

Surat Basin Future Directions Statement



Final Report
July 2011

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Foreword

The Surat Basin is a vibrant and productive region renowned for its strong and resilient communities spanning the Toowoomba, Western Downs and Maranoa districts. The region is currently experiencing growth unlike any other region in Queensland as a result of the expansion of the energy and resources sector. State, local and federal government agencies are working together with community and industry members to capitalise on the opportunities this growth presents and manage the impacts for the region as a whole.

Our primary goal is to build a sustainable future for all Queenslanders. We need to strike the right balance in responding to environmental, social and economic considerations of emerging industries with the established agricultural sector in the region.

The *Surat Basin Future Directions Statement* (the Statement), released on 4 March 2010, committed the state government to working with industry and the community to build a 21st century future for the region characterised by well planned growth with sustainable jobs in secure and liveable communities. The Statement's collaborative and cooperative approach to identifying and responding to opportunities and challenges in the Surat Basin has been very successful.

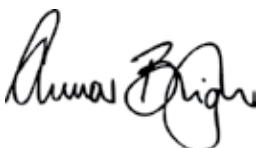
This success is in large part due to the early and continued input from the mayors of the Toowoomba, Maranoa, Goondiwindi and Western Downs Regional Councils and Banana Shire Council working closely with the state government, industry, community leaders and local residents to foresee issues, challenges and opportunities.

Based on the principles of partnership, integration, comprehensiveness, building regional community resilience, adaptability and responsiveness, the Statement has delivered 11 headline initiatives encompassing the policies that will sustain growth in the Surat Basin for the next 30 years.

Through the headline initiatives we have addressed a variety of critical issues such as planning and settlement patterns, economic development, skilled labour and workforce development, housing availability, transport, strategic cropping land, land access and CSG water management. This work has delivered a practical set of priorities to inform regional planning and service delivery at the government, industry and community level.

The Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee has guided delivery of the Statement by the Queensland Government, in consultation with regional community and industry stakeholders. We wish to acknowledge the collaboration and support of the Surat Basin community, local councils, industry, state government and union representatives who have been an integral part of implementing the Statement.

We look forward to the continuation of this collaborative relationship into the future.



The Honourable Anna Bligh, MP,
Premier and Minister for Reconstruction



The Honourable Tim Mulherin, MP,
Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies

Chair's message

I have been pleased to be the chair of the Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee.

This has provided me with a unique opportunity to work closely with others who have a keen interest in building a sustainable and prosperous Surat Basin.

Industry bodies, community representatives, peak bodies and the three levels of government have cooperated and collaborated to actively address challenges and maximise the opportunities arising from the growth in this region.

It has been an effective guiding force in a process that has created a genuine consultative approach in the delivery of the *Surat Basin Future Directions Statement*.

Together we have worked to progress the headline initiatives in the Statement. These projects are the nuts and bolts which build the foundation for the future of the region.

The Steering Committee has closely monitored the progress of these initiatives and provided input throughout the implementation period. I'd like to thank all the members of the committee, particularly my fellow mayors from Maranoa, Toowoomba, Banana and Goondiwindi Councils, for their expertise and commitment to this journey.

The delivery of this final report marks the beginning of a new and exciting era for the Surat Basin. Our communities are stronger for the partnerships developed through the Statement and I look forward to continuing these partnerships well into the future.



Ray Brown

Chair

Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Surat Basin is a region comprising established and strong communities supported by a robust and productive agricultural economy. Significant growth is being experienced in the region due to mining and extraction of extensive deposits of thermal coal and coal seam gas (CSG). The Queensland Government has had a unique opportunity to anticipate and prepare for this growth and the *Surat Basin Future Directions Statement* (the Statement) is the foundation of this preparation.

This final report on the Statement is an opportunity to detail the work accomplished through a partnership of the Queensland, federal and local governments, regional industry participants and members of the local community.

Growth: challenges and opportunities

Unprecedented resource sector growth is increasing the demands placed on the region's infrastructure and services. It is changing the face of local communities and presents challenges for the environment and the local economy.

Growth prospects create both opportunities and challenges, for example:

- How will the communities in the Surat Basin plan for the anticipated population growth?
- What additional infrastructure and services will be required?
- What will the local economy need to capitalise on the opportunities arising from new industries but continue to meet local needs and stay strong and diverse?
- How will locals be skilled-up to take up new opportunities and how will businesses maintain their workforces?
- How will the biodiversity and environment of the region be sustainably managed?

The Statement

It was clear that the opportunities and challenges arising from this rapid economic growth were complex and region-wide and would require working in partnership with local mayors, community members and industry representatives to undertake a coordinated strategy and planning exercise.

The Statement was developed to provide a model of how government can coordinate and deliver regional development outcomes which support and manage growth. It was launched by the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies, in March 2010.

The Statement aimed to achieve the following:

1. Provide the frameworks and policies to sustain and manage growth in the Surat Basin for the next 30 years.
2. Apply a holistic, long-term approach for the region, considering economic, social and environmental elements.
3. Set up a framework so government, industry and community representatives can respond to regional needs in a coordinated and collaborative way.
4. Identify major regional issues and deliver 11 'headline initiatives' which directly address key challenges and growth opportunities.
5. Establish an ongoing mechanism by which issues are raised and addressed.

Since its launch, the major aims of the Statement have been achieved.

The Statement was structured around six themes connected by a commitment to improved coordination and collaboration across government and regional partners.

The themes are:

- planning for growth
- planning and developing infrastructure
- building and maintaining liveable communities
- building economic resilience and capturing opportunities
- developing a skilled workforce
- sustaining regional environments.

Highlights of the Statement are 11 headline initiatives relating to these themes.

Achievements

It was the partnerships between governments, industry and community and led by the regional mayors, which drove delivery of the Statement and demonstrated a unique and very successful collaboration and coordination between relevant parties.

Detailed overviews of each headline initiative are included in this report and contact information is also provided for those seeking further information.

In addition to delivering the headline initiatives and other activities identified in the Statement, the Queensland Government continues to explore and fund initiatives which are responsive to change, so future challenges can be met and associated benefits maximised.

Regional participation and governance

The Surat Basin Regional Development Forum held in Roma in March 2010 marked the first formal engagement with people from the region on the implementation of the Statement. The forum gave interested parties an opportunity to be involved in the ongoing development of the projects or 'headline initiatives' of the Statement.

A Steering Committee was created to oversee delivery of the Statement. The Steering Committee is chaired by Councillor Ray Brown, Mayor of the Western Downs Regional Council. Membership comprised representatives from the Australian, state and local governments, the community, unions and industry. It was based on the Local Leadership Group set up under the *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy* with the addition of new members to expand the representation of regional interests.

The Steering Committee met four times during 2010 with the first meeting held on 13 April. It met in Dalby on 3 March 2011 and will meet once more in late 2011.

An important contributor to regional development is the Regional Development Australia (RDA) network. The RDAs engage with other regional organisations to identify regional and cross-regional priorities, inform regional planning, provide independent advice to governments about regional development priorities, and contribute to community and economic development within a region. A member of the Darling Downs and South West RDA Committee also sat on the Steering Committee creating an important link between these two initiatives.

The future in the Surat Basin

One of the government's highest priorities, following the unprecedented series of natural disasters in 2010–11, is rebuilding Queensland. Two major plans will help to achieve this.

- Operation QUEENSLANDER – the State Plan (www.qldreconstruction.org.au) will guide recovery and reconstruction activities and investments to not only repair devastated regions but make them more resilient and liveable places.
- The Queensland Regionalisation Strategy (www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/growth) aims to direct growth in regional Queensland by identifying and unlocking regions' economic potential. Its focus is to encourage workers and their families to move to regional Queensland for a job but stay for the lifestyle.

For the Surat Basin, these plans mean meeting existing and new challenges and opportunities in the Surat Basin long term. It means ongoing partnerships between all levels of government with industry, business and communities, to respond to change and maintain the quality of life in the region.

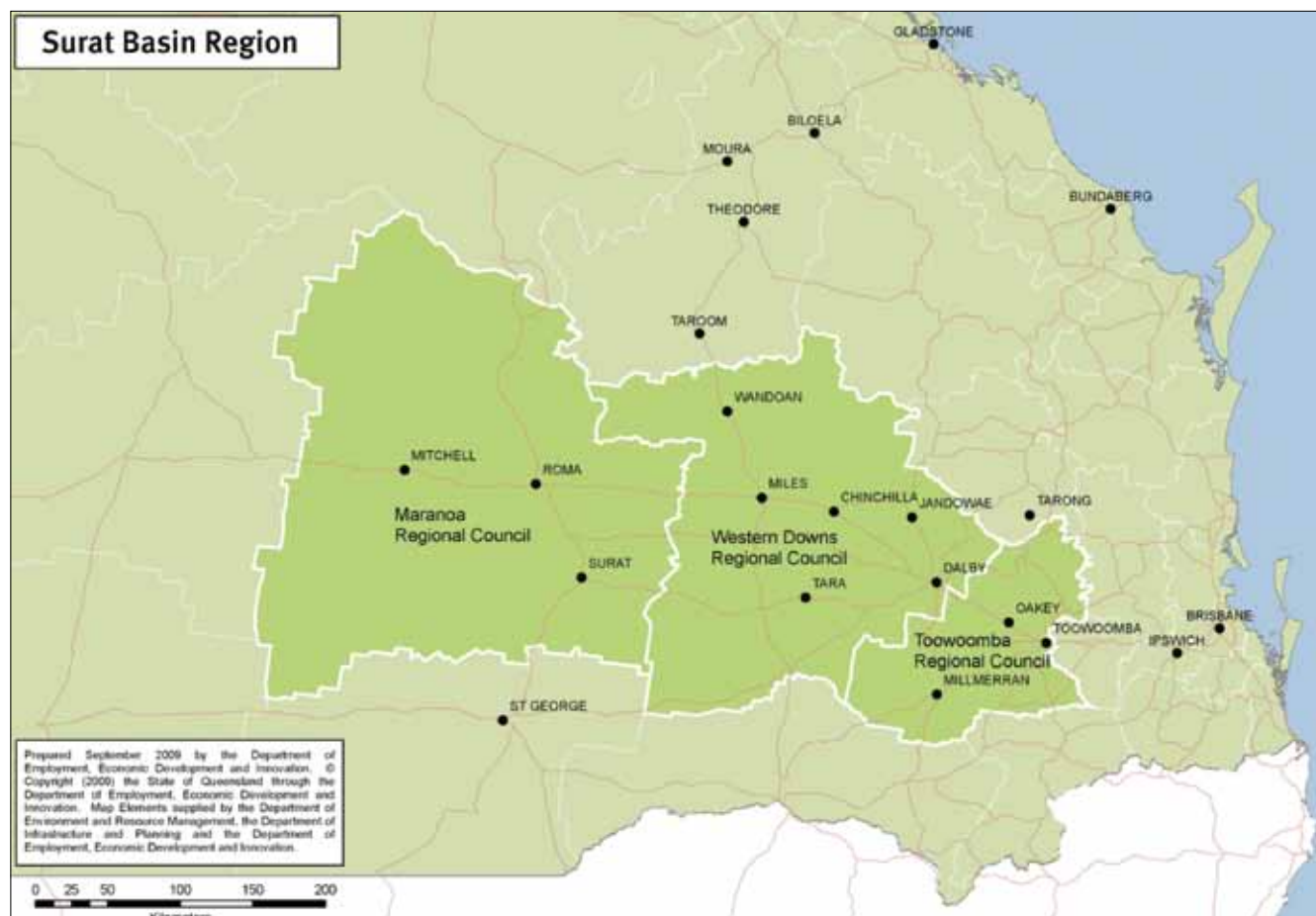
These plans will complement the framework established under the Statement which has proved to be an effective model of enabling governments, industry and communities, to respond collaboratively to major regional issues.

The Queensland Government is committed to the collaborative and inclusive approach which has defined the delivery of the Statement. Following the next scheduled meeting of the Steering Committee, responsibility for monitoring the ongoing implementation of the headline initiatives and other activities identified in the Statement will be transferred to an expanded Surat Basin Local Leadership Group. This will strengthen the link between the outcomes of the Statement and the *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy*, and provide a clear mechanism for issues arising in the Surat Basin to be raised with government.

Overview of the Surat Basin region

Region overview

The Surat Basin region is a diverse and geographically large region covering approximately 110 000 km² within the Toowoomba, Maranoa and Western Downs Regional Council areas. It contains some of Queensland's most valuable agriculture assets as well as an abundance of coal, gas and other resource deposits.



Source: Compiled by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation 2009

Demography

The estimated residential population of Surat Basin region for 2011 is 209 961, or 4.6 per cent of the state's population. Surat Basin region's population in 2031 is projected to be 301 909 persons¹.

Growth prospects in the region

The two major industries in the region are agriculture and resource extraction. The total value of agricultural production in the Surat Basin for 2009–2010 was \$1.860 billion² (for Toowoomba, Western Downs and Maranoa Regional Council areas). Energy resource deposits in the region have been estimated at over 6 billion tonnes of thermal coal resources³ and 21 488 petajoules of CSG reserves as at 30 June 2010⁴.

¹ Queensland Government Population Projections 2011 – (Medium Series), OESR, Queensland Government

² Agricultural commodities; Small area data, Australia, 2005-06 (Reissue), ABS

³ Queensland Coals: physical and chemical properties, colliery and company information, 14th Edition, 2003, Queensland Government

⁴ Fiscal 2009-10 petroleum production and reserves tables, accessed 01/04/2011 www.dme.qld.gov.au



Future directions

Governance

The Statement has fulfilled its aim in setting out a framework for government, community and industry to work together to manage the opportunities and impacts of growth from resource development. This framework will sustain growth in the region for the next 30 years.

A large part of the success of the Statement can be attributed to the strong engagement between local stakeholders and government which informed the development and delivery of the headline initiatives, a commitment to accountability and regular reporting, and the leadership of the Steering Committee.

The Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee, chaired by Cr Ray Brown, has been responsible for overseeing the Statement's implementation and the development and progress of the headline initiatives. The committee first met following the Regional Development Forum in March 2010. Since then it has met regularly—during 2010 and on 3 March 2011 in Dalby. The Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee will meet for the last time in late 2011 to table this final report.

The mayors of the Maranoa, Toowoomba and Western Downs Regional Councils have been involved in the development and delivery of the Statement and integral to its success. All members of the committee believe it has been very effective in overseeing the implementation of the Statement and successfully acted as a conduit to government to identify and prioritise the needs of the region.

Membership of the Surat Basin Future Directions Statement Steering Committee was based on the membership of the Surat Basin Local Leadership Group, established under the *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy*. The policy aimed to foster government's partnerships with local government, industry and community by establishing local leadership groups (in the Bowen and Surat Basins and the North West Minerals Province) to focus on regional planning issues and key projects which would address cumulative or regional issues arising from resource development. The aims and outcomes of the Statement are broadly consistent with those of the policy.

The Queensland Government is committed to the collaborative and inclusive approach which has defined delivery of the Statement. Following the next scheduled meeting of the Steering Committee, responsibility for monitoring the ongoing implementation of the headline initiatives and other activities identified in the Statement will be transferred to an expanded Surat Basin Local Leadership Group. This will strengthen the link between the outcomes of the Statement and the *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy* and provide a clear mechanism for issues arising in the Surat Basin to be raised with government.

The focus on addressing issues of concern and maximising opportunities will continue under the Surat Basin Local Leadership Group. It will also connect with other committees in the Surat Basin which deal with reconstruction and flood recovery efforts as well as specific issues relating to the CSG industry.

The Queensland Government will continue to provide secretariat support to the Local Leadership Group and will coordinate the involvement of other agencies as necessary.

The Queensland Government continues its commitment to shaping a prosperous and sustainable Surat Basin region, and acknowledges and appreciates the time, effort and expertise its regional partners contribute to achieving this vision.

Achievements

Coordination and collaboration

Surat Basin Regional Development Forum

The first headline initiative to be delivered under the Statement was the Regional Development Forum, held in Roma on Thursday 18 March 2010. This forum was hosted by the Premier, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, and was an opportunity for the government to engage with regional representatives to outline how it intended to deliver a planned, community-inclusive approach to managing growth in the region.

The Statement was presented, noting the headline initiatives, and outlining how it was to be delivered and how regional representatives were to be involved. Presentations by senior departmental officers were made on each of the headline initiatives and the intended outcomes. Attendees were invited to nominate to be on headline initiative working groups.

The forum attracted 71 attendees including members of the Surat Basin Local Leadership Group. Mayors of Western Downs, Maranoa and Toowoomba Regional Councils and Banana and Paroo Shire Councils, and representatives of industry groups, unions and businesses operating in the region all attended.

At the forum's plenary session, participants were invited to discuss how to preserve and enhance the liveability of their communities in light of the expected growth in the region.

The session provided an opportunity for those who live and work in the Surat Basin to contribute to Queensland-wide discussions being held by the Premier at the Queensland Growth Management Summit on 31 March 2010. This summit aimed to respond to the community's concerns about population growth and to identify new strategies to ensure long-term sustainable solutions for all Queenslanders. Outcomes from the summit have informed the Queensland Regionalisation Strategy.

Following the forum, the Surat Basin Future Directions Steering Committee was formed as the Statement's governance mechanism and first met on 13 April 2010. The committee was chaired by Cr Ray Brown, Mayor of the Western Downs Regional Council and comprised representatives from the Australian, Queensland and local governments, the local community, unions and industry.

The Steering Committee was tasked with monitoring progress of the development and implementation of the headline initiatives. It met five times during implementation of the Statement. Members of the committee believe it has been very effective in overseeing the implementation of the Statement and as a conduit to government. The Steering Committee's last scheduled meeting will be in late 2011.

Planning for growth

Regional Planning Framework and Settlement Pattern

The impacts of growth in the mining, gas and power generation industries will be felt across the whole of the Surat Basin with substantial pressure being placed on the existing network of towns and infrastructure. The Queensland and local governments are working collaboratively with regional stakeholders in planning to ensure the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of the Surat Basin are preserved and enhanced given the pressure of strong resource sector growth.

In order to identify the implications of this growth on existing and future settlement in the Surat Basin, the Surat Basin Regional Planning Framework (SBRPF) provides key planning principles and strategic direction to inform future planning decisions within the Surat Basin. The SBRPF also provides a preferred settlement pattern which includes detail for each local government area on the proposed location of future residential, service and industrial growth. It also summarises key issues relevant to particular locations and identifies where further monitoring and investigations may be required.

The SBRPF will be used to inform the review and preparation of existing and future planning documents affecting growth in the Surat Basin. This includes statutory regional plans and local planning schemes, as well as the assessment of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for major projects. It will also be used to inform the development of the final Queensland Infrastructure Plan and associated projects in the Surat Basin.

The SBRPF establishes a regional vision outlining the desired future for the Surat Basin. The vision is derived from the strengths, values and challenges as perceived by the community, industry, regional stakeholders and local and state governments. The SBRPF explores these values, strengths and challenges and identifies the strategies required for sustainable future growth.

While the Toowoomba, Western Downs and Maranoa Regional Councils have individual and diverse challenges to overcome in planning for future generations, it is important that regional direction is integrated into local planning to ensure the response to accelerated growth in the Surat Basin is consistent and adaptive to emerging regional challenges.

The SBRPF has been developed to provide this regional direction and will be used as the framework to inform an integrated federal, state and local government agenda for the Surat Basin, linking infrastructure and service provision to manage future population change and economic growth in the resource sector.

Snapshot of the Settlement Pattern

The existing settlement pattern of the Surat Basin is heavily influenced by the location of well established regional transport networks, access to water and proximity to high-quality agricultural land. The original settlements established along the Warrego Highway have become the major towns servicing the Surat Basin.

The proposed settlement pattern of the Surat Basin supports and enhances the existing network of communities and major towns by highlighting them as the primary locations for future urban growth and service delivery.

The role of the Surat Basin's towns as regional and district centres for rural services will be secured and enhanced. Depending on their proximity to resource sector activities, they will be required to respond to additional demands on community and social services and industrial land supply to support nexus activities and supply chain opportunities.

Next steps:

- working with local governments in the region on developing their community plans and planning schemes
- working with state agencies to provide advice on the assessment of EIS
- engaging local governments and state agencies on regional planning issues through the Maranoa–Balonne Regional Planning Committee.

Further information is available from the Department of Local Government and Planning by telephoning 07 3227 8548 or visiting www.dlgp.qld.gov.au

Planning and developing infrastructure

Regional Transport Investigation and Strategy

The Regional Transport Investigation and Strategy is a long-term multimodal transport plan for the Surat Basin region. The transport system is an important component of the sustainable development of the region as it provides industries and communities with efficient, equitable and safe connections within and outside the region.

The Surat Basin region has a comprehensive and well-connected transport network comprising state-controlled and local roads, railways, aviation facilities, public transport services and some active transport facilities. To facilitate future development of the region while maintaining liveability, the study has identified these major transport issues which will need to be addressed:

- Road and rail networks are predominately focused towards south-east Queensland, whereas the energy sector requires strong road and rail links to Gladstone and potentially Bundaberg and Mackay.
- Multiple major private industry developments will have cumulative impacts, particularly on the road network, due to additional traffic and over-mass and over-dimensional loads. The greatest impacts will occur during the construction phase. These need to be carefully managed through the state significant project assessment process.
- Rail and road capacity to the east is very constrained due to the range crossing and conflicts with increasing passenger traffic between Ipswich and Brisbane.
- Toowoomba Airport has limited options for expansion due to urban encroachment.
- Relatively few trips are made by public transport, walking and cycling. Over time, increasing use of these modes could assist in traffic management and improving liveability in the region's cities and towns.
- The recent trend for freight to shift from rail to road could place more pressure on the region's road network.
- Collaborative, system-wide planning and investment decisions across all levels of government will be needed to overcome funding constraints.

The Regional Transport Investigation and Strategy proposes these broad strategic directions:

- A balanced approach that addresses all industry sectors and the community, subregions and modes. The strategy recognises the needs of different industries (not just mining) and the population (the workforce and residents). It provides strategies to improve both freight and passenger movements.
- A multimodal approach that recognises the roles of road, rail, air, ports, public transport and active transport. Some modes are more suited to some purposes than others.
- A holistic approach that balances infrastructure investment with funding for planning, operational and management measures and transport services.
- A targeted approach that recognises differing needs for regional imports and exports. Exports of coal will predominately move to the north, while exports of grain will predominately move to the east. Industry inputs will continue to be sourced mostly from Brisbane, but imports could increase significantly from northern ports at Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mackay.
- A focused approach that highlights some investments as 'enabling' and therefore essential to open up the region for development, while others are recognised as 'supporting' and required to protect the long-term liveability of the region. Enabling investments (such as Surat Basin Rail) require significant one-off investment, while supporting investments (such as more bus services) can be delivered as incremental improvements over time.



Photo: Mathew Gane

Key strategies by transport mode

Road

- Complete the business case and seek federal funding for a new Toowoomba Range crossing and general widening and strengthening of the Warrego Highway.
- Analyse flood and heavy vehicle impacts on key freight routes.
- Incrementally upgrade other important routes including the Gore, Leichhardt, Carnarvon, Dawson, New England, Bunya and Burnett Highways.
- Support further planning for improvements to Local Roads of Regional Significance.

Rail and port

- Support appropriate private construction of the Surat Basin Rail link to the Port of Gladstone.
- Facilitate upgrades where required to the Moura Rail system, the Miles–Wandoan Branch and the Western Rail Line.
- Incrementally upgrade rail level crossings to improve safety and efficiency.
- Review rail/road intermodal facilities.
- Work with the federal government with planning for the Melbourne–Brisbane Inland Rail line.

Air

- Support appropriate private industry upgrades to key aerodromes, consistent with the outcomes of the state significant project assessment process.
- Develop a regional aviation strategy, including consideration of a larger regional airport.

Public transport

- Investigate improvements to bus services across the region.
- Review long-distance coach, rail and air links between towns.

Active transport

- Identify a Principal Cycle Network for the region to guide investment in the most important cycle routes.
- Ensure planning schemes prioritise walking and cycling facilities within towns.

Next steps:

- public release of a draft strategy for consultation
- working with all levels of government and private industry to progress strategies, including:
 - reconstruct transport links damaged during floods
 - develop Integrated Regional Transport Plans for the South West, Maranoa–Balonne and Darling Downs regions
 - finalise the Toowoomba Sub-Regional Transport Study
 - develop a robust regional transport model
 - advocate for, and facilitate investment in, major enabling infrastructure
 - develop a program for the incremental planning and upgrading of key links
- setting up an implementation group to monitor progress and report.

Further information is available from the Department of Transport and Main Roads by telephoning 07 3146 1785 or visiting www.tmr.qld.gov.au

Building and maintaining liveable communities

Resource Town Housing Affordability Strategy

Housing affordability is being placed under increasing pressure in the Surat Basin as demand for housing rises in response to resource sector activity. At the same time, maintaining housing affordability is integral to attracting and retaining skilled workers as well as retaining established residents and service industry employees. The availability and affordability of a suitable range of dwelling types and tenures contribute to the community's ability to function in an efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.

The Resource Town Housing Affordability Strategy (the Strategy) aims to improve the availability of quality affordable land and housing supply outcomes through the use of a range of planning frameworks and instruments. While the Strategy focuses on housing supply outcomes, additional measures targeting housing demand factors are included to provide a comprehensive response to optimising housing affordability.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities in relation to housing affordability are outlined in the Strategy. The adoption by all levels of government of an integrated and coordinated approach to implementation of the Strategy's components is required for a successful outcome.

Four broad goals underpin the specific actions contained in the Strategy. They are:

- housing diversity in type and tenure to meet the needs of different household compositions and life cycle changes
- well designed and located housing to facilitate long-term living affordability
- optimised conditions for housing affordability
- responding to changing housing needs associated with demographic changes and resource sector development.

The Queensland Government sets the regulatory framework for planning, development assessment, infrastructure charging, building standards and the land tenure system, all of which can contribute to housing affordability. While the planning system can facilitate the foundations for housing supply, the private housing market needs to respond efficiently to housing demand in the region.

In addition, through the environmental and social impact assessment process, the Coordinator-General may place conditions on project proponents when approving resource project proposals to minimise any adverse impacts on the local housing market. The introduction of Social Impact Management Plans for the life of an approved project provides the means for ensuring housing impacts are continually monitored and responses adjusted to mitigate adverse impacts over the longer term.

Current initiatives contributing to housing affordability in the Surat Basin:

- The Urban Land Development Authority's (ULDA) resource community program complements the existing property market by ensuring property within declared Urban Development Areas (UDA) is released to the market in a timely fashion at a range of price points.
- The government declared a 20 hectare site in Roma as a UDA on 30 July 2010. The ULDA has prepared a development scheme that incorporates a land use plan, a land use strategy and an implementation plan for the site. While the majority of the site is proposed to be developed into residential lots which provide a range of dwelling choices, new open spaces will also be made available. The ULDA is committed to ensuring a portion of the development will be made available for rent or purchase at affordable levels for low to moderate income households.
- The Australian Government, in conjunction with the Queensland Government, is facilitating the delivery of affordable rental accommodation through the National Rental Affordability Scheme. The scheme provides incentives via subsidies, or through the taxation system, to investors and developers to construct new dwellings which are then offered to eligible persons at a reduced rental price. Under this scheme, approval has been given for 42 dwellings in the Surat Basin, including houses, townhouses and units.
- The state government, through the Department of Communities, provides a range of programs that assist individuals with home ownership and social housing services. Action is also being taken to build the capacity of the not-for-profit housing sector, which plays a critical role in the direct provision and management of affordable housing, social and crisis housing and housing support services. For example, the Rural Housing Service Centre, involving a partnership between the Maranoa Regional Council and the state government, has received approval to provide a single coordinated social housing service in Roma. Over the longer term, it is expected that this service will grow the stock of affordable rental housing in the Maranoa area for use by lower income workers and existing residents who are experiencing housing stress as a result of sharp rises in rents in the private rental market.
- Local governments are currently preparing new planning schemes which ensure an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land for residential development and remove barriers that may limit housing options required to meet future housing needs.

A key factor for the housing market going forward will be the proportion of operational workforces that seek either permanent or temporary accommodation in townships rather than on-site or company-provided temporary dwellings. The timeliness of such decisions is likely to impact significantly on the capacity of the housing development industry and local governments to respond effectively to housing demand.

To date, a number of resource sector project proponents have indicated in their EISs that a high proportion of their construction workforces and a considerable proportion of their operational workforces are planned to work on a fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out basis with many housed in temporary accommodation away from existing townships. In the main, community stakeholders in the region (local governments, business and community organisations) have expressed concerns about the proportion of workers on these projects that will not be permanent residents of their communities, with many supporting the integration of the operational workforce into the community through permanent residency via either home purchase or long-term rental.

The Strategy will ensure monitoring of workforce, demographic and housing demand, and supply trends and projections. This information will be passed on to stakeholders.

Next steps:

- establishing a stakeholder coordinating body to facilitate ongoing dialogue so that targeted responses can be developed to mitigate adverse impacts on future housing affordability as circumstances change
- finalising arrangements for the transfer of public housing stock to the Maranoa Rural Housing Service
- developing a variety of affordable housing on the UDA in Roma.

Further information is available from the Department of Local Government and Planning by telephoning 07 3227 8548 or visiting www.dlgp.qld.gov.au

Guideline for Social Impact Management Plans

In the past 10 years, the assessment and management of community health, safety, housing and accommodation, and social wellbeing impacts have been increasingly considered as opportunities for local communities to benefit from economic development, and as part of the risk management and social responsibility of resource development proponents. Multiple concurrent and overlapping proposals for new and expanded mining development can result in significant cumulative and regional impacts in resource communities. These impacts must be considered by all stakeholders in decision making and planning for resource communities to ensure that benefits are maximised and negative impacts are avoided or minimised.

Under the *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy* and the Statement, proponents of new or expanded major resource development projects are required to develop a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) in consultation with key stakeholders including councils, community and government.

A SIMP is part of the social impact assessment process. It requires proponents to forecast positive and negative changes to communities, both in a local and cumulative sense, detail the agreed strategies for managing and mitigating these effects, determine the responsibility of various parties in relation to the strategies, and develop an effective community engagement strategy. The community engagement requirement ensures that the community is actively involved in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing social impact management strategies over the life of a project.

Baseline data, workforce profiles and the research conducted by resource companies as part of a social impact assessment provides government with a range of information about the cumulative social impacts on communities. This information is vital in guiding future development decisions and strategic planning for resource communities in terms of land use, service delivery and infrastructure requirements. Ultimately SIMPs will progressively reflect best practice in managing cumulative impacts as greater understanding is gained by government, industry and communities.

The *Guideline to preparing a social impact management plan*, released in September 2010, helps proponents to develop a SIMP in collaboration with stakeholders after having conducted a social impact assessment. The plan must be prepared in accordance with the guideline, the Queensland Government's *Sustainable Resource Communities Policy*, and current environmental impact assessment and resource development legislation.

A SIMP should include:

- an overall summary
- identified impacts
- an impact analysis, including mitigation and management strategies
- monitoring, reporting and reviewing mechanisms
- engagement strategies
- dispute resolution mechanisms.

In 2010, four resource development proponents (three liquefied natural gas (LNG) and one coal project) were required by the Coordinator-General to develop a SIMP as a condition of the approval of their projects. A SIMP can be changed to reflect the outcomes of monitoring and review processes and is therefore responsive to local and regional issues as they arise. The SIMP is required to be in place for the life of a project.

Next steps:

- The Queensland Government is currently investigating the option of legislative amendments to support the preparation of SIMPs.

Further information is available from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation by visiting www.deedi.qld.gov.au

Building economic resilience and capturing opportunities

Economic Development Strategy

The vision of the Surat Basin Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) is that ‘the Surat Basin is a balanced and sustainable region that is proactive and responsive to changing economic, community and environmental needs. The vibrant and knowledge-driven economy is globally competitive, yet supports the local social structure, allowing regional wealth to be shared by all residents across the numerous settlements and landscapes of the regional setting’.

The Strategy aims to inform and guide the future economic development of the region. It provides long-term direction for the Surat Basin through a framework which supports and complements new and existing strategies while also assisting in managing and planning for regional growth.

The Strategy also drives growth by strengthening the region’s priority sectors of coal and services, agriculture, education and training, metal product manufacturing, food processing, CSG and services, emerging industries and tourism. It captures economic opportunities to build a resilient, diverse and strong economy that meets local needs as well as attracting investment, and creates employment that contributes to regional prosperity and sustainable communities.

The Economic Development Strategy will be implemented through an overarching Regional Action Plan and eight specific Industry Action Plans. The Regional Action Plan will have a medium to long-term focus (5+ year horizon), with strategies grouped under five key themes.

Key Theme	Strategies
1. Advocacy and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote need for infrastructure and other transport solutions• Collation and communication of information and data• Provide support for regional planning
2. Assisting and supporting local business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with local business and industry• Build local business efficiencies and skills• Expand local industry capacity
3. Innovation, technology and value-adding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the use and adoption of new technology• Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship• Promote opportunities for value-adding
4. Attracting investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research opportunities for investment• Develop a strategic approach• Develop and maintain marketing material• Facilitate business investment
5. Workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the Surat Basin Workforce Development Plan• Attract and integrate new workers• Understand evolving regional skills requirements• Build the capacity of the education and training sector

The eight Industry Action Plans will be implemented in the short term (18–24 months) with specific actions for the priority industry sectors.

Industry sector	Strategies
1. Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support business and supply chain development • Encourage research, innovation and technology adoption • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
2. Food processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity through supply chain development and investment attraction • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
3. Coal seam gas and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity through supply chain development and investment attraction • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
4. Coal and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity through supply chain development and investment attraction • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
5. Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency
6. Emerging industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity through supply chain development and investment attraction • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
7. Metal product manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity through supply chain development and investment attraction • Improve industry competitiveness through innovation, technology adoption and improved efficiency • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention
8. Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build industry capacity and competitiveness through business improvement, supply chain development and investment attraction • Foster skills development, labour attraction and retention • Strengthen the region's tourism brands, experiences and attractions

Each action within the Economic Development Strategy identifies the key stakeholders who will be involved in the implementation.

Next steps:

- each lead organisation to progress actions with appropriate consultation mechanisms
- providing updates to the Surat Basin Local Leadership Group to review progress and ensure actions are implemented and strategies remain focused and relevant.

Further information is available from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation by visiting www.deedi.qld.gov.au

Land Access Policy Framework

The significant growth in CSG exploration and development has resulted in considerable concerns being expressed in the rural communities of the Surat Basin and across the state about the potential for these activities to impact on agricultural businesses and landholders.

The Land Access Policy Framework (the Framework) has been developed in response to these concerns and through detailed consultation with key stakeholders. The Framework aims to provide an appropriate balance between the rights and needs of both sectors.

New land access laws have been enacted to give force to the Framework and ensure landholders have clear rights when dealing with resource companies about private land access and compensation. These reforms amend legislation and apply to respective tenures or authorities under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (exploration permits and mineral development licenses), the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*, the *Petroleum Act 1923*, the *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009* and the *Geothermal Energy Act 2010*.

Under the new land access laws, companies are required to comply with a single Land Access Code. The Land Access Code clearly sets out government's expectations of resource companies in relation to communication, consultation and behaviour when operating on private land, and imposes mandatory conditions on the way in which activities are undertaken to ensure impacts on landholders, businesses and land use are minimised.

The new laws feature the following key elements:

- Companies are required to notify landholders before entering land to conduct activities that will have little or no impact on landholders (known as preliminary activities).
- Companies and landholders are required to negotiate an agreement about conduct and compensation before commencing larger scale activities that will have a more significant impact (known as advanced activities).
- A graduated negotiation and dispute resolution process has been introduced that allows the parties to access independent assistance to resolve disputes.
- Compliance and enforcement powers and process for the government relating to land access breach have been improved.

The new land access laws also clarify compensation arrangements associated with the impact of resource exploration and development activities on landholders, business and land use. The new laws define when compensation may be available and require that compensation is agreed between the parties as part of a *Conduct and Compensation Agreement* prior to commencement of activities that will have significant impact. The new laws provide for a more equitable approach to negotiations by allowing reasonable accounting, valuation and legal costs associated with the negotiation process to be claimed as compensation.

Legislative reform is supported by an information package to assist landholders in negotiations with companies about land access and compensation. A fact sheet explaining the new land access laws has been released as well as tools to assist landholders and companies in the negotiations, and help simplify the process. These tools include the Negotiation Tip Sheet, the Standard Conduct and Compensation Agreement and the Standard Deferral Agreement.

To assist the implementation process, the government conducted a comprehensive series of information sessions across the Surat Basin and the rest of the state in 2010.

With the new land access laws in place, government, industry and the community are now turning towards implementation of the new laws and ensuring effective relationships between the two key sectors. Government will continue to monitor implementation of the new land access laws to ensure they are functioning appropriately.

As part of the ongoing implementation of the new land access framework, government is funding an important program that will provide additional assistance to landholders who are negotiating with CSG companies about access and compensation. This will be delivered in partnership with AgForce Queensland through its AgForward program and will focus around 'farm shed' meetings that provide training for landholders who are, or will be, negotiating with resource companies over access and compensation.

The training will provide landholders with the knowledge they need to successfully negotiate conduct and compensation agreements with CSG companies and help them gain a greater understanding of potential impacts and how these can be managed or minimised.

As part of the government's LNG Enforcement Unit, dedicated Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) officers with land access expertise will be available to landholders and companies to provide assistance in rolling out the new laws. Six dedicated DEEDI officers will offer services to landholders and resource companies in relation to land access issues including information provision, compliance and enforcement, and dispute resolution.

Next steps:

- Undertake a review to ensure that outcomes have been achieved and areas for further improvement are identified.

Further information is available from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation by visiting www.deedi.qld.gov.au



Photo: Ray Cash

Developing a skilled workforce

Workforce Development Plan

The burgeoning energy sector in the Surat Basin has led to a tight labour market, with the region's unemployment rate of less than four per cent creating strong competition for labour and skills.

The Surat Basin Workforce Development Plan (WDP) presents coordinated workforce development strategies focused on four key objectives:

- Attract people to the Surat Basin.
- Retain people in the Surat Basin.
- Develop the workforce to help the region's businesses to participate in supply chain opportunities from the energy and resources sector and service the local community.
- Improve the skills base of people in the Surat Basin through education and training strategies.

The WDP was developed in partnership with regional stakeholders and takes a long-term focus at the key industries in the region.

The WDP highlights that industry (including the CSG/LNG industry) will see significant growth in workforce demand from major projects between 2011 and 2031. Overall demand will increase considerably over the next five years as industries in the Surat Basin expand. Using the 2006 Census as a base, Surat Basin employment will grow from around 85 800 in 2009 to 158 000 in 2031.

The WDP identifies a number of challenges in the ability of the local labour market to respond to projected growth, including:

- an ageing workforce and population, with a higher proportion of residents 65 years or older in the Surat Basin
- a tendency for school leavers to leave the region seeking work or study opportunities
- a tendency for newly unemployed people to leave the region
- relatively low unemployment in the region
- a slightly lower proportion of residents with post-school qualifications compared to Queensland as a whole
- a skills mismatch between the incumbent workforce, given the predominantly agricultural industry base, and the specialised skills required by the emerging CSG/LNG sector.

Accordingly, not all of the anticipated employment growth will be met locally, and will not result in commensurate population growth within the Surat Basin itself. The Queensland Government's 2011 population projections⁵ indicate that the region's resident population will grow from 209 961 in 2011 to 301 909 in 2031, an increase of 91 948⁶. It is likely that a significant proportion of new construction and resource sector jobs created in the Surat Basin will be taken up by workers who reside outside of the region and fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out between work shifts.

The traditionally strong agriculture sector is the second largest employer in the region, accounting for 11.3 per cent of jobs. This sector will remain a high priority and the government will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the workforce development needs of the industry are met. Supporting initiatives include establishing an educational precinct incorporating Dalby State High School and the local Australian Agricultural College Corporation campus, and further development of Agribusiness Gateway Schools.

⁵ Queensland Government Population Projections, 2011 (medium series).

⁶ This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.83% for the Surat Basin, slightly higher than that for Queensland overall (1.8%).

Next steps:

- Key actions identified in the WDP will be implemented in collaboration with industry and community stakeholders. They include:
 - establishing a Surat Basin Skills Investment Program, which will be targeted to high priority workforce skilling needs
 - appointing a Skills and Workforce Development Officer to coordinate the implementation of the WDP
 - expanding the Skilling Solutions Queensland service in the region to provide formal recognition of the skills of the local workforce
 - establishing the Health and Community Services Workforce Development Program to implement workforce strategies and support the region's liveability
 - continuing to deliver the \$10 million CSG/LNG Industry Training Fund
 - partnering with Construction Skills Queensland to implement the workforce plan for the construction phase of the CSG/LNG industry, which includes a Construction Skills Queensland contribution of \$5 million for training
 - providing additional services focused on existing businesses through the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE in partnership with Skilling Solutions Queensland
 - increasing delivery of tertiary training at TAFE campuses through the University of Southern Queensland in communities throughout the Surat Basin, and providing additional support to students with VET qualifications to assist their acceleration through tertiary studies
 - building on the current development of the *Local Government Workforce Retention Initiative* across the Gladstone and Maranoa Regional Council areas to encourage the retention and attraction of skilled workers for all regional councils in the Surat Basin, through the provision of contract civil works for major projects.
- Implementation of workforce development strategies will be overseen by a reference group comprising key stakeholders from the Surat Basin and surrounding regions.

Further information is available from Skills Queensland by visiting www.skills.qld.gov.au



Sustaining regional environments

Strategic Cropping Land Framework

Queensland's best cropping land is a finite resource that must be conserved and managed for the long term.

The state's strategic cropping land (SCL) is subject to a range of competing land use activities, including agriculture and mining. This competition is particularly prominent in key parts of the Surat Basin. This initiative aims to strike a balance between these competing interests.

In August 2010, the state government released *Protecting Queensland's strategic cropping land: A policy framework*.

The SCL policy will be implemented through:

1. a new Act specifically for SCL resources
2. a new State Planning Policy under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*
3. amendments to existing resources legislation.

Under transitional arrangements, from 31 May 2011, resource development projects that have not met certain milestones in the assessment process will be subject to the full extent of the new SCL legislation.

The Queensland Government has released the proposed criteria for identifying SCL in Queensland. They are slope, rockiness, gilgai microrelief (a natural feature of some clay soils that shrink and swell with changing soil water content), soil depth, drainage, soil pH, salinity and soil water storage.

SCL will either fall within a Strategic Cropping Protection Area or a Strategic Cropping Management Area. SCL in Strategic Cropping Protection Areas will not be able to be permanently alienated by mining and other development, except in limited exceptional circumstances.

Proposed development in the Strategic Cropping Management Areas will need to avoid and minimise any impacts on SCL, and where this is not possible, the development proponent will be required to mitigate their impacts.

The government has released a Regulatory Assessment Statement seeking public feedback specifically on the economic impacts of the cost recovery options and costs to businesses and landholders associated with implementing the SCL policy.

In addition to the SCL Policy, *State Planning Policy 1/92: Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land* will remain in force to ensure no reduction in the current protection of good quality agricultural land.

The SCL policy has the potential to ensure that the Surat Basin benefits from both agricultural and resource development by balancing the economic needs of the state with the need for future food and fibre security.

The Queensland Government is currently working on the implementation arrangements for the SCL policy.

Next steps:

- finalising guidelines for applying the proposed criteria at a property level
- undertaking public consultation on a draft State Planning Policy
- introducing legislation
- continuing to work with key stakeholders.

Further information is available from the Department of Environment and Resource Management by visiting www.derm.qld.gov.au

Coal Seam Gas Water and Water Management Issues

CSG water requires careful management to avoid soil degradation and impacts on aquifers and groundwater. However, the quantity of CSG water that will become available also offers the potential for deriving an economic benefit through beneficial use of the water.

The government is conscious of the need to manage these challenges and opportunities in an environmentally acceptable manner that maintains the right economic, environmental and social balance.

The *CSG Water Management Policy* aims to prevent salt produced through CSG activities from contaminating the environment and encourages the beneficial use of treated CSG water. The *CSG Water Management Policy* relates to amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and includes:

- guidelines for performance standards, produced in March 2010
- an adaptive approvals regime, adopted in July 2010. This is a system to monitor and instigate change where required which also allows for best practice environmental management to be implemented as technologies develop over time, and ensure that environmental values are adequately protected into the future.

The CSG Water Management Policy currently deals with:

- use of CSG water
- evaporation dams
- design standards for CSG water aggregation and brine dams
- transitional arrangements for existing dams
- management of saline effluent and solid salt wastes from water treatment and evaporation processes.

Other recent initiatives relating to the management of CSG water include:

- developing a code of practice (expected to be in place in late-2011), in conjunction with industry, for construction of CSG wells. The code will be mandatory under the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*
- implementing legislative amendments relating to groundwater bores and springs (to monitor and mitigate any impacts) and drinking water supplies (regulating the impact of CSG water disposal)
- established the independent Queensland Water Commission (QWC) to manage the cumulative impacts of the CSG industry
- declared Queensland's first Cumulative Management Area in the Surat and southern Bowen Basins
- requiring CSG companies to undertake baseline bore assessments before production or testing
- requiring CSG companies to make good any impacts on groundwater supplies
- ensuring that companies are not allowed to actively use BTEX chemicals as a deliberate component of fracking fluids
- banned evaporation dams, except in exceptional circumstances
- established a CSG/LNG Hotline 13 25 23, to address specific community concerns.

The QWC is preparing a region-wide groundwater model that will identify, in advance, any impacts on aquifers. This model will cover all projects and protect the environment from the risk of cumulative impacts—groundwater is being managed on a regional scale and the interactions of all projects will be considered at the same time.

A number of scientific studies are being conducted about the potential impacts of the CSG industry, including studies on groundwater impacts of CSG water extraction. A \$5 million CSG Water Feasibility Study is being undertaken to investigate the potential impacts of CSG extraction on groundwater resources, including the Great Artesian Basin. It will also analyse the opportunities for, and the practicability of, using CSG water to assist in achieving the long-term goals of transitioning irrigation communities to lower water use and securing viability of ecological assets. CSG water could play an important role in repairing stressed irrigation aquifers, such as the Condamine Alluvium. Ongoing studies are part of the government's commitment to make decisions based on the best information available.

The use of CSG water is tightly regulated. Reinjection to the coal seam, or treatment and injection to a stressed aquifer, is the first priority management option of this water where feasible. This involves the reinjection of CSG water to coal seams or other formations with appropriate characteristics to receive the water. Where CSG water can be used for virtual recharge by substituting existing groundwater take, it will be deemed to be equivalent to injection and therefore be classed as a first priority management option.

After reinjection beneficial use is a preferred management option where injection may not be feasible for all of the CSG water. Beneficial reuse includes growing crops, forestry, supplementing town water supply and industrial use (e.g. power stations).

New legislation has been introduced to ensure drinking water supplies are protected where CSG water is discharged into the environment, including surface water discharge, aquifer injection and direct augmentation of drinking water. Stringent water quality standards have been set by Queensland Health in accordance with the National Water Quality Management Strategy. The protection of public and environmental health is paramount and these standards ensure that drinking water supplies are protected.

To ensure that the CSG industry complies with the strict new regulatory regime, the government has established an LNG Enforcement Unit in the Surat Basin. Fifty new specialist groundwater, environmental and safety staff have been employed. The new officers have been placed in Dalby, Roma, Toowoomba, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Emerald and Brisbane.

Since November 2010, the LNG Enforcement Unit has received 218 enquiries about the CSG industry. To date, 157 of these enquiries have been resolved and 61 are currently being investigated.

The LNG Enforcement Unit has also undertaken a range of compliance activities in relation to CSG matters. A proactive compliance plan is in place to closely monitor company actions. 300 water bores will be inspected for quality and level in 2011. A further 300 will be inspected in 2012. So far, more than 150 bores have been inspected and this early warning system has not detected anything of concern to date. Random audits and inspections of all CSG activities are carried out regularly.

Next steps:

In *Queensland's LNG Industry – A once in a generation opportunity for a generation of employment Report* (released November 2010), the Queensland Government committed to assessing aquifer injection to determine whether it should be the preferred approach to dealing with CSG water.

In accordance with this commitment, the government has recently adopted aquifer injection as its first priority CSG water management option whenever feasible. After undertaking injection trials, CSG companies will report the results to the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and a decision will be made in relation to operational scale injection. Any pilot injection trial and full scale injection operations would require approval prior to commencement.

The QWC is also developing an Underground Water Impact Report to assess groundwater impacts of all CSG companies in the Surat Cumulative Management Area. This will be used to assess the overall impacts of the CSG industry and to protect ground water resources.

Further information is available from the Department of Environment and Resource Management by visiting www.derm.qld.gov.au

Government's continuing commitment

In addition to delivering the headline initiatives under each of the Statement's themes, a number of other activities were identified.

This section of the final report highlights the progress against these activities listed in the Statement. This list of highlights is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of all initiatives and programs being undertaken by government in the Surat Basin.

Planning for growth

The region will meet the challenges of growth through effective regional and local planning that directs the scale, type, location and connectivity of development. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Planning for Growth theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Data and information			✓
Preparation of updated resident population projections for Queensland Statistical Divisions and Local Government Areas in 2010			
Continued refinement of OESR's projection model for assessing cumulative growth in the non-resident worker populations		✓	
Monitoring of non-resident workforces in the Surat Basin, including the Surat Basin population report baseline study in 2008			✓
Development and release of demographic and workforce studies for the Surat Basin in early 2010			✓
Development of household projections, population and housing fact sheets, land use monitoring, regional profiles and other targeted research			✓
Preparation of regional employment projections and detailed industry tables consistent with ABS Input-Output tables		✓	
Monitoring the number of non-resident resource industry workers in the region, and estimates of the full-time equivalent population of the Surat Basin		✓	
Health Service Plan for the South West Health Services District			✓
Local disaster management planning		✓	
Research into the numbers of temporary residents in the region, and estimates of the full-time equivalent population		✓	
Implementation of the Maranoa-Balonne Regional Plan which covers the Maranoa Regional Council and the Balonne Shire Council		✓	
Coordination of different planning mechanisms (regional planning, town planning, natural resource planning)		✓	
Investigating declaration of Urban Development Area within the region			✓
New Local Government Planning Schemes in the next two to five years	✓		
Improving knowledge of proposed projects and changes in population		✓	
Improving communication flows and consultation with local government as part of resource development decision-making processes		✓	
Developing the Cumulative Growth Management Framework for resource communities across Queensland	✓		

Planning and developing infrastructure

The needs of communities and industry will be serviced by appropriately located infrastructure. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Planning and Developing Infrastructure theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Roads			✓
Brisbane – Darwin Corridor Strategy (includes Warrego Highway)			✓
Melbourne – Brisbane Corridor Strategy (includes Gore Highway)			✓
Mungindi – St George – Roma – Emerald Route Strategy			✓
Goondiwindi – Miles – Rockhampton Route Strategy			✓
Gladstone – Rolleston Route Strategy			✓
Warwick – Toowoomba – Kingaroy – Rockhampton Route Strategy	✓		
Toowoomba PT and Freight Study (including Charlton integrated transfer facility) – now called Toowoomba Sub-Regional Transport Study	✓		
Toowoomba Strategy Road Network plan (This is now combined with the Toowoomba Sub-Regional Transport Study above)	✓		
Replacing the bridge and approaches at Wilkie Creek and Oakey Creek, replacing bridges at Wieambilla Creek, Kogan Creek and Ashall Creek, constructing a bridge and approaches over the Barwon River	✓		
Widening and overlaying sections of the Oakey-Cooyar Road	✓		
Repairing and strengthening sections of the Moonie Highway near Dalby	✓		
Widening, repairing and strengthening sections of the Leichhardt Highway	✓		
Upgrading the Warrego Highway from Mitchell towards Roma to allow Type 2 Road Train access	✓		
Paving and sealing sections on the Roma-Taroom Road	✓		
Widening and sealing sections, constructing a bridge and approaches, and reconstructing a section of the Carnarvon Highway	✓		
Completing widening of a bridge at Angellala Creek, widening and sealing sections of the Warrego Highway			✓
Widening and sealing a section of Wallumbilla South Road	✓		
Pilot tunnel for second Toowoomba range crossing			✓
Safety improvements on Chinchilla-Tara Road and Warra-Kogan Road under the Safer Roads Sooner Program	✓		
Develop a strategic road network plan for Toowoomba including road studies for New England Highway near Toowoomba, the Oakey-Cooyar Road and links to the Toowoomba Bypass (This will be undertaken as part of the Toowoomba Sub-Regional Transport Study and future IRTPs)	✓		
Various detailed road link planning including Warrego Highway (Toowoomba-Oakey)	✓		
Implement major road infrastructure projects already programmed over the next five years in the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program		✓	

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Improve road infrastructure and other transport facilities through projects funded via the SRC initiative and other funding sources	✓		
Advocate to the federal government to build and upgrade major federally-funded infrastructure e.g. Warrego Highway and the Toowoomba Bypass		✓	
Ensure recognition of cumulative road system impacts of many major development projects in the EIS process, not just localised project impacts		✓	
Rail Facilitate and assess other major transport projects such as the Surat Basin Rail project and investigation of other potential upgrades where required to the Moura system and the Western line south and east of Wandoan	✓		
Energy Upgrades to the high-voltage electricity transmission network, including new substations, station connections, and measures to address thermal and voltage stability limitations (Powerlink)	✓		
Upgrade of electricity distribution network, including reinforcement of supply to regional towns, replacement of aged infrastructure, and augmentation of network (Ergon)	✓		
Stanwell Gas Development Alliance Agreement with Blue Energy relating to the development and production of CSG from either of two tenements located near Spring Gully		✓	
Investigations into the potential for an Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle power plant with the potential for carbon capture and storage based in Wandoan	✓		
Implementing government policy on gas availability for domestic market		✓	
Investigating electricity transmission infrastructure needs for new generation, LNG compression and mines		✓	
Implementing the Queensland Energy Management Plan		✓	
Renewable energy Renewable energy resource mapping, including assessment of sources of geothermal energy (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide energy resource mapping projects including wind mapping and solar atlas under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)		✓	
Identification of Renewable Energy Zones (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide identification of renewable energy zones under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)	✓		
Investigation of multiple small-scale solar thermal plants (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide development of renewable energy opportunities including solar, wind and bioenergy under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)		✓	
Extractive resources Investigation of the availability of regional extractive resources			✓
Identifying and protecting significant extractive resources		✓	
Telecommunications Work with the National Broadband Network Company to address effective and early delivery of broadband in Queensland		✓	
Identifying opportunities to expand radio network for Queensland Ambulance Service South Western region, through use of common facilities with government and industry	✓		
Identifying communications blackspots		✓	

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Ensuring government infrastructure has allowance for broadband infrastructure		✓	
Coordination The Coordinator-General's role is coordination and decision making regarding approval and conditioning for declared significant projects		✓	
Coal Infrastructure Taskforce set up to ensure adequate infrastructure for coal industry development			✓
Coal industry development guided by the Coal Infrastructure Program of Actions 2008 and the government's medium to long-term coal infrastructure strategic planning		✓	
Implementing governance arrangements for infrastructure planning and monitoring		✓	
Water Investigation of proposed Nathan Dam, including scoping of a potential Nathan Dam agricultural precinct			✓
Water demand study			✓
Implementation of water resource plans		✓	
Development of State Water Grid Concept Plan	✓		
Facilitating development of proposed Nathan Dam, subject to obtaining necessary regulatory approvals	✓		
Undertaking water resource planning		✓	
Developing regional water supply strategy to address water needs over the next 50 years, including managing the impact of climate change on supply and demand	✓		
Land Planning for sufficient and suitable industrial land—CSG Industrial Supply Chain Survey (This program will be ongoing through other mechanisms)		✓	
Industrial Land Demand Study			✓
Industrial Land Suitability Study			✓
Identification of a multi-user infrastructure corridor between the Callide and Gladstone State Development Area			✓
Securing multi-user infrastructure corridor for underground gas pipelines	✓		
Investigate the opportunities and constraints for state land to contribute to the preferred settlement pattern		✓	
Early stage investigation of requirements for appropriately sized and located industrial land			✓

Building and maintaining liveable communities

The region will have a range of liveable communities, with adequate community infrastructure and services to meet the needs of residents and visitors. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Building and Maintaining Liveable Communities theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
<i>Social Impact Assessment</i>		✓	
Major project proponents need to include Social Impact Assessments in their EIS			
Development of legislative amendments to require the development and implementation of Social Impact Management Plans as part of project approval processes	✓		
<i>Housing</i>	✓		
Government employee housing developments are underway in Roma, Mitchell and Injune			
An 'in principle offer' for unallocated state land in Wandoan is under investigation			✓
Development of Major Projects Housing Policy	✓		
Development of guidelines for the type, quality and location of temporary accommodation			✓
Further development of the affordable housing models for local governments through the SRC Housing Group (This group now part of the Major Projects Housing Group)			✓
Expansion of government employee housing in region	✓		
<i>Health</i>		✓	
Roma Hospital - largest acute facility in the South West Health Service District (SWHSD). Services include maternity, pharmacy, radiography, pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, podiatry, speech therapy, counselling and oral health. A Flying Specialist Service (surgeon, obstetrician/gynaecologist and anaesthetist) is based at Roma and provides services to rural and remote locations			
Hospitals at Injune, Surat and Mitchell, and an outpatients Clinic at Wallumbilla		✓	
Primary Health Care Unit located at Roma provides child and family health, young people's support program, Aboriginal health, sexual health, mobile women's service, community aged care, chronic disease management, mental health and allied health		✓	
The SWHSD provides outreach services to the smaller centres on a regular basis through visiting clinics to communities of the Surat Basin		✓	
Queensland Health to enhance the mix of services to meet local community needs at Mitchell through the Multipurpose Health Service Model		✓	
Xstrata Coal and Queensland Health Partnership in Wandoan, with a \$750 000 investment by Xstrata into improving health infrastructure in Wandoan over 3 years		✓	
\$11 million emergency department and maternity unit were opened in Dalby in late 2008			✓
Development of doctors surgeries at Injune and Mungindi Hospitals			✓
A health working group has been established by the SRC Partnership Group			✓
Deliver health service initiatives in collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g. Xstrata Coal refer above)		✓	
Identification of health service priorities, needs and demands in the SWHSD of the Surat Basin	✓		
<i>Education and training – Child care and kindergartens</i>	✓		
Creation of six new services providing 270 kindergarten places in Roma and Darling Downs Education District (One service opened in January 2011, two further services scheduled to open in 2012)			
Trialling a mobile kindergarten in Surat and Injune			✓
Planning locations for extra kindergarten services (to open in 2013 and 2014)	✓		

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Schools Educational services provided by state primary and secondary schools in the Surat Basin, with additional schools available in Toowoomba		✓	
Vocational training and tertiary education The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT) offers a broad range of programs covering wider business and industry skill needs from Toowoomba, Chinchilla, Dalby and Roma		✓	
A new facility is being developed at Roma that will focus on serving the energy and resources sectors			✓
Secondary schools, TAFE and the Australian Agricultural College Corporation work collaboratively to facilitate youth training		✓	
The University of Southern Queensland provides technical and professional education and opportunity for research and innovation		✓	
Access to government services Nine Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP) government services counters operate within the Surat Basin Region		✓	
An expansion of QGAP service counters within the region with two further counters to open in the Surat Basin region by May 2010			✓
Community wellbeing and quality of life Community safety Close liaison between Queensland Ambulance and SANTOS Ltd regarding activities on well sites and the pipeline locations		✓	
Petroleum and gas inspectorate to ensure mining safety		✓	
Approval of an additional Queensland Fire and Rescue officer for Roma	✓		
Allocation of an additional Police Officer position to Chinchilla			✓
Allocation of an Indigenous Police Liaison Officer position to the Dalby District			✓
Provision of Domestic and Family Violence Service in Roma and Toowoomba		✓	
Ensure sufficient training, equipment and other facilities are provided for regional fire and ambulance services		✓	
Liaise with gas companies to provide information to all emergency services on the location of workforces		✓	
Social and cultural wellbeing Improved identification, assessment, mitigation and ongoing monitoring and management of social impacts in EIS process		✓	
Funding of research investigations e.g. the CSIRO social impact study and the best practice sustainable mitigation strategies			✓
Funding of non-government organisations to provide community services		✓	
Social cohesion through programs for new residents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, social inclusion and multicultural needs		✓	
Coordination of human services – Research paper on Coordinated Humans Services Investment in Greenfield Sites that will include a draft technical framework			✓
Coordination and engagement Establishing a local leadership group (under the SRC policy) in the Surat Basin			✓

Building economic resilience and capturing opportunities

The regional economy will be strong and diverse, able to meet local needs, attract investment and respond to significant opportunities. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Building Economic Resilience and Capturing Opportunities theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Energy and Energy Supply Chain Industry Development Centres of Enterprise Surat Energy Resources Province action plan	✓		
Agriculture, Food and Associated Industry Development Centres of Enterprise Food Processing Plan	✓		
Expanding the region's food processing industry action plan to incorporate agriculture			✓
Investigation of opportunities from the proposed Nathan Dam			✓
Development of an 'investor-ready' agribusiness information package			✓
Research Development and Extension for improved profitability and sustainability of the Surat Basin's leading agricultural industries, including beef, grains, pulses and cotton		✓	
Implementation of the 2020 Beef Plan		✓	
Exploration of opportunities for agricultural use of CSG water		✓	
Ensuring robust biosecurity systems through Local Government Area Pest Management Plans and other biosecurity planning		✓	
Research and policy to optimise water allocation between alternative enterprises and improve the profitability risk profile of the farm business		✓	
Assist further forestry development and investment in the region through the release of Queensland's Timber Plantation Strategy		✓	
Resource industry development Releasing land for petroleum and geothermal exploration in the Surat Basin		✓	
Implementation of the LNG Blueprint		✓	
Other economic development Maximising business opportunities and jobs for regional manufacturing supply chains from agriculture, mining, LNG and associated major projects by expanding the role of Industry Capability Network (ICN) in the region		✓	
Extending coverage of the Queensland Regional Development Initiative to include the region			✓
Increasing preparedness of business to cope with impacts of climate change through the ClimateSmart Business Service and the Sustainable Manufacturing web service		✓	
Provide specialist support services through economic development activities, export support services, and specialist services for supply chain development through ICN		✓	
Form a CSG Water Initiative working committee to include key stakeholders from research, industry and economic development agencies			✓
Conducting investigations into long-term, 'post-boom' economic challenges and needs of the region		✓	
Investigate medium and longer term use of coal for a wide range of energy and other products		✓	
Land access Improving relationships between explorers, rural landholders and the Queensland Government through the Land Access Working Group			✓
Climate change Nomination of the Wandoan Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) demonstration project for consideration under the Commonwealth's Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships Program	✓		

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
The Carbon Geostorage Initiative, with release of the Queensland Carbon Dioxide Geological Storage Atlas and GIS			✓
Renewable energy Mapping of areas of strategic importance to the state, including solar and wind, data placed in an online mapping tool (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide energy resource mapping projects including wind mapping and solar atlas under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)		✓	
Developing a Solar Atlas of Queensland (to be delivered under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)		✓	
Investigating the creation of a pilot Renewable Energy Zone in the Surat Basin region (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide identification of renewable energy zones under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)	✓		
Encouraging the creation of multiple small-scale solar thermal plants (to be delivered as part of the broader state-wide development of renewable energy opportunities including solar, wind and bioenergy under the Renewable Energy Industry Development Program of Work)	✓		
Innovation Offering businesses access to the Queensland-wide Innovation Network (Q-WIN) program, Innovation Coaching, Innovation Toolbox, Research and Development Forums and Technology Clinics		✓	
The Capital Raising Pipeline programs assist researchers and innovative businesses to bring their products to market		✓	
Research Development and Extension for improved profitability and sustainability of the region's leading agricultural industries, including beef, sheep and goats, feed grains and fodder, grain, pulses and cotton, and intensive animal industries		✓	
Implementing a cross-regional industry development action plan for energy developments and their supply chain, from exploration to export		✓	
Expanding support for the development of an internationally competitive manufacturing and related services sector in the region, through Jobs First, Queensland Made Means Queensland Jobs initiative		✓	
Supporting the development of manufacturing and related services sector precincts or hubs	✓		
Provide support to local business and industry through delivery of whole-of-government programs		✓	
Investment attraction Attracting investment to address gaps in the local supply chain and take advantage of the region's growth potential		✓	
Engagement with potential investors for new projects in the energy supply chain and related industries		✓	
Engagement with potential investors for new projects in the use of coal for a wide range of energy and other products		✓	

Developing a skilled workforce

The region will provide diverse employment opportunities and meet the need for skilled labour through training local residents and attracting and retaining new workers to the region. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Developing a Skilled Workforce theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Training		✓	
Roma and Chinchilla SQIT focusing on training for gas and oil industries			
School-based traineeships in the energy sector		✓	
Support for the Mining Industry Skills Centre		✓	
Exploring Indigenous training strategies together with industry		✓	
Extensive training to address broader range of skill needs in the community		✓	
Incorporating equitable skills development programs and employment opportunities for vulnerable groups as part of social impact assessment		✓	
An existing Targeting Skills Needs in Regions strategy funded by the Commonwealth that incorporates the Western Downs and Roma Regional Councils			✓
Implementing the Queensland Government Minerals and Energy High School program in a number of secondary schools – a partnership amongst TAFE, four energy companies, the Queensland Resources Council and schools		✓	
Employment		✓	
Working with regional stakeholders to assess skills and labour needs, plan for the development of targeted employment and skilling programs to meet skills and labour needs, and increase employment opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged jobseekers			
Scoping opportunities for Indigenous employment and business development, in line with the Indigenous Employment Policy		✓	
Participation in the National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce		✓	
Quantify labour and skill demands, identify gaps and develop intervention strategies in partnership with key stakeholders		✓	
Request support from federal government for LNG industry in Queensland, including appointment of a Major Project Employment Coordinator			✓
Establish Working Group for Workforce Development for the CSG/LNG industry incorporating broader regional concerns	✓		
Implement a Skills Formation Strategy for the statewide CSG/LNG sector, in partnership with Energy Skills Queensland, supported by Manufacturing Skills Queensland and Construction Skills Queensland		✓	
Provide relevant training to businesses and individuals		✓	
Establish a working group with coal, oil and gas companies, peak regional bodies and government to train small and medium sized enterprises in the region in skills needed to enter the supply chain			
Implement training activities as recommended by the Skills Formation Strategies		✓	
Increase workforce participation		✓	
Develop coordinated and targeted employment and training programs through Skilling Queenslanders for Work locally and in surrounding areas			
Work with CSG/LNG proponents to develop Indigenous Workforce Strategies	✓		
Deliver industry training to prospective employees from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities		✓	
Develop ways to help employees to work across industries in the Surat Basin	✓		

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Pilot the Workplace Partnership and Productivity Project with a regional firm	✓		
<i>Expanding training facilities in the region</i> New training centre at Roma focused on oil and gas sector			✓
Expand Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy to possibly ten schools in the region, with potential for partnerships with the existing five Agribusiness Gateway schools in the region	✓		
Review the strategic direction of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation – Dalby campus, including expansion to offer a broader range of services	✓		
<i>Attract and retain workers to the region</i> Build upon existing strategies to attract and retain workers		✓	
Promote the work opportunities and lifestyle of the region to intending international and interstate migrants via the Work Live Play website and a DVD		✓	

Sustaining regional environments

The biodiversity, ecosystem processes and production values of the region's environments will be sustainably managed. The table below outlines progress against activities listed in the Statement for the Sustaining Regional Environments theme.

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Regulation and compliance			✓
A joint Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and Department of Environment and Resource Management office in Roma set up in May 2009			
Through the EIS process, the government has systems to consider and place conditions on mining, petroleum and gas, and other major projects		✓	
Environmental protection legislation to protect landholdings from environmental harm		✓	
Water		✓	
Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative			
Implementing water resource plans and resource operations plans in the catchments of the Condamine and Balonne Rivers		✓	
Initiated an amendment to the Water Resource (Condamine and Balonne) Plan 2004 to include groundwater in the Central Condamine Alluvium area	✓		
Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is purchasing and managing environmental water		✓	
Implementing water use efficiency initiative as part of the Queensland Murray Darling Basin (QMDB) Healthy Headwaters Program		✓	
Study of the irrigation industry and its current uptake of water use efficiency technologies across the QMDB	✓		
Environment Flows Assessment Program and the identification of flow dependent ecological assets	✓		
CSG Water	✓		
Determine impacts of CSG water extraction and disposal on surface and groundwater systems			
Recover water for ecosystems	✓		
Investigate and implement water use efficiency technologies for irrigators			
Identify links between flow management and environmental assets	✓		
Water management and conservation	✓		
Studies over the next two years followed by a co-investment program between government and irrigators on water use efficiency technologies			
The Murray Darling Basin Authority and Department of Environment and Resource Management developing a Basin Plan including Sustainable Diversion Limits for taking requirements for the next generation of water resource planning in the QMDB	✓		
Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative – Stage 3	✓		
Land			✓
Investigating land management issues, including advanced techniques for managing subsoil constraints and Acid Sulphate Soils Risk Assessment			
Biosecurity activities targeting management of pests and weeds		✓	
Fostering best management practice—sustainable farm practices through research, development and extension		✓	
Actively enforce land management, rehabilitation and other environmental management requirements for mining and exploration activity		✓	
Climate change		✓	
Implementing ClimateSmart initiatives			

Action	Commenced	Ongoing	Completed
Investing in research to inform improved response to managing impacts of climate change on the natural environment		✓	
Further investigate carbon offset and green investment options		✓	
Natural Resource Management In 2008-09, the Queensland Government invested in Condamine Alliance and the Queensland Murray Darling Committee to deliver agreed and prioritised NRM outcomes. These two regions cover the Surat Basin	✓		
Develop regional environmental priorities framework, in collaboration with natural resource management organisations, to direct investment from industry, government and community organisations		✓	
Changes to Land Access policy framework to include the mitigation of the risk and impact associated with pests and diseases			✓

