

# RAPAD Chairman's 2017 Wrap-up

*Proactively shaping and creating a prosperous future for  
the RAPAD region of Outback Queensland*

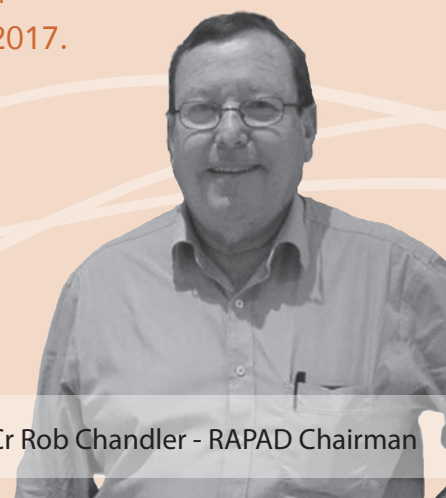
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I'm pleased to offer this summary wrap up of the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board for 2017.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Released our *Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020*.
- Appointed our first Entrepreneur In Residence.
- Hosted the region's and regional Australia's first ever start up weekend.
- Delivered cluster fencing rounds 1 & 2.
- Launched our first digital strategy.
- Continued vital programs and services through RFCSNQ, RESQ and RAPAD *Skilling* and more!



Cr Rob Chandler - RAPAD Chairman

Another year has passed and in this year we have seen the continuation of the drought.

On a much sadder note, we all reflect on the passing of Cr Butch Lenton, Mayor of Winton Shire. I was privileged to offer a few words at Butch's funeral, and the sheer number of people in attendance on that day, from all walks of life, was just one measure of the esteem in which Butch was held by so many people.

**Butch Lenton was a true leader. A regional and Winton community champion.**



Photo: Ash Moore

This year I'd like to acknowledge Cr Geoff Morton and Cr Bruce Scott who were awarded Order of Australia medals for services to their communities. Truly well-earned awards for both.

### RAPAD Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

This year RAPAD renewed its strategic plan. This plan has drawn on a range of current reports, community consultations, the Regional Australia Institute's *Pathfinder Report*, and our Mayor's intimate knowledge of the region. This plan, and other subordinate, plans will guide RAPAD's direction over the next three years. I'd encourage you to **view our strategic plan at [www.rapad.com.au](http://www.rapad.com.au)**.

**The drought continues, but despite it, our region remains resilient and defiant.**

I know we will see an end to it one day. It has been the major cause of the downturn in our region's economic well being and with that comes a fall in the population across the region, however as I said, we will get through it and come out the other side.

To ensure we do come through it we must continue to seek opportunities for growth and prosperity and while agriculture inevitably remains a major economic driver it will be things like:

- Continuing to grow the tourism industry;
- Facilitating, leading and implementing a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across our industries and community;
- Creating the environment to attract and foster new investors in any field;
- Facilitating, leading and implementing a digital culture;
- Working collaboratively at all levels of community and government;
- Promoting leadership, and
- Being open to new ideas, that will ensure our well being though, and past, this drought period.



2017 has seen RAPAD continue to implement the cluster fencing with great success.

With recent State Government election commitments we hope to see some additional funds go past the current rounds 1 and 2. Without doubt this program, supported by the Federal and State Governments has facilitated the largest infrastructure spend in agriculture in our region for some time. The outcomes for cluster owners and the region are already being seen, and I know when rain comes the results will flow even more.

We've been fortunate to administer on behalf of our councils another round of drought funding from the Queensland Government.

It's supporting funds like these that bolster community resilience and well being. We are currently advocating to the State Government for additional funds in 2018.

RAPAD was again a strong supporter and presence at Westech Field Days 2017.

We were proud to continue as the major sponsor of the Westech Youth Awards. At the Field Days we demonstrated our commitment to leading, facilitating and implementing innovation and entrepreneurship with the *RAPAD Innovation Space & Technology Precinct* tent.



We have taken a real focus on innovation and entrepreneurship this year.

Commencing with one of our staff members attending the *Start Up Catalyst Mission* to Silicon Valley, USA, early in 2017, we have been driven by new and exciting ideas and appointed our first Entrepreneur in Residence. This initiative is made possible in part through the Remote Area Board's funding program from State Government.

We also secured Advance Queensland's, *Advance Regional Innovation Program* for the Outback region. Through this program we are also collaborating with the South West Queensland Councils and McKinlay Shire Council.



Another resounding success was the delivery of digital literacy training through the region - *RAPAD Digital Tour*. I know the team is working on another roll out of this training for 2018.

We delivered *Co-Starters*, a business and product bootcamp program, and hosted the first ever *Start-Up* weekend off the east coast. We have commenced *OutbackHubs*, a series of physical co-working locations in which we have trialed the implementation of three Zoom Rooms with the plan for many more.

We took a contingent to Myriad: *"Myriad is as much an inclusive cultural experiment, as it is an inspiring technological marvel. A celebration of the human beings who find themselves at the uncertain intersections of culture and industry and choose to make a difference"*.

and hosted, in conjunction with Advance Queensland, visits from the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur and leaders in the innovation field, and this will continue in 2018.

We launched our digital strategy and as we close 2017 we are close to appointing a Chief Digital Officer – a first for a region probably anywhere in Queensland and possibly the nation. This will give the implementation of the strategy a huge boost.

As we face challenging times, RAPAD's positive outlook and commitment to deliver vital programs for our communities and local businesses continues to prove invaluable.

In partnership with Employment Services Queensland, through RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (RESQ), we deliver the Federal Government's *Community Development Program* across the Central West and South West region. RESQ is acknowledged as one of the top providers in the country.



In the training area, RAPAD *Skilling*, our Registered Training Organisation, has continued to consolidate itself as a respected provider of training in our region.

Again as we close off 2017 the board and I are looking forward to the results of an internal review designed to identify new opportunities but also so RAPAD *Skilling* can further contribute to our region's human capital and capacity, as articulated in our strategic plan.

### We have lots to look forward to as we go into 2018

Before I close I'd like to acknowledge all our partners and supporters. Notably the Federal and State Governments who offer support through a whole variety of programs directly delivered through RAPAD or through councils individually, our local Federal and State members of parliament, the Local Government Association of Queensland, and also a large number of private sector individuals and companies, NGOs and universities, who continue to offer us support in so many areas. Finally, I also acknowledge my fellow Mayors, David Arnold and his staff at RAPAD and Tony Rayner and his staff at RESQ, for their ongoing commitment to RAPAD and our communities. - Rob Chandler



RAPAD continues to deliver the Federal and State Government's Rural Financial Counseling Service Program across North Queensland ([www.rfcsnq.com.au](http://www.rfcsnq.com.au)). RFCSNQ operates as a separate business and I acknowledge our three external RFCSNQ board members, Shan Delany, Alison Larard and Dr Chris Capel who provide expertise and skills to the RFCSNQ board, which ensures its smooth and effective governance.

While we saw the departure of our Small Business and Individuals Financial Counsellor in June, I am hopeful the position will be filled again early in 2018. At this time of economic stress this position is vital.

Through the Outback Regional Roads and Transport Groups, the Outback Water and Sewerage Alliance and the Central West Regional Pest Management Group we continue to demonstrate our local governments commitment to working collaboratively to optimise the outcomes for individual local governments and our communities.

## REMOTE AREA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD



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