



# Somerset Economic Development Plan 2015 to 2020



# Contents

Somerset – Focus on Growth.....	1
Regional Challenges and Opportunities .....	2
Themes for Economic Development.....	8
Business Growth.....	9
Tourism.....	11
Capability Building .....	13
Infrastructure.....	15
Making it Happen.....	17

## Somerset – Focus on Growth

The Somerset region (Somerset) combines a high quality regional lifestyle with opportunities created by the region's close proximity to the growing urban, tourism and industry corridor between Brisbane and Gympie. Somerset delivers:

- **Real Country** - a natural landscape and a quality environment for leisure and living. Somerset contains the water catchments for South East Queensland and valuable agricultural land.
- **Real Adventure** - a tourist and outdoor recreation zone that offers relaxing activities through to adventure sports.
- **Really Close to Brisbane** - opportunities for business growth (agriculture through to knowledge industries) in close proximity to the State's largest market, South East Queensland.

This Economic Development Plan identifies opportunities for the region's growth over the next 5 years and is guided by this vision:

- Creating a contemporary business and lifestyle zone that:
  - Supports the growth of towns, villages and traditional industries.
  - Attracts new low impact and knowledge businesses.
  - Encourages a new generation of entrepreneurs.
- Positioning Somerset as a leading lifestyle, recreation and leisure destination for South East Queenslanders.



## Regional Challenges and Opportunities

In a complex and changing economic environment, Somerset must focus on its strengths and be ready to meet the challenges ahead from changes and disruptions in the wider regional and national economies.

A review of Somerset's demographic, economic and employment trends helps to set the scene for the Economic Development Plan.

### Somerset Region

The Somerset region covers approximately 5,382 sq km and includes Somerset Dam, Wivenhoe Dam and substantial high quality agricultural land.

The main centres in the Somerset local government area are:

- Esk.
- Fernvale.
- Lowood.
- Toogoolawah.
- Kilcoy.

### Population

At the 2011 census, Somerset was home to 22,200 people – representing 8.3% of the population in the Ipswich and West Moreton region.

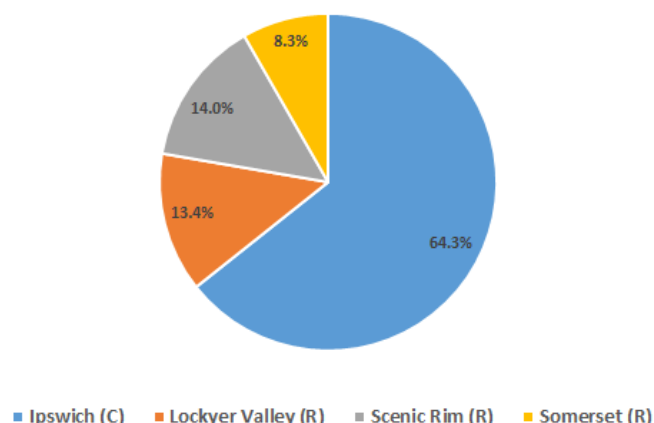
Somerset's population is forecast to grow to 32,500 by 2036 – an increase of 46% over the 25 year period.

However, Somerset will represent a smaller share of the regional population (4.6%) in 2036 due to the strong population growth in the wider Ipswich and West Moreton region.

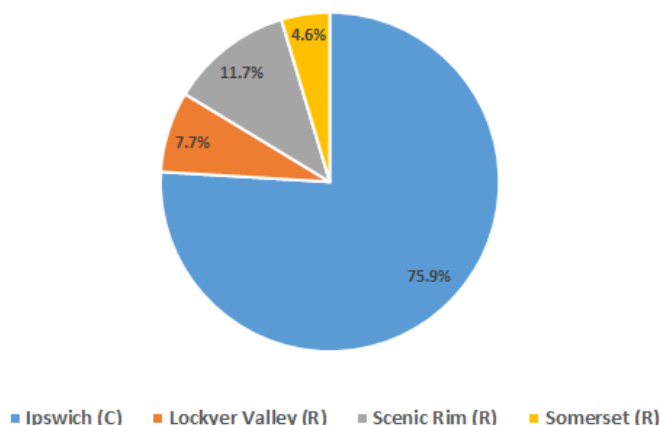
This regional growth will create opportunities for Somerset:

- Tourism opportunities based on a larger market for day trip and short trip stays.
- Expanded opportunities for Somerset businesses to serve a growing regional market.

**2011 Population Shares in Ipswich and West Moreton**  
(267,717 people in 2011)



**2036 Population Shares in Ipswich and West Moreton**  
(701,346 people in 2036)



The average annual population growth rate for Somerset for the 25 year period 2011 to 2036 is 1.5% - lower than the rate of growth forecast for the Ipswich and West Moreton region (3.9%) and slightly lower than the rate for South East Queensland (1.8%).

Towns and villages in Somerset region are long established. There has been higher growth in the Fernvale and Lowood areas and in Kilcoy as more people move to the region for quality of life but still commute to jobs outside Somerset.

While this population growth has been positive, Somerset faces some challenges in terms of its current demographic profile.

The average age in Somerset region is increasing (estimated to be 41.8 years in 2013) while in the Ipswich and West Moreton area, the average age is decreasing (estimated to be 34.7 years in 2013).

Along with Scenic Rim (42.5 years), Somerset has the highest average age in the Ipswich and West Moreton region. This highlights the need to attract young families to the Somerset.

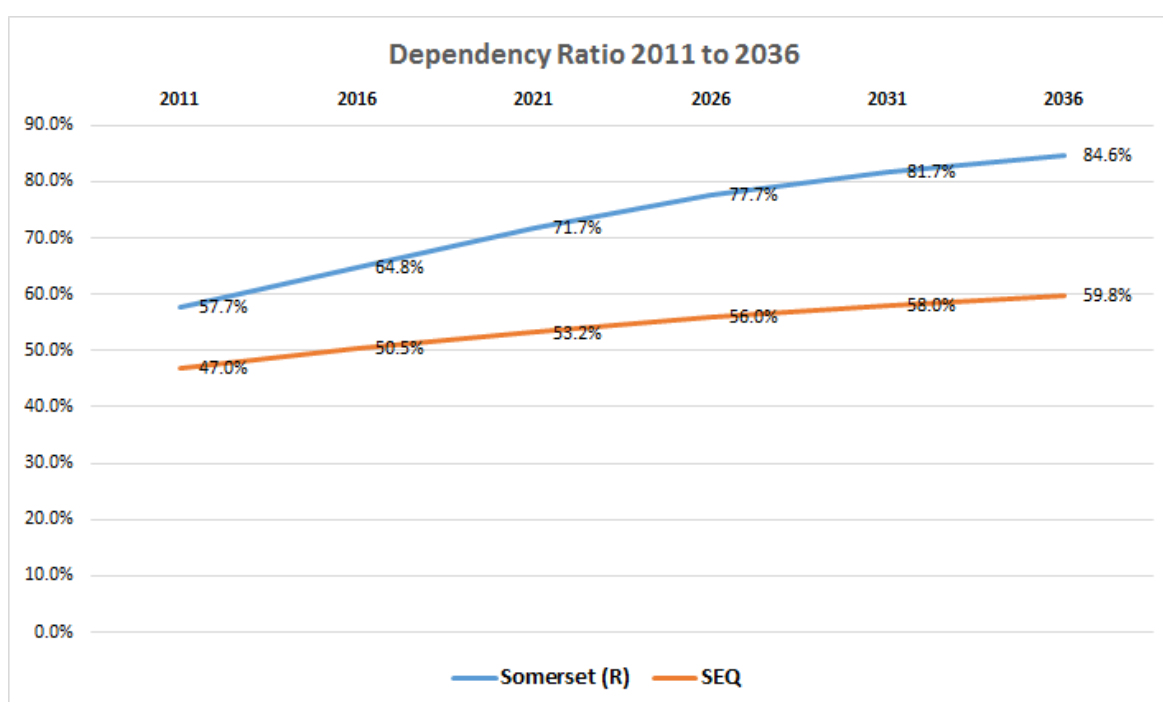
This demographic challenge is illustrated by the region's dependency ratio – the proportion of people who are in dependent age groups (under 15 and 65 and over) compared with the number of working age people (aged 15 to 64).

The dependency ratio for the South East Queensland region as a whole was about 47% at the 2011 census, while the dependency ratio for Somerset was 57.7% at that time.

The Somerset dependency ratio will increase significantly in the future based on an ageing population to a forecast 84.6% in 2036 compared to 59.8% in South East Queensland. This means fewer people in the Somerset workforce and a larger number not in the workforce.

If not countered, this trend could have a negative impact on Somerset's economy and the ability to provide services to a larger 'dependent' group living in Somerset

Attracting young families and providing the jobs and opportunities for these families locally can help to mitigate the effects of Somerset's ageing population. .



## Industry and Employment

The mix of industry sectors in Somerset's economy will also change in the future.

Forecasts prepared by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research for the Council of Mayors (SEQ) show Somerset's gross regional product was estimated to be \$549.4 million in 2011, rising to \$814 million in 2041.

While manufacturing, agriculture and construction will remain strong contributors to Somerset's economy in the future, there will be strong growth in transport, retail trade and education and training sectors (see chart below).

Within Somerset's population of 22,000 at the 2011 Census, there were estimated to be 9,365 people in employment, but only 6,838 of these (73%) worked in the region.

NIEIR's forecast of growth to 2041 estimates that the percentage of residents working in the region will rise to 81% by 2041.

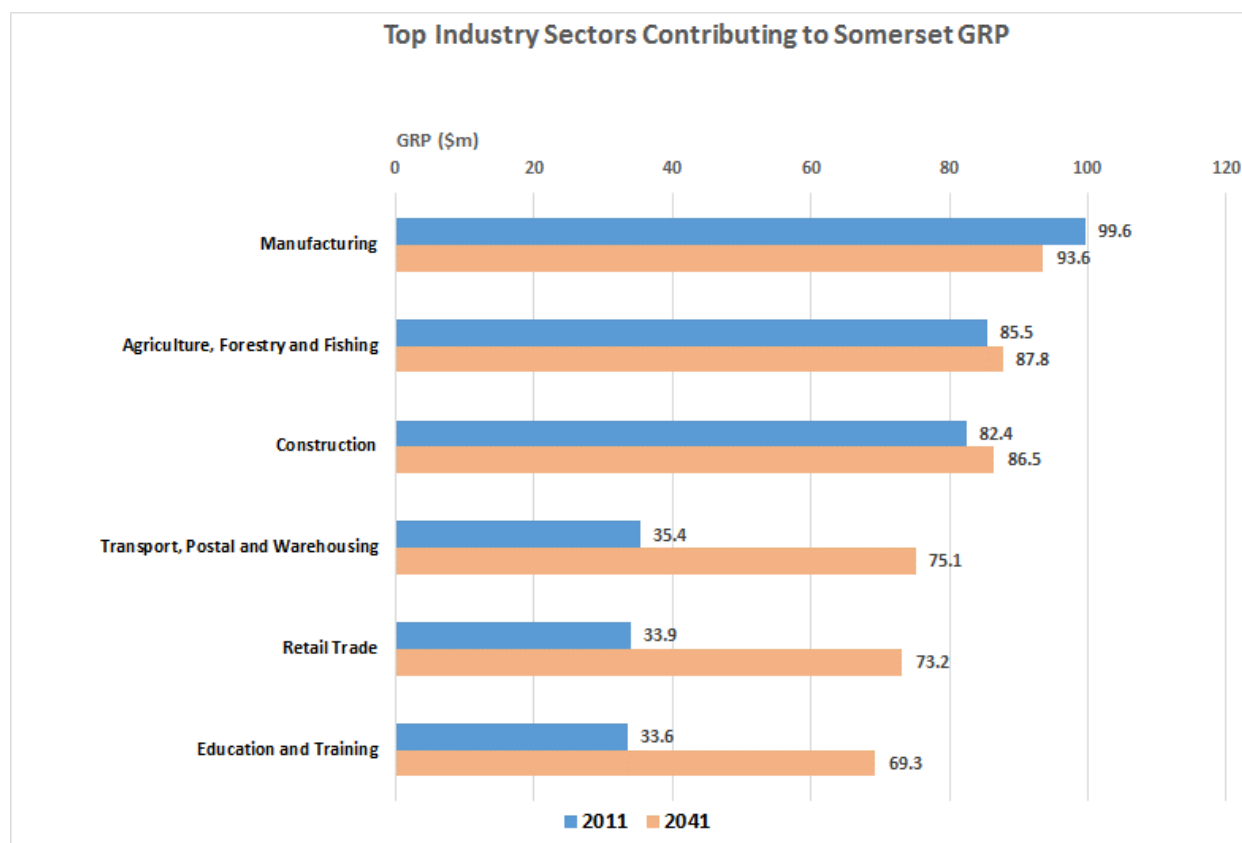
This represents an increase in jobs in the region of 4,200 over a 30 year period (140 new jobs per year).

In 2011, the top employment industries in Somerset were:

- Manufacturing (including food processing) (accounting for 16.8% of employment).
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (15.1%).
- Retail trade (11.3%).

This mix will change slightly in the future with the top employment industries in Somerset in 2041 forecast to be:

- Manufacturing (accounting for 18.4% of employment).
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (13.1%).
- Education (12.0%).



NIEIR also provided a second scenario where population growth is moderated to match the current employment generating capacity of the Somerset region. In this second scenario, there will be nearly 3,000 less people working in the region and about 3,000 fewer jobs in the region.

Under this scenario, education (14.0%), health care and social assistance (12.7%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (9.6%) will be the top employing industries. This reflects a greater focus on service sectors.

The Economic Development Plan is focused on job creation – strengthening the economy, creating local jobs in the region and retaining strong agriculture, manufacturing and construction sectors in the economy.

An industry specialisation ratio compares the industry sector employment proportion in Somerset with the industry sector employment proportion for South East Queensland. This ratio shows that Somerset has a comparative advantage in these industry sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing – 16.89 specialisation ratio (employment in Somerset in this sector is 16.89 times the percentage of agriculture employment in South East Queensland) at 2011.
- Manufacturing – 1.88.
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services – 1.44.
- Construction – 1.06.
- Education and training – 1.19.

Of significance for Somerset is the lower ratio for these important industry sectors:

- Professional and insurance services (0.13).
- Professional, scientific and technical services (0.26).

- Accommodation and food services (0.64) (an indicator for tourism).
- Information, media and telecommunications (0.27).

Using standard population projection growth trends, these relativities do not significantly change over the next 30 years.

This means that without action to attract new investment in knowledge sectors, Somerset will lag behind in industries that drive the new digital economies that are creating wealth and employment globally.

The Economic Development Plan aims to boost Somerset's share of:

- Professionals and those in technical occupations living in the region – particularly information technology and knowledge industries.
- Tourism.
- Value adding of agricultural production (manufacturing).

Somerset also needs to maintain its level of services and capabilities in health, education, retail and other services needed for a vibrant community.

While the region is close to the South East Queensland share of employment for arts and recreation services (0.80), there are also opportunities to grow this important sector of the economy.

## Transport

The Somerset region is a corridor that links regional Queensland to the larger market centres of Brisbane, Ipswich and the Sunshine Coast.

The D'Aguiar Highway and the Brisbane Valley Highway are vital highways that support the daily movement of residents and visitors and facilitate the transportation of livestock and

agricultural produce, from the region and areas west and north of Somerset.

Maintaining these highways not only supports economic activity within the Somerset, but is an important resource to support competitive transportation of goods into and out of South East Queensland.

Road networks in Somerset need to support competitive transport costs for primary producers and Council has been working to replace old wooden bridges unable to support modern truck weights. Somerset Regional Council has been proactive in attracting external funding and has invested millions to upgrade roads and bridges.

Public transport is also an area for improvement – providing better connecting services to major centres and within Somerset.

## Tourism

Tourism is a growth sector for Somerset. A Destination Management Plan has been prepared and modern visitor information centres established to support tourism marketing.

Somerset is also investing in facilities and services for the day trip and drive market as well as the RV market.

The current industry is made up of small businesses but there is potential to attract major new investment in tourist accommodation given the proximity to Brisbane and the SEQ urban growth zone.

## Environment

The pristine environment in the region is an asset that will be preserved – the region contains the water catchment for South East Queensland. This means that the region will continue to retain the scenic environment and its smaller scale urban development.

This environmental asset is important for preserving the region's heritage, offering a quality lifestyle and will attract increasing numbers of tourists in the future.

## Other Infrastructure

Infrastructure including sporting facilities, visitor and community meeting venues, health and education facilities support both community and economic growth.

Council has proactively invested in infrastructure in the region and has a successful track record in attracting grant funding. As Somerset continues to attract new residents, many from urban areas, there will be continuing demand to invest in infrastructure.

Somerset's strategy of proactive investment and strong advocacy for infrastructure will support future growth.

NBN infrastructure, internet access and good telecommunications are essential for community and economic development.

## Summary

To capitalise on opportunities as a lifestyle region, Somerset needs to retain its scenic environment, its quality towns and villages and maintain the 'country lifestyle' that is 'really close to Brisbane'.

The challenges and opportunities for Somerset in the future set the framework for the Economic Development Plan.

### Challenges

- Jobs growth to support population growth and allow more Somerset residents to work where they live.
- Boosting high value and knowledge sectors of the economy.
- Needing to attract younger age groups to 'rebalance' the demographic profile.
- The lack of digital connectivity in Somerset to support population and business growth.
- The need for infrastructure investment for vital highways and services to support community growth.

### Opportunities

- Retaining the pristine environment that supports Somerset's country lifestyle and tourism opportunities.
- Tourism growth to gain a greater share of the growing South East Queensland tourism market.
- Retaining existing businesses and encourage their growth.
- Attracting new investment to strengthen core industry sectors and diversify the Somerset's economy.
- Increasing participation in knowledge based sectors to boost economic growth.
- The ability to offer a quality country lifestyle combined with business opportunities and local employment.



## Themes for Economic Development

Four economic development themes and nine projects will help Somerset meet future growth challenges and capitalise on opportunities. These four themes and nine projects will drive sustainable growth and strengthen Somerset's economy

### Business Growth

Retaining existing businesses and attract new businesses and employment to the region:

1. Promoting Somerset as a high quality **destination for business owners** and their employees.
2. Establishing a **digital hub** at Esk and work with Ipswich City Council on the **Intelligent Region** initiative to support growth in knowledge based industries and enhance the digital skills of businesses and residents.
3. Supporting **innovation and new business investment**.

### Tourism

Building capability and capacity in the region's tourism industry:

4. **Implementing the destination management plan** for the region and engaging an expert 'tourism mentor' to assist the tourism and business community to fast track implementation.
5. Establish an international standard **bass fishing tournament** on Lake Wivenhoe.

The following pages outline the short term (next 1 to 2 years) and long term (next 5 years) actions for each of the nine projects. Detailed implementation plans for each of the nine projects are contained in a separate report.

### Regional Capability Building

Supporting growth in local businesses and industries:

6. **Retaining local businesses** and working with industry sectors to support their growth.
7. **Supporting growth in towns and villages** to create employment and economic opportunities throughout the region.
8. **Buying local and spending local** initiative to support the local economy and supply chains.

### Infrastructure

Secure investment in infrastructure to support economic and tourism growth:

9. **Advocating for investment in infrastructure** that supports industry and community development – transport, telecommunications and internet access, sport, recreation and tourism, water security, health, education and community services.



## Business Growth

Business growth will drive economic and employment growth in Somerset.

As a major agricultural production region, there are opportunities to expand this sector and add value to agricultural and food production.

Supporting growth in existing businesses and attracting new investment will create diversity in the economy and new local employment opportunities for a growing population in Somerset.

### New Investment

Typical patterns of regional growth show that local businesses can account for 80% of the new investment in a region. Understanding the priorities of these existing businesses and creating an environment that welcomes their continued investment is an important focus for Somerset.

Attracting new investment – whether it is from existing businesses or from investors new to the region – is a critical input to growing local employment opportunities.

Opportunities to attract new investment include:

- Tourist accommodation ranging from basic through to high end accommodation with potential for a conference centre.
- Tourist attractions and activities.
- Agriculture and food or produce value adding. The region is already a base for high quality food processing operations and there are opportunities to attract additional

investment including a proposed food processing precinct at Coominya.

- Agritourism ventures.
- The Kilcoy horse racing training centre and equestrian event venue.
- Attracting events, sporting and recreational activities to the region.
- Encouraging entrepreneurs and start-ups in the region.
- Attracting businesses whose owners and staff enjoy the Somerset lifestyle, and benefit from the proximity to the growing SEQ market.

A new Investment Prospectus will be an essential tool to support discussions with local and new investors.

### Innovation

Encouraging entrepreneurs, knowledge businesses and innovation will help Somerset participate in a growing digital economy.

An 'Intelligent Region' initiative by Ipswich City in conjunction with Somerset, Scenic Rim and Lockyer Valley can develop digital hubs, encourage startup ventures and build the digital skills of the region.

Growth in knowledge businesses and support for innovation and entrepreneurship will foster growth in the next generation of Somerset businesses.

As the knowledge economy grows as a component of the global economy, Somerset region needs to be ready to play a proactive role in this growth economy.

## Business Growth Projects

The following table outlines the short term actions (next 1 to 2 years) and long term actions (next 5 years) for the three Business Growth projects in the Plan.

<b>1. Promoting Somerset as a high quality destination for business owners and their employees.</b>	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a new <b>investment attraction prospectus</b>.</li> <li>Attracting investment that proactively seeks out opportunities for <b>major new investments in tourism facilities and low impact industry</b>.</li> <li><b>Marketing the Somerset lifestyle</b> to small and medium size firms to encourage relocation to Somerset.</li> <li>Including <b>investment attraction promotion as part of all major events</b> in Somerset and encourage businesses to promote the message, and advocate for Somerset among their own business networks.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a <b>proactive pathway for new investment</b> – ensuring that Somerset is ‘open for business’ and is a competitive investment destination.</li> <li>Attracting investment in these <b>target sectors</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food value adding.</li> <li>Transport services hub or support activities e.g. truck stops, rest areas.</li> <li>Low impact manufacturing, construction and related supply chain businesses.</li> <li>Information technology businesses.</li> <li>Professional services and technology based businesses.</li> <li>Aged care and retirement living.</li> <li>Entrepreneurs able to make lifestyle decisions on business relocation.</li> <li>Business incubator – innovation, entrepreneurs, knowledge businesses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2. Establishing a digital hub at Esk and work with Ipswich City Council on the Intelligent Region initiative to support growth in knowledge based industries and enhance the digital skills of businesses and residents.</b>	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Working with Ipswich City Council</b> to identify how Somerset can participate in the Intelligent Region initiative. This includes establishing a digital hub and support for knowledge business growth.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with providers of digital economy skills (government agencies and private sector) to <b>build the digital skills</b> of residents, and of businesses (including digital marketing and greater participation in the digital economy).</li> </ul>
<b>3. Supporting innovation and encouraging new business investment.</b>	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Welcoming start-ups and entrepreneurs</b> in sectors including knowledge based and IT businesses and professional services.</li> <li>Marketing the region as a <b>lifestyle haven for digital start-ups</b> and technology based businesses.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborating on regional initiatives that <b>support innovation and entrepreneurship</b> (Federal and State Government, SEQ and Ipswich and West Moreton regions).</li> </ul>

## Tourism

Somerset region's proximity to Brisbane, Ipswich City, Moreton Bay, Caboolture and the Sunshine and Gold Coasts creates opportunities to attract day trip visitors, weekend visitors and the RV and sports markets to Somerset.

The diversity of terrain, the high quality environment and the range of adventure sports through to events and activities in the region is extremely diverse.

### Destination Management Plan

The Somerset region has recently developed a Destination Management Plan. Implementing this Plan will be a catalyst for tourism growth.

Initiatives in the Plan that will help to support tourism growth include:

- Building on the unique tourism heritage of the region including Yowie tourism and Yowie experiences.
- Using the visitor centres and interested community members to support a greeters program.
- Marketing the region as a safe 'try out destination' for people with new four wheel drives, RVs, caravan and camping set ups.
- Developing events and festivals that encourage visitors to come to the region.



## Building Tourism Capabilities

The Somerset region has a dynamic range of committed small businesses who provide a great tourism experience.

Helping to build the skills of these businesses and engaging directly with higher value investors can strengthen the tourism competitiveness of the region and attract major new investment to the region.

Building tourism capabilities includes:

- Service excellence.
- Effective marketing including digital marketing.
- Business skills to support profitable operation and long term sustainability.

### Tourism Mentor

To support capability building and the implementation of the Destination Management Plan, engaging an expert tourism mentor is recommended. Local businesses and the community can gain a great deal from this mentor and ensure that their efforts are targeted to deliver the best possible outcomes.

### Major Bass Fishing Event

Lake Wivenhoe can provide an ideal venue for an international standard bass fishing tournament – creating a major new fishing event for Queensland. Establishing an international standard bass fishing tournament will boost awareness of Somerset and increase domestic and international visitor numbers.

### New Investment

Somerset has the potential to attract significant new tourism investment based on the quality of the environment and the proximity to Brisbane, Ipswich and urban growth north to the Sunshine Coast.

Tourism activities can also support a wider investment attraction agenda – as well as individuals who visit the region, business owners also visit Somerset region. Having a program and dedicated communication

## Tourism Project

The following table outlines the short term actions (next 1 to 2 years) and long term actions (next 5 years) for Tourism.

<b>4. Implementing the Destination Management Plan</b> for the region and engaging an expert ‘tourism mentor’ to assist the tourism and business community to fast track implementation.	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging an <b>expert tourism consultant as a mentor</b> to work with Somerset businesses and Council on the implementation of a drive market promotion strategy and the destination management plan.</li> <li><b>Expanding tourism information, promotion</b> (including online) and signage.</li> <li>Delivering a ‘<b>Somerset Exceptional Service</b>’ program – aimed at developing a consistently high level of service provided by visitor amenities, shops, hotels, restaurants and pubs &amp; clubs.</li> <li>Marketing the Somerset region as a <b>safe and convenient ‘tryout’ destination</b> for people with new caravans, RVs and 4WD vehicles.</li> <li>Developing an <b>events program</b> (including major events) and events calendar that attracts visitors and profiles the region.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting <b>new events</b> to Somerset.</li> <li>Promoting <b>Yowie tourism</b> in Somerset and raise the profile of Yowies and ‘Yowie experiences’.</li> <li>Continuing to <b>invest in signage, amenities</b> and interpretive material to enhance the visitor experience in Somerset.</li> <li>Continuing to <b>invest in RV facilities</b> (parking, park amenity, RV facilities and recreation areas) to create high quality experiences for visitors in RVs and caravans.</li> <li>Assessing the feasibility of a <b>new horse racing training centre</b> at Kilcoy.</li> <li>Expanding <b>sporting and outdoor recreation opportunities</b> – fishing and boating, non-motorised (bike and mountain bike) and motorsports activities, walking trails.</li> <li>Developing a tourism investment prospectus and <b>attracting new investment in tourism</b> accommodation, activities and facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Establish an international standard bass fishing tournament on Lake Wivenhoe.</b>	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with recreational fishing peak bodies, Australian and international bass fishing groups to prepare a business case for an <b>international standard bass fishing event</b> at Lake Wivenhoe.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with SEQ and fishing groups to <b>establish an international standard bass fishing tournament</b> in Somerset that links to and complements the international bass fishing calendar.</li> </ul>

for these business owners to encourage them to make a lifestyle choice and relocate to Somerset can support growth in the broader economy.

## Capability Building

Businesses in the Somerset region are not alone in facing a range of challenges from changing economic conditions through digital, market and technology disruption.

Online information and sales are impacting on the traditional retail model and business models are changing across a range of industries as new technologies are adopted.

To keep pace with this change, a focus on building business capabilities and business collaboration can help to strengthen Somerset's economy and provide access to new approaches that will benefit local businesses.

### Strong Local Networks

A major strength in Somerset is the presence of strong industry groups – Kilcoy Chamber of Commerce and Somerset Region Business Alliance. These two groups provide leadership and are a contact point for the business community.

Industry and business groups can collaborate on projects and be a touch point for strengthening the economy and encouraging innovation.

Tapping into existing capability building programs can help the Somerset business community keep up with the unprecedented changes in the wider economy.

### Business Retention

Somerset is the base for leading companies and producers who compete in national and global markets. Somerset is also home to a growing business community who invest in their businesses and local employment. A program that works with existing businesses to understand their needs and support their

retention and growth will strengthen the economy.

### Strong Towns and Villages

The Somerset economy is driven by villages and towns that create opportunities for local businesses and support major employers in the region.

Individual centre plans that maintain local towns and villages and support new investment are included in the Somerset Regional Planning Scheme.

While there will naturally be growth in home based businesses, encouraging new businesses to operate in town and village centres helps to sustain those vital centres.

### Buy and Spend Local

While businesses and individuals will spend outside the region to some extent, a strategy that encourages local people and businesses to buy locally will support town and village economies, create and retain local employment, and strengthen local supply chains in Somerset.

As part of this 'buy and spend local' initiative, helping Somerset businesses to build their online sales capabilities will improve local access to a wider range of goods and services.



## Capability Building Projects

The following table outlines the short term actions (next 1 to 2 years) and long term actions (next 5 years) for the three Capability Building projects in the Plan.

6. Retaining local businesses and working with industry sectors to support their growth.	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiating a program of <b>ongoing communication with major businesses</b> in Somerset to better understand their needs and support their retention and growth in Somerset.</li> <li><b>Working with the industry bodies</b> (Somerset Region Business Alliance Inc., Kilcoy Chamber of Commerce and Community Inc., Somerset Regional Tourism Association Inc.) <b>and professional advisers</b> in Somerset to support retention and growth of businesses in the region.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with industry sectors to <b>support growth and retention</b> covering:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture, rural industries and supply chains e.g. possible saleyards, support for value adding industries.</li> <li>Transport services.</li> <li>Extractive industries.</li> <li>Professional services.</li> <li>Retail and service businesses.</li> <li>Tourism, sport and recreation businesses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accessing business programs that <b>strengthen the capabilities</b> of Somerset businesses including online marketing, business management, product and service delivery.</li> </ul>
7. Supporting growth in towns and villages to create employment and economic opportunities throughout the region.	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging new and home based businesses with a focus on <b>growth in Somerset town and village retail/business centres</b>.</li> <li>Installing <b>new entry signage</b> for towns and villages.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the <b>implementation of centre plans</b> for Somerset towns and villages. villages are in Council's planning scheme (Part 3 Section 3.6.2 to 3.6.7)</li> </ul>
8. Buying local and spending local initiative to support the local economy and supply chains.	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing and implementing a program that encourages the community and businesses to <b>buy from local suppliers and spend in the local Somerset region</b>.</li> <li>Working with state and local government to identify opportunities for local businesses to increase their <b>share of government contracts</b> and spending.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessing programs that assist Somerset businesses to <b>improve their capabilities</b> to successfully bid on larger contracts.</li> </ul>

## Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment in Somerset will support economic development.

Key highways running through the region – the D'Aguilar and Brisbane Valley Highways – connect local towns and villages, but also act as a vital transport corridor for South East Queensland.

Support for transport infrastructure and transport support facilities in Somerset is important, not only for the Somerset, but for South East Queensland's future growth.

Somerset Regional Council has proactively invested in road, bridge, community and tourism infrastructure.

Council has a strong track record of successfully securing grants – an important skill for the region.

Somerset needs to continue this successful approach and advocate for investment in infrastructure that addresses the needs of the economy and the community now and in the future.

Infrastructure priorities include:

- Highway, road and bridge maintenance and upgrades.
- Better public transport linkages between Somerset and high growth urban centres nearby e.g. Ipswich.
- A heavy vehicle bypass for Kilcoy.
- Land access and development for industrial and business growth in Somerset – funding for trunk infrastructure will remove the barriers for initial investment.
- Telecommunications and internet or NBN infrastructure.
- Water security for agriculture.
- Health, education and community services to cater for a growing community, and an ageing community.



## Infrastructure Project

The following table outlines the short term actions (next 1 to 2 years) and long term actions (next 5 years) for the Infrastructure project in the Plan.

<b>9. Advocating for investment in infrastructure</b> that supports industry and community development – transport, telecommunications and internet access, sport, recreation and tourism, water security, health, education and community services.	
<b>Short Term - 2016 and 2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating for better <b>public transport</b> linkages between Somerset and Ipswich City to improve transport access.</li> <li>• Applying for funding for <b>transport, recreation, sporting and tourism</b> infrastructure.</li> <li>• Seeking funding for <b>trunk infrastructure</b> to support land access and development for industrial and business growth.</li> <li>• Exploring available options to provide <b>improved access to Wi-Fi</b> in town centres and tourist information centres.</li> </ul>	<b>Longer Term - next 5 years to 2021</b> Ongoing advocacy and dialogue with State and Federal Governments, and other key stakeholders on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transport infrastructure</b> including funding to ensure that key highways through Somerset (D'Aguilar, Brisbane Valley Highway), and connection roads between towns and villages meet Somerset and SEQ needs. Includes advocacy to address black spots, fund interchanges and ongoing highway and road development.</li> <li>• <b>Public transport</b> infrastructure and services.</li> <li>• <b>Recreation, sport and tourism infrastructure</b> to support tourism and population growth.</li> <li>• <b>Telecommunications, NBN infrastructure</b>, and internet access including Wi-Fi zones.</li> <li>• <b>Heavy vehicle bypass</b> for Kilcoy.</li> <li>• <b>Water security</b> for agriculture.</li> <li>• <b>Health, education and community services</b> to meet Somerset's future needs.</li> </ul>

## Making it Happen

To be successful, the Economic Development Plans need the support of the business community and local government. This local team also needs the support of private and public sector stakeholders and investors.

No one group has all the skills or resources to implement the plan - all stakeholders groups have a role to play in creating opportunities for the future.

Here are some approaches and resources that will help Somerset implement this Plan and achieve growth.

### Implementation Working Group

A Working Group made up of Council, Kilcoy Chamber of Commerce, Somerset Region Business Alliance, Somerset Regional Tourism Association and representatives from the business community to implement and guide the Plan.

In an environment where there are limited resources, having a Working Group which meets on a regular basis to review progress and take forward new initiatives will make the most of resources available.

### Implementation Plan

A detailed Implementation Plan for the nine projects has been provided as a separate document.

### Regional Collaboration

While the Economic Development Plan has a focus on Somerset, it is noted that Somerset is part of two larger regions - Ipswich and West Moreton Regional Development Australia (RDA) region and South East Queensland. By working with RDA and other local government authorities (LGAs) – Ipswich City, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim Regional Councils - Somerset can collaborate on shared

economic development initiatives and on advocacy for infrastructure.

### Tracking Progress

Measures that can track the impact of the Economic Development Plan include:

- The value of new investment projects and grant funding attracted by Somerset.
- Securing at least one major new investment in the region over the next 5 years.
- An increase in the number of business managers and professionals coming to the region and living in the region.
- Employment growth.
- Population growth and retention.
- Dependency ratio declines.
- Achieving project specific KPIs.

