



REMOTE AREA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD (RAPAD) PATHFINDER

The Remote Area Planning and Development (RAPAD) region is in transition – constrained through a long period of drought, it now has the potential to deliver an extra \$1.5 billion in gross value added by 2031. To reach this potential, the region must build on its strengths, address its challenges and focus on key priority areas for action.

The RAPAD board with Queensland Department of State Development worked collaboratively with the RAI to identify priority areas that will grow the regional economy. This work used data analysis and supporting interviews to identify priorities and estimate local payoff potential.



RAPAD'S ECONOMIC STRENGTH

The RAPAD region's economic strengths comes from its high participation rate, with nearly 70 per cent of the working age population employed. It also performs strongly in its share of owner managers (22 per cent) compared to the rest of the state (15 per cent), indicating a high level of business experience in the region.

The RAPAD region has a number of job specialisations with high shares of employment in agriculture, wholesale trade, civil engineering construction, airport operation, arts, and recreation services. The region also has a significant share of public sector jobs – 24 per cent in 2011 – nearly 10 percentage points higher than the average for outback Queensland LGAs.

The overall economy of this area is projected to increase by 1.7 times in 2031 than the level of 2011, with a number of industries like agriculture, tourism and health and public administration aligned to global trends. However, key issues must be addressed to ensure the region reaches its full potential.

Challenges



Support upskilling to utilise new infrastructure and jobs for the future.



Grow local private businesses - create the environment for entrepreneurs in prioritised industries to thrive.



Attract investment in digital and physical infrastructure.



Invest in the local value chain of priority industries, especially where technology will enable jobs.

Rational

An estimated 45 per cent of jobs are at risk of becoming obsolete with digitalisation and new economy. These jobs are in lower skill clerical, sales and manual processing.

Strong dependence on public jobs provision and low performance of the business dynamo across RAPAD signifies a weak regional business ecosystem.

There is desire across the region for upgraded local road and rail and digital infrastructure to ensure better connectivity to capital cities and ports. Renewable energy assets also exist across the region, but face barriers in exploitation.

Invest to strengthen and diversify the work opportunities, especially using technology and broadening markets.



REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

PATHFINDER INITIATIVE

Navigating opportunities for growth

UNLOCKING FUTURE GROWTH OF THE RAPAD REGION – 6 PRIORITIES

To achieve its potential, RAPAD will need to focus its efforts on strategic priorities aligned with regional planning and capacity building to support the economy's growth. The following six priorities will be the first step to unlocking the RAPAD regions long-term growth prospects:



BRING BACK THE SHEEP

- Broadening sheep meat production and wool production to supply growing international markets.
- Potential regional economic growth to \$38.8 million annually through increased gross margins from sheep production, stimulating jobs for an additional 158 people in the industry.



TOURISM GROWTH

- Tourism growth to increase tourist numbers and expenditure, building on strengths of regional attractions.
- Potential industry growth of 262% from 2016 creating \$1.67 billion expenditure in the broader Outback Tourism region.



INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIONS

- Infrastructure connections – ensure inter and intra connectivity and service delivery that enables the region to be globally competitive.
- Early sealing of roads could save \$6.8 million in road maintenance, as well as \$56 million in additional benefits and productivity gains to key tourism, livestock and freight routes, including 24 potential new jobs from increased drive tourism market.



ENERGY AND WATER SECURITY

- Delivering low cost and stable energy sources with secure water access.
- By meeting Queensland's renewable energy target of 50%, with residential households and small business self-consuming energy produced rather than feeding it back into the grid, Community Service Obligation subsidy payments would reduce by at least \$70 million out to 2031.



HEALTHY AGED CARE LIVING

- Supporting services and infrastructure to ensure the RAPAD region is a preferred retirement destination.
- Potential job growth of 600 people by 2031 based on increase in 61% of retirees in the region.



IMPROVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Create the environment where the RAPAD region leads remote area delivery of telecommunication and digital infrastructure for regional growth.
- Potential retail output increase of \$7.8 million, enhanced ICT jobs from 7 to 18 local jobs and increased overseas tourist numbers to 33,782.

Through the Pathfinder process the RAPAD board and partners have agreed to follow these priorities to grow the region. Read the full report or contact Dr Leonie Pearson at leonie.pearson@regionalaustralia.org.au to find out about how Pathfinder could help your region grow.