

# OUTBACK QUEENSLAND REGIONAL RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

A MESSAGE FROM  
**THE PREMIER**  
**THE HONOURABLE ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK MP**  
 AND  
**THE TREASURER**  
**THE HONOURABLE CAMERON DICK MP**



The COVID-19 pandemic has touched everyone and communities in Outback Queensland have not been immune to its effects.

Our immediate commitment is to keep the region moving through extra

support for businesses, workers and households – from payroll tax waivers to electricity bill relief.

Our recovery approach recognises that sectors like agriculture, natural resources and tourism will continue to be the backbone of the Outback economy.

We have identified shovel-ready projects to upgrade roads in the region, with all up \$1 billion in statewide road stimulus projects committed since April, over one hundred COVID-19 Works for Queensland projects to be delivered through the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, a new \$18 million community hospital for Blackall, and major investment in digital connectivity and tourism infrastructure.

In recognising that our COVID-19 response is a long-term challenge, this approach charts the way forward for delivering on one of our key priorities identified through Queensland’s Economic Recovery Plan – growing our regions.

We know that lasting recovery can only be achieved through genuine, community-based partnerships. That’s why we will continue working with all levels of government and key stakeholders to drive the best outcomes for the Outback, a region that geographically represents half of our State.

Together we will support our existing industries as well as invest in emerging industries, more infrastructure and more businesses. This plan backs local jobs and local opportunities.

There will be challenging times ahead as we navigate our way through the pandemic.

One thing is certain, however – the Government stands as a ready partner to Outback communities as we work towards better days to come.

The Queensland Government has committed more than \$8 billion to support COVID-19 health and economic recovery initiatives across the State.

**\$500M**

in **electricity and water** bill relief, with a \$200 rebate for households, and a \$500 rebate for eligible small business and sole traders

**\$90M**

for **jobs and skills**, including funding for the Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs

**\$400M**

**land tax relief** for property owners which must be passed onto tenants in the form of rent relief

**\$267M**

**building boost** to support home owners, ‘tradies’ and construction, including a **\$5,000 regional home building grant**

## Support for Outback Queensland region’s small businesses includes:



**Up to \$950M**

in **payroll tax relief** statewide, supporting **14,960 jobs** in the Outback Queensland region



**\$6.9M**

in **Job Support Loans** of up to \$250,000 for 45 businesses supporting 436 jobs



**\$1.4M**

in **163 Small Business Adaption Grants** of up to \$10,000 in the Outback Queensland region



# GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

## 1 Mornington Island State School

\$1.2 million in 2020-21 out of a \$2.3 million total spend for a new secure perimeter fence.

## 2 Power Reliability Hilton-Lake Julius

\$1.7 million in 2020-21 to continue renewal of high-voltage yards and electro-mechanical equipment in the Lake Julius Power System.

## 3 Lake Moondarra Deep Well Pump Station Pumps Renewal

\$587,155 in 2020-21 out of a \$900,000 total spend to renew the 60 year old pump sets and improve reliability and energy efficiency of the Lake Moondarra Deep Well Pump Station.

## 4 Unmanned Aerial Systems Flight Test Range

\$14.5 million in 2020-21 for the Autonomous Systems (drone testing facility). Part of the Defence and Aerospace Roadmap and action plans.

## 5 Mount Isa Queensland Fire and Emergency Services complex upgrade

\$500,000 in 2020-21 out of a \$3.7 million total spend to complete upgrade of the QFES complex at Mount Isa.

## 6 Kennedy Developmental Road (Winton - Boulia), pavement widening and sealing

\$3.6 million in 2020-21 out of a \$4.8 million total spend to widen a section of the Kennedy Developmental Road (Winton - Boulia). Part of the Outback Way, delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth Government.

## 7 South West Digital Connectivity Project

\$2.79 million contributed from the Building our Regions program for a collaborative digital connectivity program in Outback Queensland (\$4.36 million across Outback and Darling Downs regions).

## 8 Longreach replacement auxiliary fire and rescue station

\$100,000 in 2020-21 out of a \$3.1 million total spend to continue replacement of the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Longreach.

## 9 Rural and Regional Infrastructure Package - Blackall Hospital Redevelopment

\$9.4 million in 2020-21 out of a \$18.9 million total spend for the construction of a new community hospital in Blackall to support the delivery of contemporary, flexible models of care.

## 10 Landsborough Highway (Morven - Augathella), pavement rehabilitation and stabilisation

\$1.8 million in 2020-21 out of a \$2.8 million total spend to rehabilitate and stabilise pavement in two sections between 1.99km and 39.90km on the Landsborough Highway (Morven - Augathella).

## 11 Cunnamulla Artesian Hot Springs and River Walk Experience (Commonwealth)

\$1.3 million in 2020-21 out of a \$5 million total spend to deliver an artesian hot springs facility and recreational river walk along the Warrego River to complement the existing community and tourism facilities. Delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth Government.

## 12 Paroo Shire Council upgrade to critical sewerage infrastructure

\$2.8 million in 2020-21 out of a \$9.1 million total spend To replace Paroo Shire Council's sewage treatment plant and sewer relining.

## 13 Arts and Cultural Recovery Package

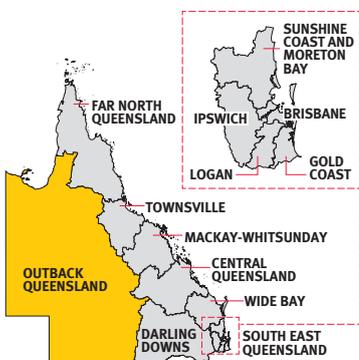
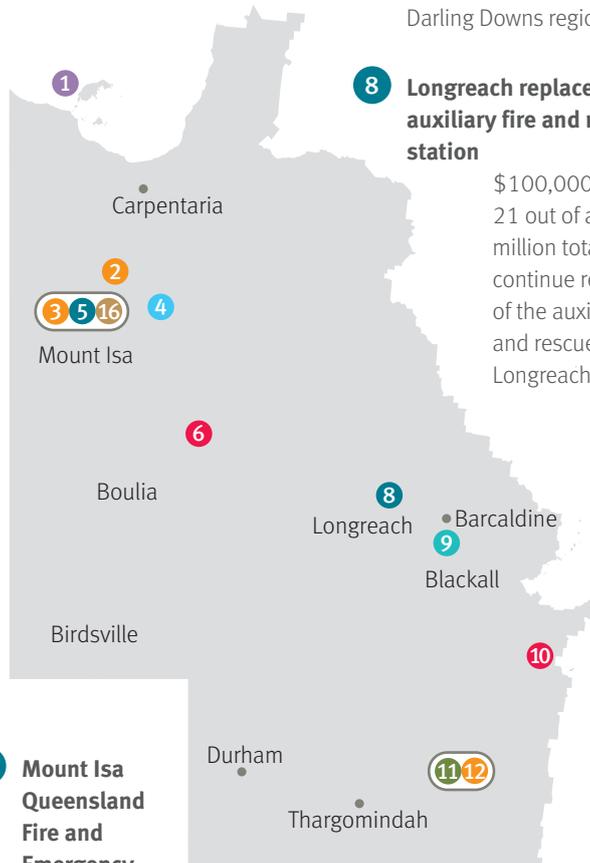
\$15.4 million in 2020-21 out of a \$22.5 million total spend to reactivate cultural and creative spaces and provide jobs for local artists and arts workers bringing communities together and boosting cultural tourism.

## 14 Chlorine Dose Equipment Upgrade

\$520,000 in 2020-21 out of a \$1.2 million total spend to replace and upgrade to current standards the outdated chlorination facilities.

## 15 Indigenous Home Ownership

\$1.5 million in 2020-21 to increase home ownership outcomes from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Indigenous communal lands.



**\$506M** in Queensland Government capital investment in Outback Queensland, supporting an estimated 1,900 jobs in 2020-21

# NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

**16 Mount Isa, Arthur Petersen Diversionary Centre bathroom upgrade**  
 \$621,015 in 2020-21 out of a \$651,125 total spend to upgrade bathrooms at the Arthur Petersen Diversionary Centre to improve functionality as they are no longer fit for purpose.

**17 Health Technology Equipment**  
 \$1.28 million in 2020-21 for the Health Technology Equipment Replacement Program (\$629,000 in Central West and \$655,000 in North West).

**18 South West - Minor Capital Projects and Acquisitions**  
 \$882,000 in 2020-21 as part of ongoing funding for minor capital projects and acquisitions.

**19 Outback Queensland Tourism**  
 56 events across Outback Queensland have received more than \$2.2 million through the \$3 million Year of Outback Tourism Events Program with events continuing into 2021.

Please note: Not all Government expenditure for the region is shown. Dollar amounts may include capital and operating expenditure, though may not represent the entire funding allocated.

SEPTEMBER 2020

KEY	
	Community wellbeing
	Utilities
	Health
	Education
	Transport and roads
	Justice and safety
	Government services
	Recreation and culture
	Statewide/region-wide
	Election commitment

## Barcaldine to get renewable energy boost

The Queensland Government is providing \$380,000 for a feasibility study into the second stage of a ground-breaking solar, wind and hydrogen project. This study will look at producing zero-carbon hydrogen from renewables to produce ammonia and urea for domestic and global markets. This builds on the \$300,000 Stage One feasibility study into a 30 megawatt solar farm with intensive horticulture. Should the project proceed, it will be Australia's first commercial-scale use of hydrogen with potential to turbo-charge economic growth in the Barcaldine area. The Hub could create 350 local jobs, 600 construction jobs and attract up to \$500 million new investment.

## Opportunity in sheep meat processing

A sheep meat processing industry development strategy will be developed by June 2021, providing a framework for industry and government investment focused on industry engagement, supply chain issues, and skills and market development. This will help increase investor interest in Queensland's sheep meat supply chain. This strategy will build on the existing \$5 million for cluster fencing grants and benefit the development of key sheep production regions in Outback Queensland. This combined investment will create more regional jobs across the sheep meat and wool supply chain.

## Mount Isa Mines Copper Smelter backs local jobs

The Queensland Government is securing almost 1,100 jobs associated with the Mount Isa Mines copper smelter. Eight hundred and thirty jobs in Mount Isa depend on the smelter, with a further 250 jobs in Townsville across Mount Isa Mines' and Incitec Pivot's operations. The smelter supports indirect employment for many hundreds more in those regions who either supply other goods and services to the smelter or refinery, or rely on the outputs. Over the next decade, there will be growing global demand for copper and other new economy minerals needed for wind turbines, generators and batteries and copper for electric cars.

## Agricultural development in the North West

A comprehensive analysis will unleash opportunities for dryland agriculture to support farmers and graziers in the North West region. The Queensland Government is investing a further \$250,000 to develop and deliver practical solutions for landholders to inform decision making that will unlock the region's dryland agricultural potential in conjunction with emerging irrigation opportunities. This initiative complements the Queensland Government's Strategic Blueprint for Queensland's North West Minerals Province and implementation plan, leading to new jobs in an expanding cropping sector.

## New Economy Minerals Prospectus

The Queensland Government has released the New Economy Minerals Prospectus to attract private investment and capitalise on the state's global reputation as a leading destination for mining and mineral processing. With global demand set to soar for New Economy Minerals such as cobalt, vanadium and molybdenum, Queensland's Minerals Provinces offer unrivalled opportunity for mining companies and industry participants for the production of minerals essential to manufacture wind turbines, generators, batteries, and electric vehicles. This prospectus will be used by Trade and Investment Queensland to promote Queensland as the preferred investment location for mining companies and those seeking exciting opportunities in exploration, manufacturing and infrastructure projects. The investment prospectus builds on the \$13.8 million New Economy Minerals Initiative.

# COVID-19 SUPPORT KEEPS WHEELS TURNING FOR MOUNT ISA BUS COMPANY

Thousands of mine workers, school children and sports teams who depend on Mount Isa Coaches for transport in the outback town were able to hop on board after COVID-19 travel restrictions were eased.

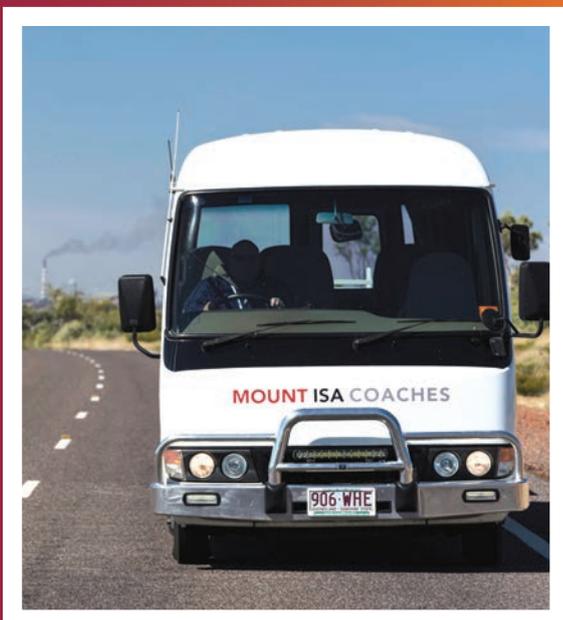
Mount Isa Coaches co-director Alan Mathieson said a Queensland Government COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan was the ‘perfect safety net’ to help the company keep on their local employees and maintain business operations during the pandemic.

He said COVID-19 restrictions had forced the business to adapt but the wheels were still turning and those in the outback town were still able to get to work.

“The immediate effect of COVID-19 was we thought that was it, everyone had been isolated and had to shut up shop, but we then understood what was essential and we adapted and changed our business to suit the restrictions put in place,” Mr Mathieson said.

Mr Mathieson said the Jobs Support Loan allowed all 10 staff to retain their positions which provided enormous flow-on benefits to the Mount Isa community.

“It is certainly helping with working capital and cash flow month to month and it means we will get through the next six month period” he said.



# OUTBACK TOURISM BUSINESS READY TO ‘TURN THE KEY’ THANKS TO COVID-19 JOBS SUPPORT LOAN

Winter is peak tourism season for Outback Queensland but this year COVID-19 has forced rural and remote communities and tourism businesses into dormancy due to restrictions.

Longreach-based Allan and Sue Smith own and operate Outback Aussie Tours and are now able to ‘turn the key’ on their coaches and cruises as restrictions have been eased.

Allan said the Queensland Government COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan had been a ‘life saver’ in supporting his business through this tough time.

“COVID-19 took a record year of nearly \$7 million and basically put that on hold,” he said.

“It caused an absolute nightmare of cancelling tours and keeping the faith with as many of our passengers as we could.”

“We probably wouldn’t have made it without the support of the COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan.”

“It was a relief to receive the loan because it meant we could keep our team, who are like extended family to us, and it meant we could continue doing what we were doing.”

With restrictions slowly easing and Queensland open for intrastate travel, Allan said the business was preparing to re-open some tour operations.

“The 1.5 metre social distancing measures are more flexible for some of our tour packages so we can get 20 people on our cruise boat and with a COVID Safe Plan in place, we can get back to business,” he said.

