy in the region through R&D of waste recycling and remanufacturing, including batteries and other renewable energy components.

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The Queensland Government has identified a strategic need to onshore the manufacturing and maintenance of renewable energy technologies, such as the construction of wind towers and large-scale battery assembly, much of which is currently imported.

There is an opportunity to take advantage of the DDSWSB region's established construction and manufacturing labour force for emerging advanced manufacturing needs, particularly renewable energy, as well as aerospace and defence componentry. Existing investments around the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport, as well as engineering and technical service clusters in Toowoomba, Dalby, Roma, Murgon and Kingaroy, are well placed to provide this.

Strategically located industrial precincts that are co-located near skilling hubs, such as universities or TAFEs, will enable capability for advanced manufacturing.

The potential to use the DDSWSB region's existing manufacturing labour force requires coordination

with local employment and training organisations, as well as channels to communicate opportunities from developers. There should be equal access to employment opportunities for First Nations peoples and support for gender and culturally diverse workforces.

It will also be important to strengthen transport connectivity between advanced manufacturing and emerging resource recovery industries, renewable energy sites and key ports. Unlocking greater opportunities in the South Burnett region and adjacent areas, including Toowoomba and the Port of Bundaberg, will require improved road freight capability.

There is also an opportunity to develop recycling precincts, supporting councils and industry to identify and develop scalable technologies to allow recycling and repurposing of waste. To enable efficiencies and the development of green industrial precincts, these should be co-located near manufacturing and renewable energy hubs.

### Queensland Government actions to support implementing this priority:

The REFF is a new fund that supports economic and community development initiatives. REFF funding that aligns to this priority is expected to be announced in 2024.

#### Other activities include:

- The Advanced Manufacturing Roadmap and Action Plan includes actions to support manufacturers to grow in a carbon neutral future (DRDMW).
- Queensland's Procurement Policy 2023 and Buy Queensland 2023 are the government's overarching policies for the procurement of goods and services. This will use procurement power to support local jobs through applying a 'local benefits' approach and supporting the establishment and growth of new industries through declaring Supply Chains of State Significance. These will boost Queensland manufacturing industries, Queensland content and manage risks for critical supply chains (DEC).
- The Queensland METS Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Defence Industries Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Aerospace Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (DESI).
- The Queensland Resource Recovery Industries Roadmap and Action Plan (DSDI).
- The Manufacturing Energy Efficiency Grant (MEEG) Program is a \$7.1 million Queensland Government program helping the manufacturing sector to increase their competitiveness in a low carbon future by implementing energy efficiency measures that reduce energy costs and operational emissions (DRDMW).
- The \$121.5 million Made in Queensland grant program helps small to medium sized manufacturers to increase international competitiveness, productivity and innovation and to generate high skilled jobs of the future. The program also supports manufacturers to achieve energy efficiency, export, onshoring and the advancement of decarbonisation and net zero outcomes (DRDMW).
- The Manufacturing Sustainability Benchmarking Program enables manufacturers to benchmark their progress towards sustainability and provides a report outlining opportunities for further action. This program is subsidised by DRDMW.
- The Manufacturing Capability Development program provides a range of workshops, seminars and events to increase manufacturers knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues and challenges within and facing the industry (DRDMW).
- The Queensland Jobs Fund provided a \$12.6 million loan for the InterLinkSQ Intermodal Terminal (DSDI).
- The Queensland AgTech Roadmap (DAF).
- The Queensland Government is providing free or reduced fee training through Free TAFE, Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s, User Choice, Certificate 3 Guarantee and Higher-Level Skills (DESBT).
- Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap includes an action to appoint a dedicated Renewables Project Officer for Manufacturing Skills Queensland (MSQ) to work with local manufacturing businesses to build workforce capacity and access clean energy supply chain opportunities (DESBT).
- Business Growth Fund provides between \$50,000-\$75,000 to business experiencing high growth to buy specialised equipment to unlock growth potential, increase production, expand the workforce and maximise economic returns. Special consideration is given to applications in, or part of, the supply chain for these priority industries. The largest industry that commonly receives the grant are those part of the manufacturing industry (DESBT).
- The QEJP represents long term opportunities for relevant manufacturing businesses to accelerate, establish or expand their operations in Queensland. Under the action 3.4 of the QEJP, to grow the renewable energy supply chain in Queensland, the Queensland Government committed \$11.6 million to help build capacity in the manufacturing sector and encourage local content in Queensland to supply future renewable energy projects. The Queensland Government will announce mechanisms to encourage local content in mid-2024 (DEC).

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### Queensland Government actions to support implementing this priority CONT.

- The Advance Queensland (DESI) initiative is supporting sustainable and resilient regional economies through innovation, and the suite of targeted programs is empowering our regions to unlock potential, harness opportunities, be innovative, collaborate and create jobs, such as:
  - A Place to Innovate – Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places (QIPP) Strategy 2022-2032 is Queensland’s ten-year strategy to release the potential from the state’s innovation precincts and places and builds on decades of investment in Queensland’s innovation ecosystem.
  - \$15 million Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund to help innovation places achieve their goals across the three pillars of people, place and purpose.
  - The Deadly Innovation Strategy supported the establishment of the Cherbourg Digital Service Centre, where a partnership between Fujitsu Australia and the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council has created a skilled workforce and digital career pathways on Country; and also supported the new Cherbourg Data Hubs that is developing pathways for the community to develop AI technology skills and careers.





# Priority 4: Health and pharmaceuticals

Position the DDSWSB region as a health, research and pharmaceutical precinct for regional Australia.



Agribusiness innovation and transformation

**Priority 4.1:** Partnering with First Nations communities to investigate the development of traditional bush foods and use of medicinal plants.

**Priority 4.2:** Supporting the growth of collaborative health, science and community precincts, including training and research.

**Priority 4.3:** Growth of the region's role in producing and processing pharmaceutical products, such as duboisia, heparin, collagen and keratin.

There is an opportunity to develop well-recognised bio-clusters and health precincts in the DDSWSB region, which both contribute to improved health and wellbeing services for communities, as well as progress research and innovation for new health products.

To achieve this requires a multifaceted and holistic approach to improving community health outcomes and advancing development in the pharmaceutical industry. This includes considering a precinct approach to foster collaboration between health, research and education providers. With further investments into the Toowoomba Hospital, Toowoomba will be strategically positioned to further its status as a regional health, R&D hub in collaboration with universities.

Harnessing the DDSWSB region's diverse and rich agricultural lands will also support the expansion of the production and processing of pharmaceutical products. There is a growing recognition and demand for native pharmaceutical products, such as duboisia and bushfoods. It will be important to grow this industry particularly through empowering First Nations-led businesses and ensuring consistent supply. In addition, the expansion of a circular economy for animal by-products will unlock supply of pharmaceutical products, for example, exploring the production of keratin and collagen from the substantial pork industry in the South Burnett LGA.

## State Government actions to support implementing this priority:

The REFF is a new fund that supports economic and community development initiatives. REFF funding that aligns to this priority is expected to be announced in 2024.

### Other activities include:

- Investment in Queensland hospitals, for new and upgraded hospitals (Queensland Health).
- The Science into Industry Initiative aims to make Queensland's science sector more competitive by accelerating the translation of research and development, supporting universities and research institutes to partner with industry to build new products and services (DESI).



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