

Rural and Remote Councils Compact between the Queensland Government and Local Government in Queensland

A sub-agreement to the Partners in Government Agreement

State of Queensland

**Local Government Association of Queensland Ltd on behalf of
Rural and Remote Councils**

2021

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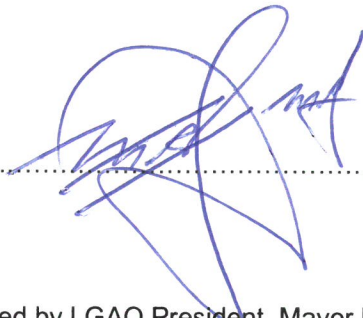
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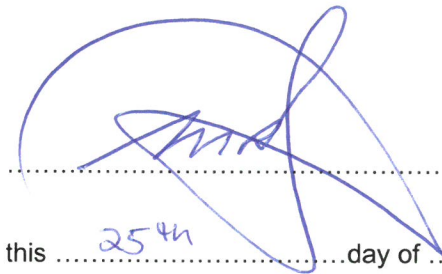
Signing page

Signed by the Honourable Dr Steven Miles MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning for and on behalf of the Queensland State Government.



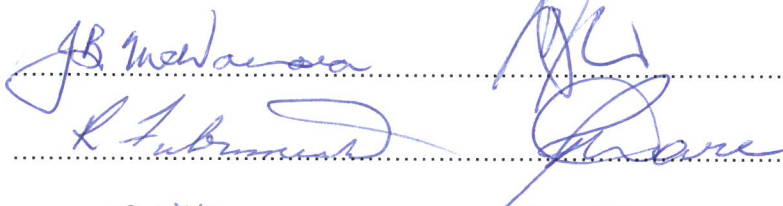
Steven Miles

Signed by LGAQ President, Mayor Mark Jamieson, of the LGAQ Ltd, on behalf of Rural and Remote Councils.



this 25th day of JUNE 2021.

As witnessed by the LGAQ's Rural and Remote Policy Executive members Mayor Jane McNamara, Mayor Peter Scott, Mayor Rob Dare and Councillor Robyn Fuhrmeister.



this 25th day of JUNE 2021.

Rural and Remote Councils Compact (Compact)

1. Preamble

Parties to the Compact are the Queensland Government, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) and Rural and Remote Councils (as per **Schedule 1**).

There are forty-five (45) Rural and Remote Councils which have unique circumstances and experience challenges in delivering services to their communities and it is important that local governments of all sizes have the foundations, infrastructure and outlook to continue to support liveable communities. Ensuring that rural and remote councils have these building blocks in place is critical to their long-term sustainability.

The Compact will provide a mechanism to ensure strategic priorities, backed by evidence, that support Rural and Remote Councils are properly considered by the Government as part of its legislation, policy and program development.

A Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee is established as a multi-agency forum to facilitate oversight of the Compact, engagement between the parties and progression of key priorities.

2. Objective

The Compact, as a sub-agreement to the Partners in Government Agreement, consolidates the partnership between Rural and Remote Councils and the Queensland Government. The Compact formalises a set of principles, responsibilities and governance arrangements to guide the partnership between the Queensland Government and Rural and Remote Councils.

It formalises the robust, respectful and enduring partnership between the Parties that is underpinned by common objectives and strives to achieve the full potential of Queensland's rural and remote communities.

The aims of the Compact include, but are not limited to, improved outcomes for Rural and Remote Councils through meaningful engagement; working towards more funding certainty; building capability; and providing transparency about Government decisions.

The Compact will support the development of solutions to strategic priority issues for rural and remote communities which are agreed for progression under the Compact. The priority issues are listed in **Schedule 2** which is amended as issues are resolved or new issues are identified for consideration.

A Directors-General Sponsors program comprising chief executives of the lead State agencies for priority issues, is established to assist in progressing solutions for priority issues.

3. Principles

Engagement

Input from, and engagement with, Rural and Remote Councils when developing new policies, programs and legislation to ensure the needs of rural and remote communities are considered and accommodated.

There is policy and regulatory flexibility that takes into account local circumstances and does not hinder the growth and prosperity of rural and remote communities.

Funding

Funding certainty, as much as is practicable, is considered over the forward estimates to enable Rural and Remote Councils to confidently plan and deliver infrastructure and services.

Capability

Program and project management is supported to enable Rural and Remote Councils and the Queensland Government to effectively deliver essential infrastructure and services, as well as track outcomes.

Collaboration

There is a standard of collaboration between the Parties that maximises the value of investments made by all levels of government.

Transparency and accountability

Queensland Government agencies must properly consider the impact of decisions about funding, policies, programs and legislation on Rural and Remote Councils.

4. Governance

Oversight of Compact

The implementation and operation of the Compact will be overseen on behalf of the LGAQ by its five (5) Rural and Remote Regions Policy Executive Members (the Guardians).

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is the lead agency for implementation and operation of the Compact on behalf of the Queensland Government.

Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee (Committee)

The Policy and Legislation Committee is established as the primary governance structure for the implementation and operation of the Compact.

The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis and at other times agreed by the Parties.

Role and Functions

The role of the Committee is to:

- Provide a regular forum for formal engagement between the Parties on new policy, program and legislative proposals.
- Provide advice to the Queensland Government on the impacts of all new policy and legislative proposals for Rural and Remote Councils.
- Highlight areas where current policy and legislation may be having adverse impacts for Rural and Remote Councils
- Develop plans and strategies, including options or alternative approaches, for the Queensland Government's consideration to address identified strategic issues and other proposals likely to impact Rural and Remote Councils.
- Facilitate with responsible Queensland Government agencies, the delivery of strategic priorities agreed through the Compact.
- Monitor the delivery of strategic priorities by the Queensland Government
- Develop an annual update on outcomes of the committee's work for the Queensland Government's consideration and publication.

Membership

The Committee comprises nominated representatives (or proxies) of the Parties and other agencies, as follows:

- Deputy Director-General, Local Government Division, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (Chair)
- The Guardians
- Head of Advocacy, LGAQ
- Office of Rural and Regional Queensland
- Deputy Director-General, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Deputy Director-General, Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water
- Deputy Directors-General for agencies responsible for progression of the identified strategic priority issues (time-limited membership whilst a relevant issue is under consideration)

Directors-General - Rural and Remote Sponsors

In addition to the Committee, a further line of key government interaction will be included within the Compact through a Director-General Sponsor program.

Each year the Guardians will select several strategic priority issues (see **Schedule 2**) for rural and remote communities which are agreed for progression under the Compact.

The relevant Directors-General for those portfolio issues (see **Schedule 2**) are a Rural and Remote Sponsor for that twelve-month period. In that capacity, the Sponsors will act as a contact point for the Guardians, to provide advice and help steer them in their progress as concerns and/or roadblocks arise when working through strategic priority issues.

5.Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties

Joint roles and responsibilities

Under the Compact, the Parties will work together to:

- Demonstrate leadership through the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee to address strategic issues impacting rural and remote communities.
- Develop evidence-based responses to guide priorities and decision making on initiatives identified under the Compact.
- Agree key priorities (a maximum of three at any given time) for progression over an agreed timeframe e.g. 1 to 2 years. Key priorities are listed in **Schedule 2**.
- Ensure that the long-term sustainability of Rural and Remote Councils is central to identification of agreed strategic priorities and consideration of new policies, programs and legislation.
- Enhance the capability of Rural and Remote Councils to deliver high-quality infrastructure and services to their communities.
- Collaboratively deliver initiatives which promote the Queensland Government's Economic Recovery Plan.
- Prepare an annual update on the outcomes of operations conducted under the auspices of the Compact.

Queensland Government roles and responsibilities

Under the Compact, the Queensland Government will:

- Establish and support the operation of the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee, including arranging participation by agencies leading on specific identified issues.
- Invite the Guardians to participate in scheduled meetings under the Partners in Government Agreement between the Minister responsible for Local Government and the LGAQ.
- Ensure Queensland Government agencies consult with the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee on new policy, program and legislative proposals impacting rural and remote communities, as appropriate.
- Include detail of Queensland Government agencies consultation with the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee in the annual update prepared on the outcomes of operations conducted under the auspices of the Compact.
- Promote greater rigour in submissions to Government to address the impacts of new legislation, policies and programs for Rural and Remote Councils and to more effectively communicate decisions affecting rural and remote communities.
- Explore options with Queensland Government agencies which may provide more funding certainty over Queensland Government programs for Rural and Remote Councils.
- Deliver programs and other support for Rural and Remote Councils to enhance capability in financial and asset management and project management.
- Enable the Directors-General Sponsor program to assist the Guardians to raise concerns or seek advice on key strategic issues.

Local Government roles and responsibilities

Under the Compact, the LGAQ, and the Guardians will:

- Commit to supporting continuous improvement in financial and asset management and efficiencies in operations and service delivery of rural and remote councils to achieve local solutions wherever possible.
- Identify strategic priority issues, which cannot be addressed through local solutions and are based on evidence and need, for consideration by the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee.
- Propose evidenced-based options to address the long-term sustainability and capability of Rural and Remote Councils for consideration by the Rural and Remote Councils Policy and Legislation Committee and the Queensland Government.
- Provide additional linkage between the Queensland Government and the respective Regional Organisations of Councils which comprise Rural and Remote Councils.

6. Operation and Review

The Compact aligns with the term of the Partners in Government Agreement. Meetings to review the operation of the Compact may be held as required at the request of the Queensland Government or the LGAQ. Changes may be made from time to time by mutual agreement.

The Compact will become a standing agenda item of the quarterly Partners in Government Agreement meeting between the Deputy Premier and the LGAQ. The Guardians will be invited to dial in/attend the quarterly meeting for the duration of the discussion on this agenda item.

SCHEDULE 1

Rural and Remote Councils

1. Balonne Shire Council
2. Banana Shire Council
3. Barcaldine Regional Council
4. Barcoo Shire Council
5. Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
6. Boulia Shire Council
7. Bulloo Shire Council
8. Burdekin Shire Council
9. Burke Shire Council
10. Carpentaria Shire Council
11. Cassowary Coast Regional Council
12. Central Highlands Regional Council
13. Charters Towers Regional Council
14. Cloncurry Shire Council
15. Cook Shire Council
16. Croydon Shire Council
17. Diamantina Shire Council
18. Douglas Shire Council
19. Etheridge Shire Council
20. Flinders Shire Council
21. Gladstone Regional Council
22. Goondiwindi Regional Council
23. Gympie Regional Council
24. Hinchinbrook Shire Council
25. Isaac Regional Council
26. Livingstone Shire Council
27. Lockyer Valley Regional Council
28. Longreach Regional Council
29. Maranoa Regional Council
30. Mareeba Shire Council
31. McKinlay Shire Council
32. Mount Isa City Council
33. Murweh Shire Council
34. North Burnett Regional Council
35. Paroo Shire Council
36. Quilpie Shire Council
37. Richmond Shire Council
38. Scenic Rim Regional Council
39. Somerset Regional Council
40. South Burnett Regional Council
41. Southern Downs Regional Council
42. Tablelands Regional Council
43. Western Downs Regional Council
44. Whitsunday Regional Council
45. Winton Shire Council

SCHEDULE 2

Key Strategic Priority issues 2021-22

	Priorities	Director-General Sponsor
1	Financial Sustainability	Director-General, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
2	Roads	Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads
3	Housing	Director-General, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

