



POLICY LEADERS



QUEENSLAND  
FUTURES  
INSTITUTE

# SUMMARY REPORT

## QLD POLICY LEADERS SERIES

### Growing Regional Queensland

**Thursday 10 May 2018**

Customs House, Brisbane

7.30am - 9.00am

#### **Moderator**

**Associate Professor Nicole Gillespie**, Associate Professor in Management,  
UQ Business School

#### **Panellists**

**Councillor Margaret Strelow**, Mayor, Rockhampton Regional Council

**Shane Charles**, Chairman, Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise

**Kevin Gill**, Chairman, Townsville Enterprise

**Trent Twomey**, Chair, Advance Cairns

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# Breakfast Summary

The predominant theme from the 2018 Queensland Futures Institute's *Growing Regional Queensland* breakfast focused on the strengths, investment potential and challenges that regional Queensland faces in 2018. Four regions in Queensland were represented, namely Rockhampton, Townsville, Toowoomba, and Cairns.

The discussion highlighted the challenges these regions currently face due to their location and dysconnectivity of regional government. The investment potential that could help these regions become more attractive to both international as well as domestic investors, and to help these regions grow further, was also discussed.

Lastly, the discussion allowed the audience to explore further into the topic of how these investments could be achieved and how the link between the regional governments could help these regions to grow and become more attractive, raising a number of critical issues as detailed in the graph below.

## Key comments from panellists

### Councillor Margaret Strelow, Mayor, Rockhampton Regional Council

- Challenges:
  - Less ethnically diverse
  - High unemployment
  - Different education
  - IT needs to be recognized and improved in regional QLD
- Benefits:
  - Incredibly affordable housing
  - Art collection
  - Old city and coffee culture
  - Zero infrastructure fees
- Opportunities:
  - Rebuilding of river front
  - New art gallery: supported by Premier Palaszczuk
  - Strong partnership with Adani
  - Smart hub: a collaborative working space for start-ups and entrepreneurs
  - Committed council and a hungry community for growth.
  - International airport, due to high level of Asian visitors
- Game changer project:
  - policies that make it easier to buy a home.

### Shane Charles, Chairman, Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise

- Challenges:
  - Cannot fill positions
  - Relocation of employees
- Benefits:
  - International airport
  - A new road to Brisbane (1.6 mil project)
- Opportunities:
  - Data centre
  - Railway: passenger trains to Toowoomba

- Change relocation and migration policies
  - Renewable powerhouses
  - Changing immigration and relocation policies
- Game changer project:
  - passenger rail connectivity - Australian game changing project.

### Kevin Gill, Chairman, Townsville Enterprise

- Challenges:
  - High unemployment in double digit area
  - Mining and refineries are shut down
  - Growing population
- Benefits:
  - Proximity to Asia
  - Large millennium population
  - Drive technology and economy
- Opportunities
  - New stadium and waterfront
  - Focus on youth
  - Proximity to Asia
  - Good public sector economies
- Game changer project: investment in port and rail

### Trent Twomey, Chair, Advance Cairns

- Challenges:
  - Disjointed regional government
    - Hard for regions to work together
- Benefits:
  - Most ethnically diverse
  - Aviation plays a major role
  - Home for both Australian cultures
- Opportunities
  - Gateway to Great Barrier Reef
  - Opportunities for business in health and tourism industries
  - A museum for first people of Australia
- Game changer project:
  - Global tourism park

### Professor Frank Kennedy, Professor of Practice, UQ Business School

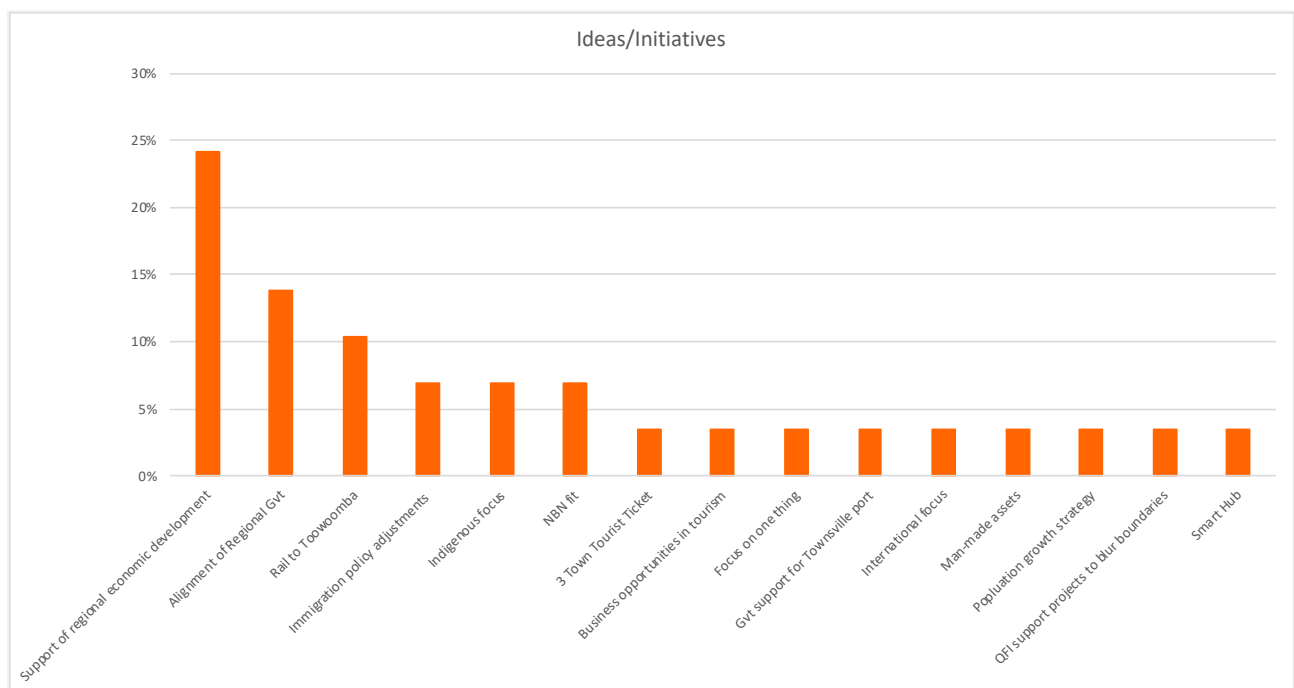
- Summarizes the event as follows: An event that covered overcoming challenges, resilience, balancing the strengths, lifestyle, culture and the arts in regional Queensland
  - Challenges, but hungry communities for growth
  - Inadequate number of workforce and relocation, but staying positive and optimistic about growth
  - Private funds – not relying on government funds; building on diversity of the region
  - The reason why The University of Queensland exists: assets, liabilities, culture, people, and global infrastructure
- To sum up: resilience, optimism and actions!

### Summary of Workshop Comments

- The overview provided by the speakers was really great. It would be good to discuss what is happening to develop remote areas outside of the city councils.
- Rockhampton:
  - airport potential, art, fishing, pro Adani

- Townsville:
  - Asian focus (Singapore), Youth focus
- Cairns:
  - wind farm, outdoor theatre, need for the man-made assets
- Toowoomba:
  - Data centre, Tech park, Renewable centre, passenger rail to Toowoomba, Inland port: rail/air
- Got a lot out of the speakers
- Good session – well organized
- Great optimism expressed – very interesting details on regions
- Cairns – indigenous, huge point of economy, business opportunities in tourism
- Great to hear from regional Queensland leaders, more details on business initiatives in these areas would be good, i.e. Townsville Tech/start-ups, resources
- Building/creating a vision for Queensland and its communities from the ground up
- How do we support our first nation's people to live with their culture?
- Passionate local leaders

## Summary of Ideas



The Queensland Futures Institute acknowledges the support of the UQ Business School and Samira Nazar for her excellent recording and analysis of the Breakfast.

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