



Back the Region That Backs Itself



RAPAD Post COVID-19

Central Western Queensland Recovery Plan

State Election Priorities to Empower, Connect & Support RAPAD Communities to Prosper

RAPAD POST COVID-19 CENTRAL WESTERN QUEENSLAND RECOVERY PLAN

The Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) stands ready to play its part in Queensland's COVID-19 *Unite and Recover Strategy* by delivering initiatives to create the economic foundations to make RAPAD economies and communities even stronger by:

- getting our communities back to work;
- creating new and protecting existing jobs in our region;
- supporting our local businesses;
- reconnecting our communities;
- rebuilding our region based on our traditional and emerging strengths; and
- investing in vital local infrastructure.

INITIATIVE	2020-21 ('000)	2021-22 ('000)	2022-23 ('000)	2023-24 ('000)	2024-25 ('000)	TOTAL ('000)
EM(POWER) THROUGH ENERGY AND EDUCATION \$2.25M over five years to grow a new manufacturing centre and industries built on the RAPAD region's world class renewable energy resources.	\$750	\$750	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$2250
Ongoing support to create a regional centre of excellence and create new jobs by designing and delivering a new strategic direction and operating model for the former Longreach Pastoral College. ^(a)	-	-	-	-	-	-
CONNECT WITH BETTER ROAD AND AIR SERVICES \$9.2M additional Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding over four years for priority road upgrades as well as dedicated funding for immediate upgrades to other critical road links such as the Donohue Highway and the Winton/Richmond Road.	\$1539	\$1539	\$3078	\$3078	-	\$9234 ^(b)
Increase the region's competitiveness, liveability and tourism by committing to a Queensland Productivity Commission review of air route supply, regulated routes and airfare subsidies, including the feasibility of east west flights between Rockhampton and Longreach.	-	-	-	-	-	-
STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURE THROUGH LAND MANAGEMENT \$5M over two years for strategic cluster fencing for the RAPAD region. This will create 55 jobs, deliver 1351km of fencing, grow the population by more than 100 new residents and boost regional income by \$17M.	\$2500	\$2500	-	-	-	\$5000
\$9.2M over four years for Desert Channels Queensland to increase productivity and protect jobs in the vital agricultural industry by delivering ongoing sustainable pest animal and plant control projects.	\$2300	\$2300	\$2300	\$2300	-	\$9200

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SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES TO PROSPER \$25M additional funding for the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund over the next five years to enhance tourism product and support operators across the region.	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000 ^(c)
Continue the Advancing Regional Innovation Program (or similar) and increase each region's funding allocation by a minimum of \$200K to facilitate 'smart' regional outcomes.	\$200	-	-	-	-	\$200 ^(d)
\$180K per annum over four years for RAPAD to engage a region-wide Chief Digital Officer to progress the creation of data-led communities across the central west as part of our virtual communities smart region vision.	\$180	\$180	\$180	\$180	-	\$720
Increase funding to each Remote Area Board to \$200K per annum ongoing, for approved project related activities that support collaboration and economic development outcomes across the region.	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$250 ^(e)
Support collaborative arrangements such as the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG) and RAPAD Water and Sewerage Alliance by ensuring funding for the Roads and Transport Alliance State-wide Capability Development Fund and the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) remain, at a minimum, at current levels to help build workforce capability, promote joint purchasing and resource sharing and innovation in project delivery.	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$8000 ^(f)
	\$14 119	\$13 919	\$12 458	\$12 458	\$6900	\$59 854

(a) The level of financial support required will be contingent on findings of Business Case once complete.

(b) Additional TIDS funding for ORRTG only. Does not include funding for dedicated strategic road links.

(c) State-wide funding in addition to current allocation of \$10M per annum.

(d) Additional total allocation for RAPAD region only over life of Program.

(e) Additional allocation for RAPAD region only based on increase from current \$150K annually.

(f) State-wide allocations based on \$600K per annum for the Roads and Transport Alliance State-wide Capability Development Fund and \$1M per annum for the QWRAP.



BACK THE REGION THAT BACKS ITSELF

RAPAD is purposely focused on the priorities that will have the greatest impact, the furthest reach, and the longest lasting effect to help create a prosperous future.

The RAPAD region comprises close to 10 500 people living across 396 000km² in seven different local government areas (Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Boulia, Diamantina, Longreach and Winton) working in the key industries of agriculture, tourism, public administration and social services.

Regional Australia Institute modelling indicates the collective RAPAD region has the potential to deliver an annual output of \$1.5B in Gross Value Added by 2031. Focusing on key strategic priorities and commitments to a long-term vision will be vital to achieving these gains. In both 2008 and 2013, the average productivity of the RAPAD region was more than 28% higher than the Australian average.

Like all regions, RAPAD faces its own unique challenges, but it's also a region that backs itself. Just like its big and far reaching landscape, RAPAD has big and future-focused ideas.

Through the RAPAD organisation these ideas are translated into action in line with its vision to create a prosperous future for the communities of Central West Queensland. Our region is already investing in, and often leading the way in the areas of energy, education, transport, tourism, economic development, entrepreneurship and natural resource management.

RAPAD requires your genuine commitment to, and investment in, the following priorities to enable our region to realise its full potential.

RAPAD REQUIRES YOU TO BACK THE REGION THAT BACKS ITSELF

PRIORITIES TO EMPOWER, CONNECT & SUPPORT RAPAD COMMUNITIES TO PROSPER

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EM(POWER) RAPAD COMMUNITIES TO HAVE A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH ENERGY AND EDUCATION

- » \$2.25M over five years to grow a new manufacturing centre and industries built on the RAPAD region's world class renewable energy resources.
- » Ongoing support to create a regional centre of excellence and create new jobs by designing and delivering a new strategic direction and operating model for the former Longreach Pastoral College.



CONNECT RAPAD COMMUNITIES SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY BY BETTER ROAD AND AIR SERVICES

- » \$9.2M additional Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding over four years for priority road upgrades as well as dedicated funding for immediate upgrades to other critical road links such as the Donohue Highway and the Winton/Richmond Road.
- » Increase the region's competitiveness, liveability and tourism by committing to a Queensland Productivity Commission review of air route supply, regulated routes and airfare subsidies, including the feasibility of east-west flights between Rockhampton and Longreach.



INCREASE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RAPAD COMMUNITIES AND PROTECT VITAL AGRICULTURAL JOBS THROUGH REGIONALLY DELIVERED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

- » \$5M over two years for strategic cluster fencing for the RAPAD region. This will create 55 jobs, deliver 1351km of fencing, grow the population by more than 100 new residents and boost regional income by \$17M.
- » \$9.2M over four years for Desert Channels Queensland to increase productivity and protect jobs in the vital agricultural industry by delivering ongoing sustainable pest animal and plant control projects.



SUPPORT OUR REGIONAL BUSINESSES TO PROSPER THROUGH REGIONALLY BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COLLABORATION TO ACHIEVE OUR SMART REGION VISION

- » \$25M additional funding for the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund over five years to enhance tourism product and support operators across the region.
- » Continue the Advancing Regional Innovation Program (or similar) and increase each region's funding allocation by a minimum of \$200K to facilitate 'smart' regional outcomes.
- » \$180K per annum over four years for RAPAD to engage a region-wide Chief Digital Officer to progress the creation of data-led communities across the central west as part of our virtual communities smart region vision.
- » Increase funding to each Remote Area Board to \$200K per annum ongoing for approved project related activities that support collaboration and economic development outcomes across the region.
- » Support collaborative arrangements such as the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG) and RAPAD Water and Sewerage Alliance by ensuring funding for the Roads and Transport Alliance State-wide Capability Development Fund and the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) remain, at a minimum, at current levels to help build workforce capability, promote joint purchasing and resource sharing and innovation in project delivery.



EM(POWER) RAPAD COMMUNITIES TO HAVE A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH ENERGY AND EDUCATION

» \$2.25M over four years to grow a new manufacturing centre and industries built on RAPAD's world class renewable energy resources.

The RAPAD region has a once in a generation opportunity to create a new manufacturing sector based on the region's globally competitive renewable energy. This opportunity extends beyond building wind and solar farms, instead it's about using our wind and solar to manufacture energy intensive "green" products here in Central West Queensland.

Through extensive community consultation RAPAD developed its *Realising RAPAD's Big Vision – Community Consultation Report 2019*¹, which identified that the RAPAD community:

- has a strong appetite for significant change;
- has embraced the idea of self-sufficiency;
- is eager to action it;
- is ready to progress a significant economic transformation; and
- recognises and supports RAPAD as the appropriate body to lead an economic transformation across the central west community.

¹ Funded by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science.

EM(POWER) RAPAD COMMUNITIES TO HAVE A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH ENERGY AND EDUCATION

In partnership with renewable energy leader Professor Ross Garnaut AC, as well as other commercial partners, RAPAD is backing itself to make this vision a reality by developing the Barcaldine Renewable Energy Hub which will:

- create a minimum 200 new long-term full-time jobs;
- increase the local population by 38%;
- deliver a regional economic benefit of \$41M per annum and an annual wage increase in the region of \$16.2M; and
- generate a robust segment of the local economy which is immune to drought conditions.

What RAPAD needs now is courageous leadership and ongoing investment from the State Government to back this regional initiative.

» Ongoing support to create a regional centre of excellence and create new jobs by designing and delivering a new strategic direction and operating model for the former Longreach Pastoral College.

In 2019, the former Longreach Pastoral College closed its doors causing significant job losses and additional population decline. Education, training and skills development opportunities are vital for the region to remain competitive and connected in a post COVID-19 world.

RAPAD backed itself as the best placed entity to re-think and redesign a new future for the college. In February 2020 RAPAD signed an agreement to occupy the College's premises until November 2020.

RAPAD needs long-term certainty that the government will continue to work with and financially support it over the long-term to transform the College. Central West Queensland needs the government to back RAPAD to deliver a regional centre of excellence for training, education and research. This will grow jobs, attract new residents and make our region even stronger.



CONNECT RAPAD COMMUNITIES SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY BY BETTER ROAD AND AIR SERVICES

» \$9.2M additional Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding over four years for priority road upgrades as well as dedicated funding for immediate upgrades to other critical road links such as the Donohue Highway and the Winton/Richmond Road.

Our roads and air services provide vital economic and social connections for individuals, families, businesses, industries and government services.

RAPAD's focus on roads is supported by the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG), which identifies the priority routes and focus of investment to ensure vital road connections are maintained and grown across the region.

By backing its community and continuously investing in the region's road network, RAPAD is delivering:

- better employment outcomes;
- improved supply chain connectivity;
- increased flood immunity;
- tourism revenue; and
- improved safety outcomes, particularly to essential health care services.

» Increase the region's competitiveness, liveability and tourism by committing to a Queensland Productivity Commission review of air route supply, regulated routes and airfare subsidies, including the feasibility of east-west flights between Rockhampton and Longreach.

From a Central Western Queensland perspective, there is a need to better connect communities, and support tourism and business opportunities between Longreach and Rockhampton with direct flights.

The recent *Airline Business Case for East-West Flights Connecting Western Queensland to the East Coast via Rockhampton*, revealed:

- Direct access from Longreach and surrounding towns to Rockhampton would complement the existing airline network.
- Enough demand exists for point to point flights where approximately 17 000 seats could be filled on an east-west route.

The economic and social impacts of air route supply and airfare pricing was a key focus for the Australian Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee *Inquiry Into the Operation, Regulation and Funding of Air Route Service Delivery to Rural, Regional and Remote Communities*.

The Australian Government's response to recommendation number one of the Inquiry was that: "...state's are constitutionally responsible for intra-state aviation," and that the Australian Government considers: "...state government agencies such as the Queensland Productivity Commission better placed to examine the issues identified from the Inquiry".

By backing RAPAD and investing in road and air services, the government will be providing the certainty and confidence councils and communities so desperately need to forward plan, especially as the region recovers from the impacts of COVID-19.



INCREASE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RAPAD COMMUNITIES AND PROTECT VITAL AGRICULTURAL JOBS THROUGH REGIONALLY DELIVERED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

» \$5M over two years for strategic cluster fencing for the RAPAD region. This will create 55 jobs, deliver 1351km of fencing, grow the population by more than 100 new residents and boost regional income by \$17M.

The State Government backed RAPAD to manage three rounds of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative to:

- create jobs through the immediate construction of fences; and
- generate long-term benefits of improved lambing rates, increased wool production, job creation and stemming a declining population in the central west.

The State Government's investment of \$9.85M into the local agriculture sector has increased the productivity of more than 1.9M hectares through cluster fencing. This funding has encouraged local landholders to invest a further \$24.7M which has been directly re-invested back into the economy through local businesses.

So far, this program has been a massive success. It has created 150 new jobs and \$6M in direct wages per year circulating back into our region. Prior to this program, and before the added impact of COVID-19 on the region, 715 jobs were lost and 3624 people left the region - a 27% reduction in the local population, from 2001 to 2016.

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Independent economic analysis commissioned by RAPAD outlines that an additional \$5M investment by the State Government would deliver:

- 55 new jobs
- \$12M leveraged local spending
- Clusters of up to 50 landholders fencing 1351km and protecting 1M hectares
- 135 local population increase
- \$15M increase to property income
- \$17.5M increase in regional income.

» \$9.2M over four years for Desert Channels Queensland to increase productivity and protect jobs in the vital agricultural industry by delivering ongoing sustainable pest animal and plant control projects.

Similar to the cluster fencing program, \$9.2M over four years is requested for Desert Channels Queensland (DCQ). This will enable DCQ and its project partners across the region to continue to:

- deliver sustainable pest animal and plant control projects
- grow agricultural productivity
- support jobs in the vital agricultural industries in the region
- contribute to the region's ecological and social sustainability
- maintain workforce capacity.

A note on the Lake Eyre Basin:

RAPAD recognises the uniqueness and importance of the Lake Eyre Basin (LEB). RAPAD has played an important role in previous Wild Rivers and Western Rivers community consultations. The current discussions regarding amendments to the *Regional Planning Interest Act 2014* are important to all LEB stakeholders.

RAPAD stands ready to once again facilitate discussions and work in partnership with all levels of government to ensure the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders.

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 THROUGH REGIONALLY BASED
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 COLLABORATION TO ACHIEVE
 OUR SMART REGION VISION

- » \$25M additional funding for the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund over five years to enhance tourism product and support operators across the region.

Tourism remains a key pillar of RAPAD’s smart region vision. The tourism sector in Outback Queensland is vital to the Queensland economy as well as our own region. RAPAD has gathered essential data which shows why we back outback tourism and you should too. The *Central West Queensland Data Collection and Analysis Report* found the sector injects \$527.4M in visitor spend alone into the central west region each year. It also supports 4600 jobs. In 2019, the region hosted more than one million visitors confirming the latest research highlighting visitors are looking for real Australian adventures that embrace the nation’s heritage and rich indigenous culture. By backing Central West Queensland and the outback we will deliver beyond expectations.

- » Continue the Advancing Regional Innovation Program (or similar) and increase each region’s funding allocation by a minimum of \$200K to facilitate ‘smart’ regional outcomes.

Often the innovation agenda focuses just on ‘smart cities’. Our goal is to develop Australia’s first ‘smart region’ which seeks to have ‘globally connected ecosystems and provision of hard and soft infrastructure to foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship across the RAPAD region’.

To better understand how this could be achieved, with support from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, RAPAD developed the *Smart Central Western Queensland: A Community Enabled Digital Plan* – a first in regional Australia.

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- » \$180K per annum over four years for RAPAD to engage a region-wide Chief Digital Officer to progress the creation of data-led communities across the central west as part of our virtual communities smart region vision.

RAPAD is the lead agent for Outback Queensland's Advancing Regional Innovation Program funded by Advance Queensland. This program has assisted RAPAD deliver a range of outcomes across the region including:

- Outbackhubs – a network of physical and virtual co-working sites with state-of-the-art video conferencing facilities connecting our region to the world and facilitating skills uplift, retraining and supporting active virtual communities.
- Outback Aerodrone Symposiums – hosting and connecting local, national and international individuals and organisations with the latest technology and operational uses for drones and UAV's with a focus on partnering with leading Asia Pacific companies to facilitate international investment into the region.

- » Increase funding to each Remote Area Board to \$200K per annum ongoing for approved project related activities that support collaboration and economic development outcomes across the region.

- » Support collaborative arrangements such as the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Group (ORRTG) and RAPAD Water and Sewerage Alliance by ensuring funding for the Roads and Transport Alliance State-wide Capability Development Fund and the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) remain, at a minimum, at current levels to help build workforce capability, promote joint purchasing and resource sharing and innovation in project delivery.

As the Remote Area Board for Central Western Queensland, RAPAD receives annual funding from the State Government to undertake economic development projects in the region – some of which are highlighted in this Recovery Plan.

Likewise, RAPAD's activities are supported by a number of long-term, collaborative alliances, including the ORRTG and the Outback Regional Water Alliance.

Each of these groups is essential to the success of RAPAD. However, more than that, given their membership includes relevant State Government departments they also offer a valuable regionally based framework to pursue various State Government objectives.

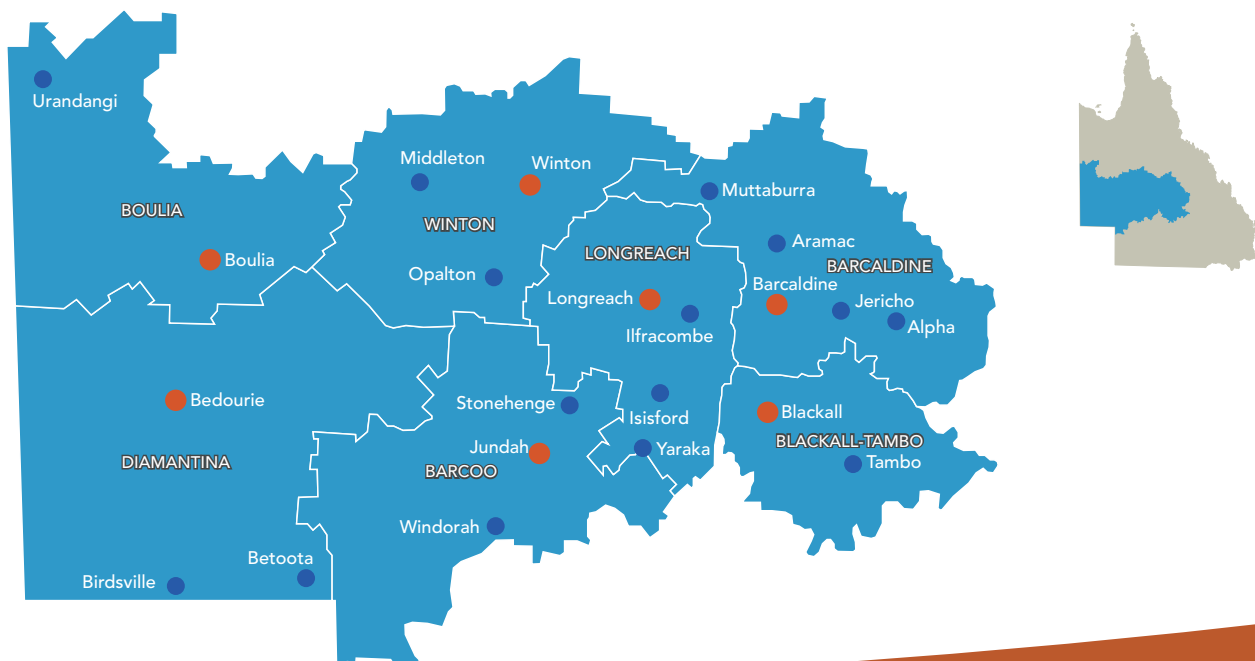
OUR ORGANISATION AND ITS POTENTIAL

We know our projects and advocacy are making a difference to the people, communities and businesses of our region, and we recognise our success is shared with our many partners across different levels of government, industry and academia.

Our Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is the peak regional economic development body for the central west Queensland region and the lead advocate for our member councils of Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Boulia, Diamantina, Longreach and Winton.

We've been in existence since 1992 and are guided by our mission to support and empower the RAPAD region, its communities and people to realise their potential.

We have a strong regional mandate and set our priorities through a focus on innovation, creativity, consultation, collaboration and partnerships.



OUR ORGANISATION AND ITS POTENTIAL

Significant examples of our achievements include:

- Our delivery of the Rural Financial Counselling Service (North Queensland) over the past 20 years on behalf of the Australian and Queensland governments, which provides a confidential, free and impartial rural financial counselling service to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses experiencing financial difficulties.
- Our appointment as a Regional Certifying Body by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection with respect to regional employment opportunities for migrants.
- Our development of a Regional Skills Investment Strategy in conjunction with the Queensland Government to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries to ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand.
- Our development of the RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (RESQ) as a service provider of Australian Government employment programs and Centrelink agent services to support job seekers and employers in remote and regional communities in Central West and South West Queensland, connecting them with strong, sustainable work opportunities.
- Our establishment of RAPAD Skilling, the region's only (non-school) Registered Training Organisation.

By backing RAPAD, you are backing our Central West Queensland communities. Through our expertise, experience and long-standing partnerships, we have the capability to deliver real outcomes.

We look forward to empowering, connecting and supporting RAPAD communities to prosper with you.

Further information about RAPAD and how it delivers for the Central West, can be found at: www.rapad.com.au

RAPAD acknowledges the Traditional Owners as the original custodians of the land and water on which we rely and operate. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past, present and future.

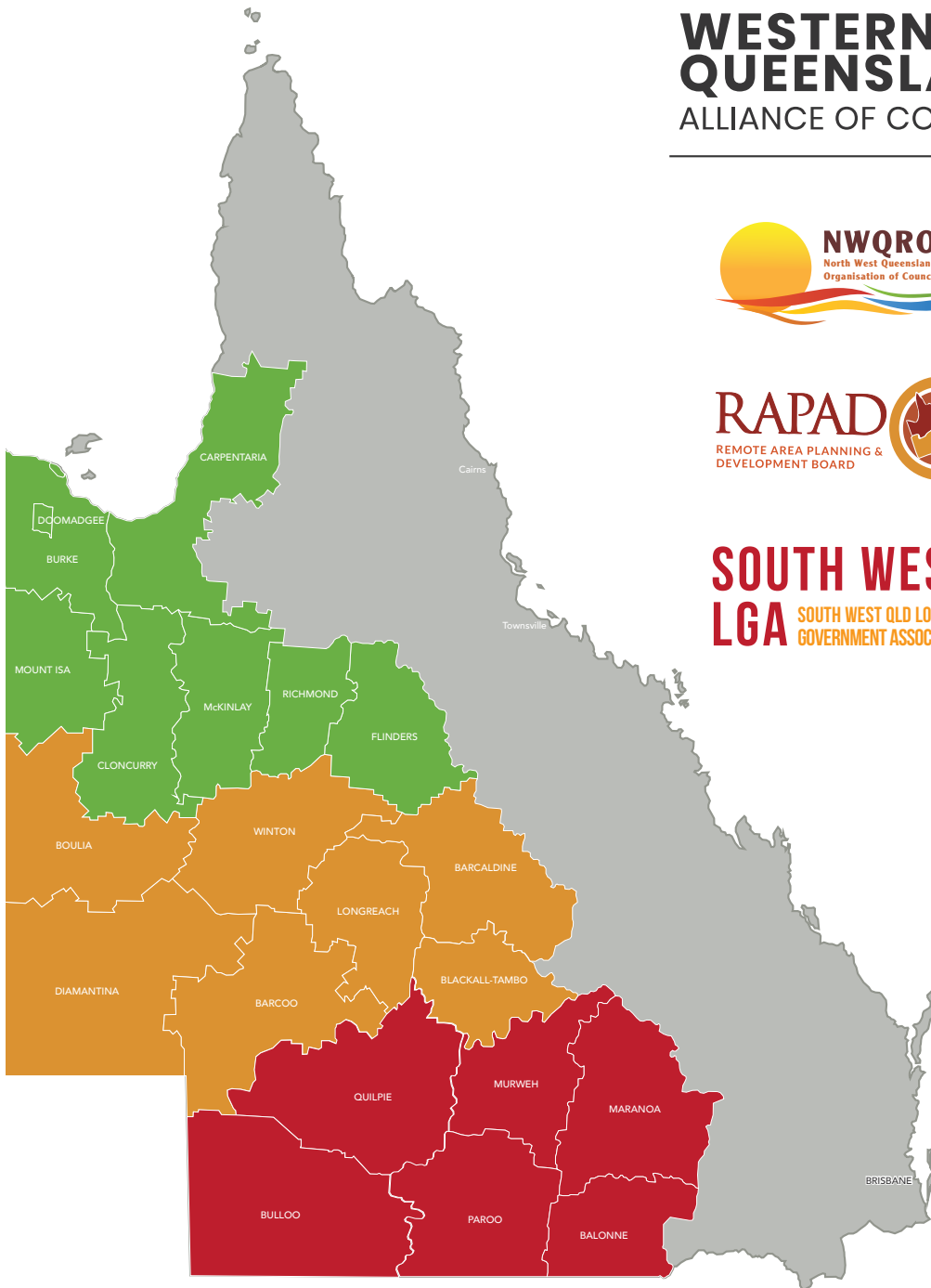
We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections with the land, sky and waters, and recognise and value that the Traditional Owner groups have cared for and protected them for thousands of generations.

WESTERN QUEENSLAND

ALLIANCE OF COUNCILS



SOUTH WEST LGA SOUTH WEST QLD LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION.



RAPAD forms part of the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, which collectively with the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and the South West Queensland Local Government Association aims to draw attention to the challenges, opportunities and contribution that Western Queensland makes to the State and Australia.

RAPAD supports the issues highlighted in the State Election Platform for the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils.

RAPAD

REMOTE AREA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD

