



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional
Development
Australia

LOGAN & REDLANDS

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN (ABRIDGED)

2024 TO 2025

Regional Development Australia Logan & Redlands Incorporated

ABN: 54 726 472 231

www.rdaloganandredlands.org.au

PO Box 775
Springwood QLD 4127

Original release : August 2024

Strategic context and regional priorities

In October 2020, following initial broad consultations, the RDA released *Logan and Redlands: The Centre for Economic and Employment Growth* to widespread support. This served as the foundation for further extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including all levels of government, South East Queensland Regional Development Australia Committees, business representative organisations, businesses, community organisations, key individual stakeholders, education and training providers and potential investors.

These consultations culminated in the September 2022 *To 2042 and Beyond: Investing in SEQ* Summit. All inputs gathered from the 2020 to 2022 period were consolidated into the Strategic Regional Plan titled *Logan and Redlands: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Growth*, released in February 2023 and widely supported by all levels of government, the private sector and the community.

Broadly, this work identified four strategic themes included in the Strategic Regional Plan, aligning with the Australian Government's revised RDA Charter (July 2023), Regional Investment Framework (May 2023) and key regional priorities.

The RDA Board's focus for 2024 to 2025 remains on long-term (20+ years) strategic enabling issues. This reaffirms the RDA's role is not to duplicate or compete with specific local initiatives but to identify and advocate for key areas in the Logan and Redlands Region and the broader South East Queensland Region. This approach aims to avoid building in failure factors that could result from short-sighted planning. This includes inadequate attention to impacts of the need for associated better infrastructure and services to accommodate increased population and traffic, including mobility, health, education, cultural and sports facilities.

The above laid the groundwork for understanding the economic, social and environmental conditions within and impacting the Logan and Redlands Region. To give substance to this context, it is crucial to outline the specific actions that need to be taken.

RDA Logan and Redlands (the RDA) is developing its Advocacy Paper, *Purpose Before Price; Economic, Social and Environment Sustainability for Regional Australia: Logan and Redlands*. The Paper builds on previous RDA Logan and Redlands strategic and business plans rather than duplicating their content.

The target audience for the Advocacy Paper includes businesses, the wider community, and all levels of government, with specific advocacy directed towards the Australian Government regarding the implementation of the Regional Investment Framework for both the Logan and Redlands Region and the broader South East Queensland Region.

This advocacy will align with the requirements for the RDA to focus on delivering the Regional Investment Framework, which encompasses investment in people, places, services and industries, as well as local economies. Additionally, it will involve building evidence for economic development, including innovation and diversification strategies, fostering meaningful engagement across government levels to ensure effective investments and providing relevant data and local intelligence to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.

The mindset for considering the way forward demands an understanding of the connectedness of issues. For example, juvenile offenders are more likely to have been the subject of socio-economic disadvantage, neglect, and residential instability; to have lived in crowded dwellings; and to have experienced interrupted or sporadic participation in formal education ¹.

¹ 5th Annual Juvenile Justice Summit, Rydges Melbourne: Tuesday 25 March 2014, Judge Peter Johnstone, President of the Children's Court of NSW, "Emerging Developments in Juvenile Justice".

Several crucial issues need addressing to facilitate the platform needed to create the balance between economic development, social investment and environmental sustainability, including:

- **Integration of Plans:** Harmonising various plans at national, state, provincial and private levels.
- **Addressing Myopic Planning:** Tackling issues like cross-region competition and insufficient planning for purpose, often resulting from an exclusive cost-focused approach rather than investment planning.
- **Exploring Alternative Investment Sources:** Considering avenues like superannuation funds to drive the shift from cost to investment-oriented planning.
- **Highlighting Ramifications of Inaction:** Emphasising the economic, social and environmental consequences of neglecting disaster mitigation efforts.
- **Establishing KPIs and an M&E Framework:** Setting up Key Performance Indicators and a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- **Integrating Economic, Social and Environmental Issues:** Ensuring holistic consideration of dependencies and strategies' vulnerability, including distinguishing between disaster management and mitigation.
- **Addressing Funding Inadequacy:** Resolving funding shortfalls for the Redlands and Logan Region.
- **Revisiting Peri-Urban Definitions:** Reviewing definitions and treatment of peri-urban areas in planning processes.
- **Ensuring Fair Treatment of Thin Markets:** Avoiding exploitation of thin markets and ensuring equitable resource allocation.

The referenced peri-urban definition refers to areas beyond the metropolitan fringe, at the interface between city and country but within the economic and social catchment of a large metropolitan area – an apt description of the Logan and Redlands Region.

The exclusion of the recognition of peri urban areas in grants such as the *Urban Precincts and Partnership Program* (and similar) means under a “*greater capital city statistical area*” definition, Logan and Redland LGAs will be competing against Brisbane LGA within a co-contribution funding model. This will be a comparative disadvantage based on varying LGA wealth and social disadvantage. The unintended consequence of further disadvantaging the already disadvantaged will arise calling to account the “*no one gets left behind*” aim of the Regional Investment Framework.

For instance, under the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program, Gold Coast has a remoteness classification of “Major Cities of Australia” and an “eligible” rating. This compares unfavourably with other areas classified as follows:

- Toowoomba has a remoteness classification of “Inner Regional Australia” and an “eligible” rating;
- North Stradbroke Island has a remoteness classification of “Remote Australia” and an “excluded” rating;
- Russell Island has a remoteness classification of “Outer Regional Australia” and an “excluded” rating; and
- Jimboomba has a remoteness classification of “Major Cities of Australia” and an “excluded” rating.

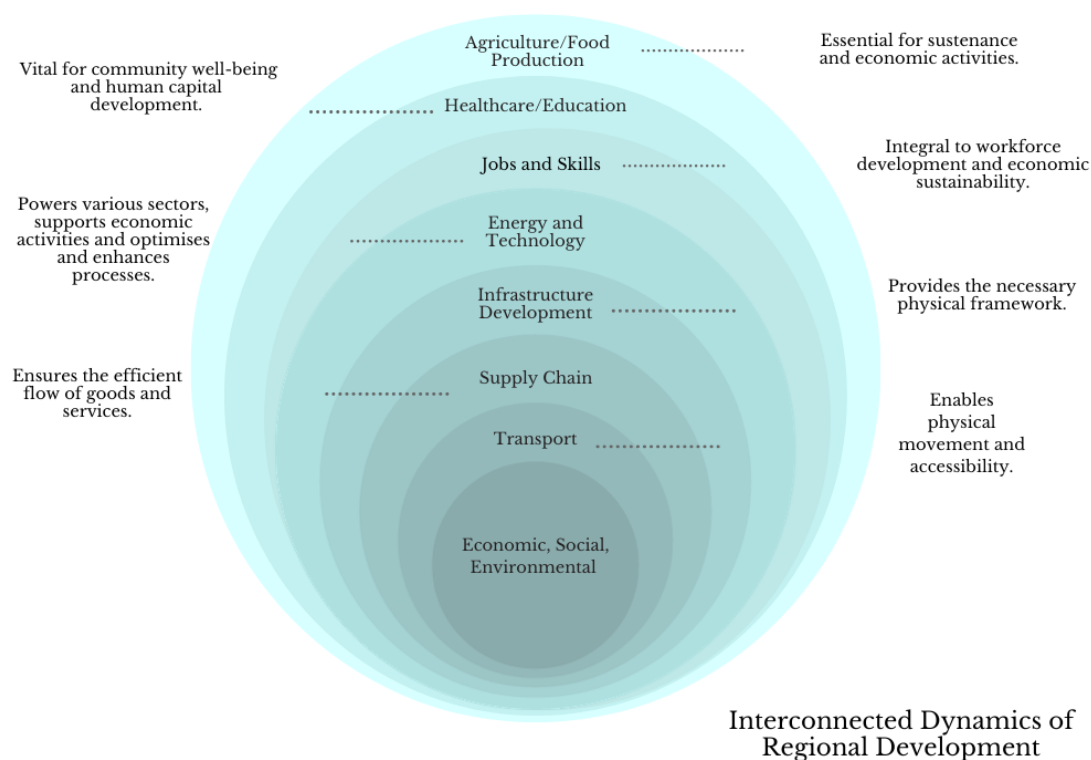
Efforts to ensure fair and inclusive development must address disparities in eligibility criteria.

Currently, the Australian Government's allocation of grants and programs excludes areas other than regional or urban. Consequently, Logan and Redlands has been unable to access merit-based, competitive programs for 2022-23 and 2023-24. This exclusion is critical given the missed opportunities for economic, social and environmental legacy associated with the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This oversight carries profound implications for peri-urban areas, exacerbating existing disparities and hindering their ability to function optimally. Essential services are constantly squeezed, focusing on throughput rather than the quality of service with which they are meant to be provided. As a result, these areas are at best functioning rather than thriving and often overshadowed by their neighbours — the "major cities."

The discussion highlights the importance of identifying both intended and unintended consequences of plans and decisions affecting the Logan and Redlands Region. The extensive range of Stakeholder Engagement Forums held by the RDA over five years has identified key common issues. While mobility within, between and as part of South East Queensland, the Logan and Redlands Region is a dominant impediment to economic growth and social sustainability, it operates within a broader ecosystem and cannot be analysed in isolation from other key issues.

The below diagram illustrates the interconnectedness of economic, social and environmental factors, highlighting their collective impact on regional development.



The centre circle symbolises the unity of these essential dimensions. Expanding outward, the first outer circle focuses on "transport" due to its recognised substantial influence on other sectors. This highlights the crucial role of mobility as a key link, shaping accessibility and facilitating the seamless movement of people, goods and services. Beyond "transport," each concentric circle represents additional sectors strategically placed to emphasise their significance in regional development.

Together, these circles portray the interconnected dynamics that shape the broader landscape of regional growth. The diagram offers a visual representation of how various sectors work together to influence and drive regional prosperity.

While this approach lends some integrity to understanding the components that must come together, more is needed to ensure the identification of intended and unintended consequences of plans and decisions within and impacting the Logan and Redlands Region and more broadly.

Annual Work Plan

The bookending of consultations, the advocacy paper and the forum is the activation of industry and community leadership in taking the advocacy forward. This will require the raising of an activation strategy for implementation from September 2024 within the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework.

The strategic challenge is to make sure the current and future pipeline of activity across the Logan and Redlands Region is nourished, delivers benefits as expected and/or is as sustainable as should be the case due to the surrounding environment being considered and planned. This reflects the strategic stance that the RDA's role is not to duplicate or compete on specific local initiatives but rather to identify and advocate on behalf of the Logan and Redlands Region and the broader South East Queensland Region on key areas of focus to avoid building in failure factors resulting from a myopic approach to planning, a competitive approach to prioritising, positioning between LGAs etc.

Building on the crucial issues raised under Strategic Context and Regional Priorities, the headline findings from the RDA's stakeholder engagement work can be summarised as follows:

Transport Challenges: Transport infrastructure poses a significant challenge, affecting not only mobility and accessibility but also the success of various sectors. Efficient transport is crucial for labour market development, upskilling and the Region's economic prosperity and competitiveness.

Connectivity Hurdles: Traveling between Redlands and Logan is difficult due to a geographical divide, hindering economic, educational and cultural interactions. Over 70% of the population rely on personal vehicles for daily commutes. Improved connectivity is essential to unlocking the Region's potential.

Missed Tourism Opportunities: The Region's unique characteristics and attractions remain underutilised. By leveraging natural beauty and increasing short-term accommodations, tourism can support economic growth and cultural exchange, attracting visitors to the area rather than just passing through.

Long-Term Vision Lacking: Stakeholders' express concerns over the lack of a comprehensive, long-term vision for the Region's development. Sustainable growth and resilience require a clear, forward-looking roadmap to guide planning and resource allocation and local accountability.

Myopic Planning: Short-sighted decision-making focused on immediate needs often overlooks long-term implications, potentially limiting the Region's future capacity to thrive and reducing investment impact.

Preparing for Tourism Influx: With the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games approaching, there is concern about the Region's readiness to handle the anticipated surge in tourists and the resultant infrastructure demands. This highlights the need for strategic development to prepare for this significant event and, arguably more importantly, provide long term meaningful legacy that contributes to economic development, social investment and environmental sustainability.

Pressure on Existing Infrastructure: Existing infrastructure is under significant strain, affecting transport networks, public services and community amenities. The Region must address the challenge of accommodating growth while ensuring infrastructure evolves accordingly.

In challenging the prevailing thinking on regional planning, whether by Government or the Private sector, it is imperative to emphasise investment language and recognise the significance of Return on Investment (ROI) in decision-making. Past planning, rooted in "cost" rather than investment, has highlighted deficiencies amid population growth and its associated impacts. This has led to additional upgrade and maintenance costs, which could have been mitigated through an initial "investment" planning model.

This perspective sheds light on some public positioning that may be more assumed than real. In November 2023, the Australian Government expressed its commitment to collaboration with the local government sector, stating, "*We are serious about working with the local government sector.*"

However, local government planning often exhibits myopic tendencies, characterised by cross-regional competition and a lack of purposeful planning, further exacerbated by a prevalent reliance on cost-based planning rather than investment-oriented strategies. This is compounded by the hierarchical approach state governments adopt in their dealings with local governments.

In addition, it is reasonable to assume some degree of failure will continue to be built into infrastructure and amenities planning in the absence of consideration of:

- population;
- skills (for need rather than certification) including a skilled workforce;
- housing;
- mobility (vehicular and general mobility reflecting commerce and trade, tourism, social and specific such as school traffic);
- safety for aged and young in particular;
- education;
- health;
- social services;
- retail;
- supply chains (including food);
- the environment; etc.

Across stakeholder meetings, local council plans and RDA research in Logan and Redlands, striking similarities emerge despite regional differences. These shared concerns revolve around key issues consistently highlighted, including the tendency to approach planning from a cost perspective rather than an investment one.

Research by RDA and stakeholder insights reveal a predominant focus on evaluating upgrade costs in planning for Logan and Redlands. Unfortunately, this approach often treats upgrades as expenses rather than investments in long-term regional well-being.

This cost-centric mindset overlooks potential benefits and returns from strategic infrastructure and community investments. Contrarily, an investment-oriented approach anticipates greater returns over time, whether economically or in societal gains.

Justifying infrastructure neglect in regional and peri-urban areas due to thin markets is ethically and practically flawed. Governments should ensure equitable access to services and promote inclusive growth, viewing these areas as opportunities for development rather than hindrances.

These common concerns, although not new, are critically important. The fact that they have been recurrently discussed in the RDA's 2023 to 2024 Business Plan and recent strategic plans underscores their criticality. Regional stakeholders and local councils must collaborate, transcending regional differences and work together to capitalise on shared opportunities for growth and development.

In addition, the Logan and Redlands Region holds significant economic, social and environmental opportunities as outlined in the Strategic Regional Plan. However, these prospects face obstacles such as vulnerable supply chains, inadequate mobility corridors and limited training opportunities.

To unlock the Region's economic potential, priority should be given to enhancing access to training, infrastructure and investment.

Clarity within key policies is crucial for meaningful engagement with local businesses and communities to avoid unintended consequences and downstream costs. For instance, relying on outdated transport solutions exacerbates congestion issues instead of prioritising innovative, environmentally friendly public transport options, particularly with the impending Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The RACQ's Red Spot Congestion Survey underscores the pressing need for improved transport infrastructure, with several orbital motorways in South East Queensland ranking among the most congested roads.

In summary, the bookending reference to the conduct of consultations, the raising of an advocacy paper and the conduct of a forum is the activation of industry and community leadership in taking the advocacy forward. This will require the raising of an activation strategy for implementation from September 2024 within the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework.

While this will dominate the RDA's 2024 to 2025 work plan, it will complement the ongoing commitment of the RDA to its region through:

- consultations including aligning the RDA Board's bi-monthly meetings with stakeholder round tables including with local businesses, employment intermediaries, education and training providers, Councils, Queensland Government State Departments, Members of the Australian and Queensland Parliaments and community groups and including holding meetings on the islands off the Redlands mainland;
- ensuring the RDA Logan and Redlands Board rotates its 2 monthly meetings around the Region to meet with key stakeholders from governments, industry and the wider community around focussed, strategic discussions through which regional information, contacts and areas of focus are identified, discussed and prioritised;
- working collaboratively with other RDAs in the South East Queensland region and across the State to ensure economic growth opportunities are not negatively impacted by issues of "territory"; and
- continuing growing and deepening key stakeholder networks comprising the 3 levels of government, local businesses and community groups, local chambers of commerce and education and training entities.

Summary of top 5 strategic priorities for the upcoming year

1. Operationalise the RDA Logan and Redlands Strategic Regional Plan *Logan and Redlands: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Growth* released in February 2023.
2. Continue integrating individual impacts of key national, provincial and local strategic planning on the Logan and Redlands Region with particular focus on Economic Infrastructure; Social Infrastructure; Education, Skills and the Labour Market; and Leveraging opportunities including amenities.
3. Lead the public policy debate on the impact of perceived myopic planning which focusses on immediate needs over long-term implications.
4. Bring together key stakeholders to drive innovations and activities that will support the growth and well-being of the Redlands and Logan Region.
5. Strengthen key stakeholder and broader communities (government, business and social) engagement such that RDA Logan and Redlands is seen as a key source of information, advice and assistance.

Summary of top 5 business activities for the upcoming year

1. Organise a forum with relevant stakeholders on what can be done to remove barriers to the economic growth, social viability and environmental sustainability of the Logan and Redlands Region.
2. Complete and launch a regional Advocacy Paper, conduct a regional forum from which business and community led activation will result supported by the execution of this RDA Logan and Redlands 2024 to 2025 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
3. Identify and draw together key national, provincial and local strategic planning impacting the Logan and Redlands Region with particular focus on Economic Infrastructure; Social Infrastructure; Education, Skills and the Labour Market; and Leveraging opportunities including amenities.
4. Work collaboratively with other RDAs in the South East Queensland region to ensure economic growth opportunities are not negatively impacted by issues of “territory”.
5. Continue growing and deepening key stakeholder networks comprising the 3 levels of government, local businesses and community groups, local chambers of commerce and education and training entities.

Communications Strategy

Background

Regional Development Australia Logan & Redlands’s (the RDA) approach to Marketing and Communications operates within the guidelines from Section 8 of the Australian Government’s Regional Development Australia Better Practice Guide.

Current Stakeholders

- Australian Government;
- Queensland Government;
- Regional Development Australia;
- RDA Chairman and Board Members;
- Redland City Council;
- Logan City Council;
- Community Groups;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Industry Associations;
- Local businesses;
- Investors; and
- Not for profits.

The RDA’s Marketing and Communications Key Objectives are to:

- endeavour to generate business and community leadership opportunities in the economic planning, social investment and environmental sustainability of the Logan and Redlands and the wider South East Queensland regions;
- improve brand awareness for RDA Logan and Redlands;
- improve engagement across all social media platforms with existing audience; and
- encourage engagement from new stakeholders within the community.

Baseline Statistics

The RDA has an established Website and Facebook and LinkedIn accounts and uses weekly Email Direct Marketing (EDM) to disseminate messages to its network. It is noted that current engagement rates on Facebook posts are growing and the LinkedIn account has attained solid market penetration.

Target Audience

The RDA has a diverse target audience and branding/messaging is defined in terms of relevance.

Given the RDA's target audience covers two Local Government Areas (LGAs), all promotional material will not always be relevant for all constituents. It is important to find a balance between presenting material that is relevant for both LGAs so neither is seen to be favoured over the other.

Recognising the ongoing critical importance of maintaining connection with government entities, the target audience is further broken down into the following two categories:

- Primary targets:
 - Regional businesses;
 - Community organisations; and
 - Not-for-profits.

- Secondary targets:
 - Individuals in the Logan and Redlands Region interested in finding out about community and business events in their area;
 - School leavers; and
 - Jobseekers.

Communications/Marketing Mix

- LinkedIn
 - Repost of relevant content from stakeholders
 - Networking with external stakeholders/ community networks

- Facebook
 - Funding/Grant opportunities
 - Publicise RDA Sponsored events
 - Publicise community events
 - Community success stories

- Website
 - Funding/Grant opportunities
 - Budget updates
 - Board member information
 - Sponsorship opportunities/Community events
 - Information/report releases

- Public Relations
 - Sponsorship of business and community events
 - Attendance at conferences/business and community events.

Priority actions

To ensure the strategic and marketing goals of the RDA are achieved and improve the RDA's understanding of its target audience, the following activities will remain elevated in 2024 to 2025 and implemented concurrently with more targeted marketing activities:

- continuously monitor and maintain the existing mailing list to ensure current and relevant contacts;
- escalate engagement with clients to better understand the needs of the existing audience; and
- maintain and improve assessment of website analytics.

To improve brand visibility and encourage increased engagement from stakeholders the RDA will:

- maintain consistency of branding and messaging across all platforms - LinkedIn, Facebook, Website and EDMs;
- elevate the improvement and maintenance of currency of information available on the RDA website; and
- distribute regular EDMs (once weekly) with relevant and highly engaging content.

The RDA will continue its release of a quarterly Report to the Region.

RDA Logan and Redlands will monitor opportunities for sponsorship of relevant events to ensure organisational strategic and marketing goals are being achieved.

The RDA will encourage engagement from new stakeholders within the community by:

- engaging with relevant regional stakeholders and relevant groups via social media;
- sponsoring and attending relevant events; and
- increasing the use of LinkedIn and Facebook to encourage increased brand exposure.

Implementation

The following marketing activities will be implemented in the next 6 month period:

| <u>Marketing activity/deliverable</u> | <u>Date of expected completion</u> | <u>Success indicator</u> |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Regular (once weekly) EDM to mailing list | Ongoing weekly | Open rate, bounce rate, click through rate |
| Regular posting (weekly with increased frequency during special events) to social media | Ongoing weekly | Click through rate, rate of engagement, growth in social media following |
| Regular posting of content to LinkedIn | Ongoing weekly | Rate of engagement, growth in followers |
| Website Updates – New Board members/staff, Grant announcements/outcomes, business events, community events | As required | Improved Google analytics data, search visibility |

Key Dates

| <u>What</u> | <u>When</u> | <u>Region</u> | <u>Target Audience</u> | <u>Marketing Objective</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Logan Business Awards | September 2024 | Logan | Local business and communities, industry experts, local government | Event promotion, networking, brand awareness |
| Redlands Coast Business Awards | October 2024 | Redlands | Local business and communities, industry experts, local government | Event promotion, networking, brand awareness |
| Distribute Quarterly Report | Quarterly | Logan/ Redlands | Local business and communities, industry experts, local government, policy and planning entities | Awareness of RDA activities and priorities including strategic directions |
| Distribute Electronic Direct Mail | Weekly | Logan/ Redlands | Local business and communities, industry experts, local government, policy and planning entities | Awareness of RDA activities and priorities including strategic directions |