

CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Exceptional Service for an Exceptional Community



12 December 2014

Our Ref: 922608
File Ref: 06/PLA/09
Enquiries: Martin Homisan

Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Green Paper Submission

Agriculture is one of our region's main economic pillars.

Council promotes an investment-friendly approach for the agricultural sector and is keen to assist investors to come to the Region.

Future growth of the agricultural sector will further stimulate employment and resident population growth, which is important for the Charters Towers Regional economy and community.

This growth will be achieved by:

- retaining the benefits from agricultural industries (localised value adding);
- minimising the leakage of consumer spending from the Region;
- building lifestyle infrastructure to attract and retain people and skills;
- developing Charters Towers as a major service centre to rural North Queensland;
- advancing major agricultural projects; and,
- supporting investment from a wide range of investors, including State and Federal Governments.



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Agricultural projects of significance:

1. Irrigation project



Opportunity exists to develop irrigated cropping along the Burdekin River within Charters Towers Regional Council. Key drivers of this project are:

- High demand for food in the Asian region.
- Well-developed road, rail and port transport networks.
- Favourable climatic conditions with good, reliable rainfall and sunshine.
- Reliable water supply available.
- Historical expertise in irrigated horticulture crops - potatoes have been grown successfully on a commercial scale in this Region for many years. There are opportunities to diversify the food, fruit and vegetable crops grown in this region including, but not limited to, bean varieties, citrus, peanuts, melons, grapes, sorghum and a variety of stock fodder crops.
- Charters Towers Regional Council is a strong proponent of this development opportunity.
- Soil testing needs to be carried out for diversified crops.
- Potential for off-stream water harvesting is highly promising.

Potential project 'show stopper':

Whilst Charters Towers possesses a relative abundance of water and arable land, there is minimal irrigated agriculture occurring in the Region at present. Several reasons are behind this, including a lack of water storage capacity, Government policy, and a lack of required three phase electricity infrastructure.

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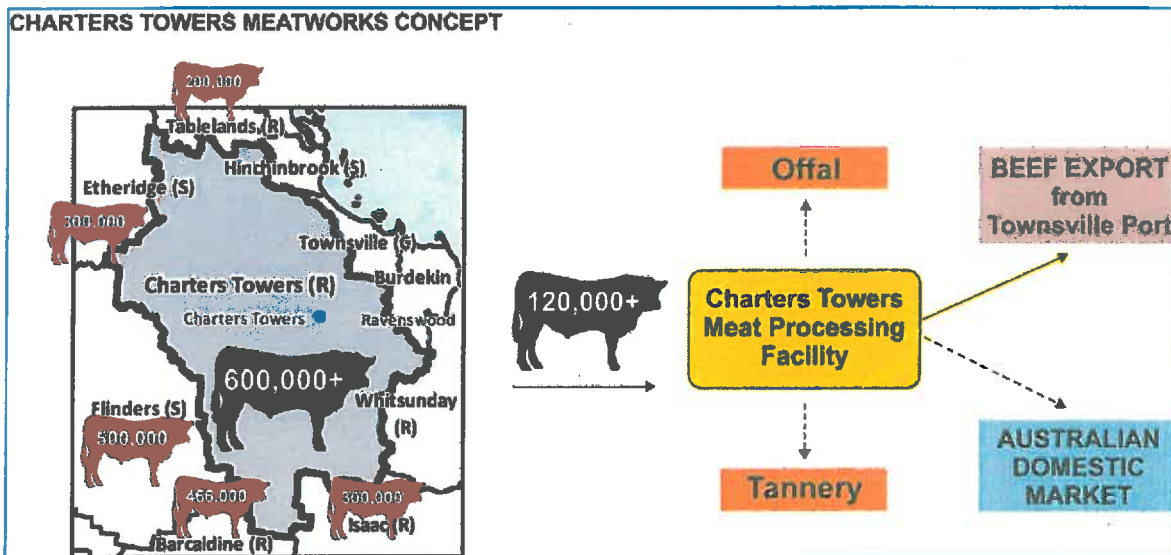
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Council has petitioned the State Government to increase the allocation of water presently available for irrigation purposes within the Regional water systems from unallocated reserves to enable further uptake and continues to assist landholders interested in cropping achieve such objectives through its representations to the State Government.

Current limiting factors are being addressed as part of the push towards the development of Northern Australia and the development of significant new irrigation areas in the Charters Towers Region would be a major and durable economic boost to the Northern Queensland Region.

2. Beef Processing Investment Opportunity - Meat Processing Facility

Beef production is a major economic activity in the Region. Council is currently working on a Meat Processing Facility project to ensure new job creation while value adding to the Region's biggest agricultural commodity.



3. Pentland Bioenergy Project - Greenfield Biofuel

Private sector company RDA has identified and secured long term access to 67 000 hectares of land specifically for the purpose of developing this project. The project will be developed in 3 stages with current land holdings sufficient for stages 1 and 2.

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The project is to be located in between the townships of Charters Towers and Pentland in North Queensland, approximately 50 kilometres south-west of Charters Towers and 160 kilometres south-west of Townsville. The project location was selected on five key criteria:

- Climate.
- Topography and Soils.
- Social compatibility.
- Likely environmental impact.
- Availability of water.

Stage 1 of the project includes a production facility sustained by 18 500 hectares of sugar cane plantation and will deliver 140 million litres per annum of ethanol from first generation technology. The use of second generation processing technology will produce a further 160 million litres of ethanol. Stage 1 will produce a combined total of 300 million litres of ethanol for export.

Stage 2 will see production sustained by 43 000 hectares under cultivation, producing approximately 300 million litres of ethanol from first generation and a further 350 million litres using second generation processing technology.

Stage 3 will see a further increase in ethanol production, using both first and second generation technology. The project is expected to create 700 jobs during construction and 500 full time equivalent permanent positions.

For further enquiries and project details, please contact Council's Economic Development Officer, Mr Martin Homisan, at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully



R Jayo
Director Planning & Sustainable Development