

Smart Central Western Queensland

A digitally enabled community strategic plan



RAPAD
REMOTE AREA PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT BOARD





This page: Near Winton. Image: Tourism and Events Queensland
Cover: Birdsville. Image: Tourism and Events Queensland



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1 /

A smart, digital Central West strategic plan

Central Western Queensland is a broad and beautiful area, rich in history and productive land.

The region, constituting 396 609 km², accounts for 22.9 per cent of the land area of Queensland and is serviced by seven local government areas (Barcaldine Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Blackall Tambo Regional Council, Boulia Shire Council, Diamantina Shire Council, Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council).

Sparsely populated and removed from areas of central service delivery, the area is remote and the core industries, agricultural production, tourism and associated industries, are reliant on factors outside the region's control including weather, rainfall and the economic prosperity of the remainder of the supply chain.

The remoteness, the absence of services, funds flowing from the region and a lack of diverse opportunities are resulting in a further depopulation as young people seek opportunities outside the region.

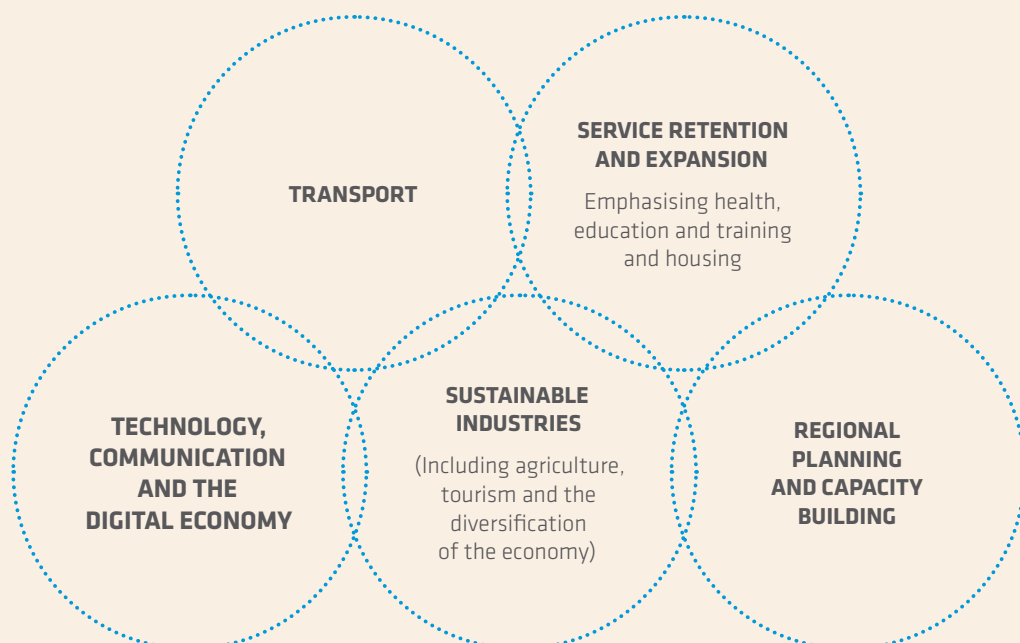
To diversify the economy of the region, increase liveability, strengthen the social fabric of the community and reverse depopulation, the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) have produced this strategy.

The strategy itself focusses on the economic development of the region, and the advancement of those five strategic areas, using digital technology as an enabler to allow the region to access the benefits at a lower cost, to ensure that a broader market can be reached and to enable better collaboration between the region, its councils, and its business sector.

In many cases the projects outlined in this strategic plan have both digital and non-digital components. The non-digital components recognise that, to ensure success, an increase in the demand created by digital means must be met by an increase in supply.

Elements within this strategy are designed to complement the activity of the state and federal government's policy goals and objectives. The RAPAD approach is more localised based on direct community, business and visitor consultation. All relevant social and economic strategies, plans and policies across all layers of government and industry bodies have been reviewed as part of the strategy development. The activities within this document offer greater value in a shorter timescale with the agility of local control. Moreover, the RAPAD approach is based on the principles of the sharing economy as it seeks to share large amounts of data to underpin economic growth in the region.

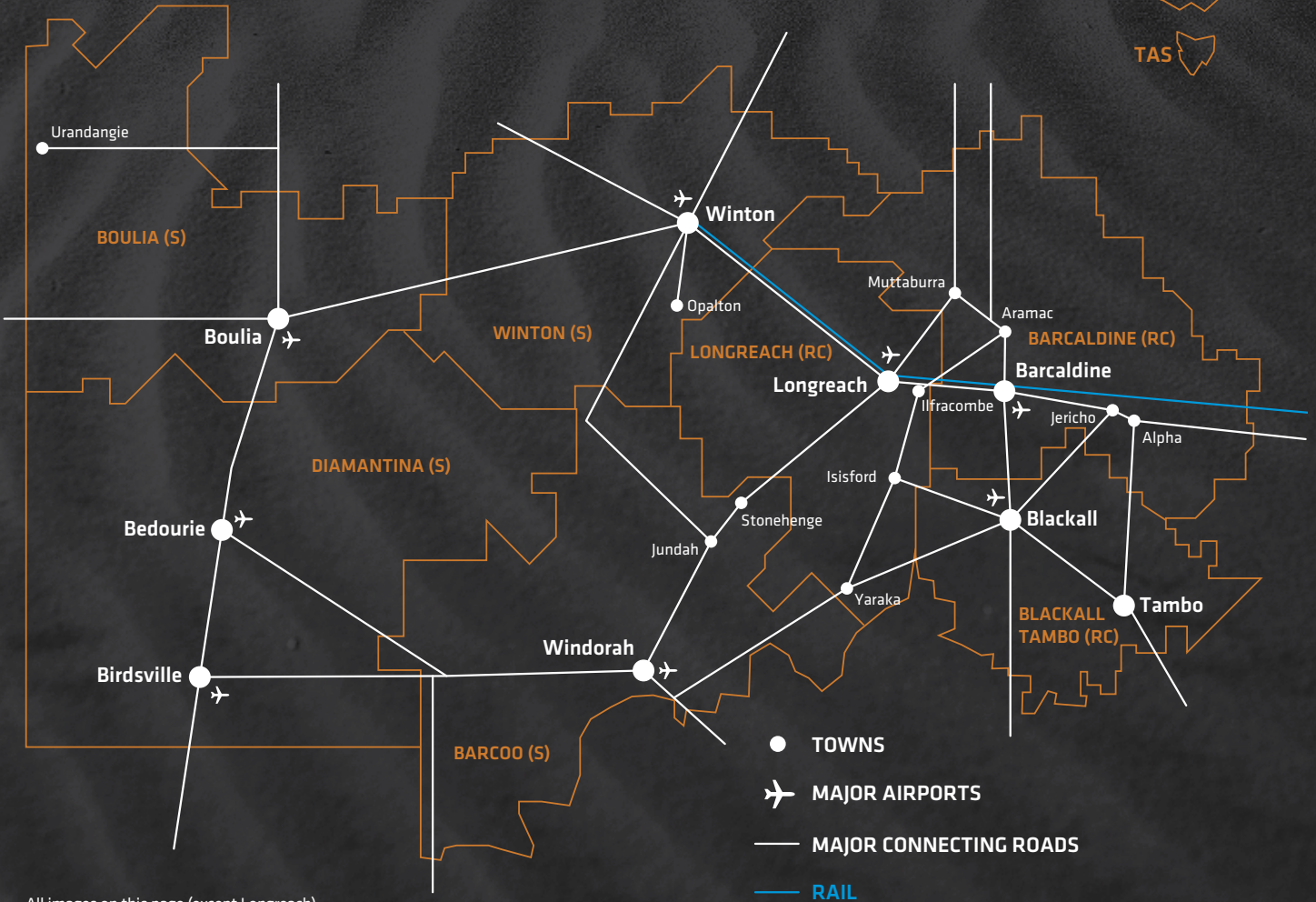
THIS STRATEGY PRIORITISES INITIATIVES IN FIVE SERVICE AREAS:



The region

22.9% of the land area of Queensland

396,609 km² total area



All images on this page (except Longreach) courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland



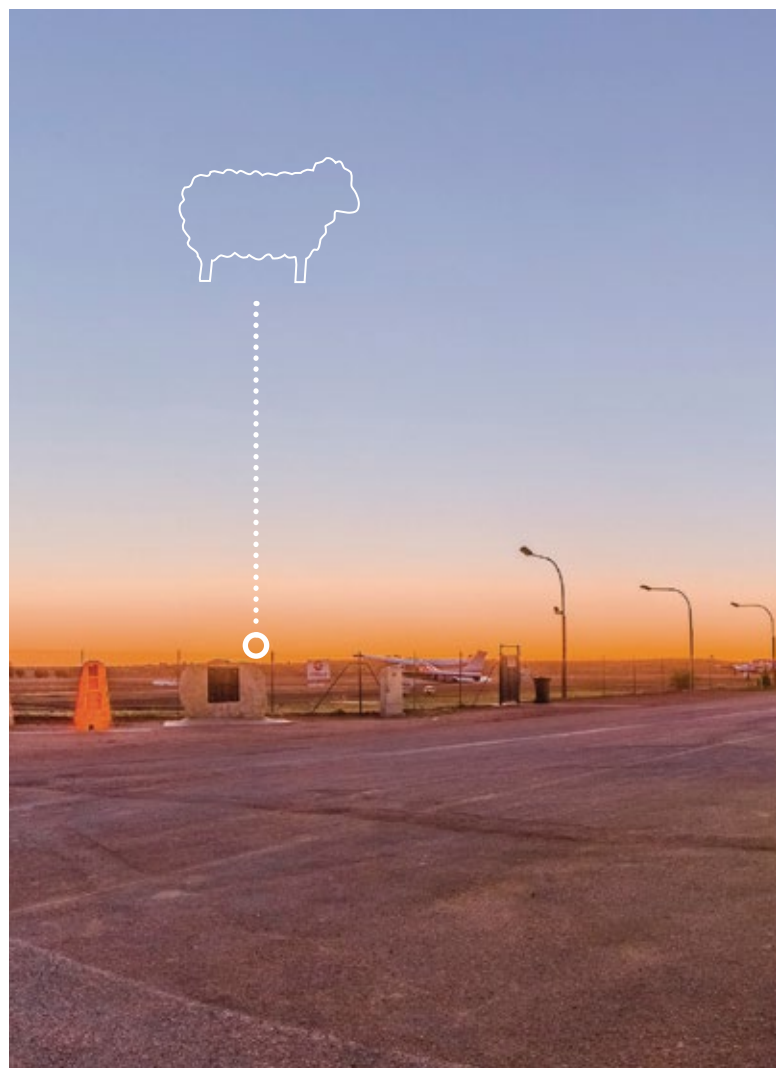
2 / Development of this strategic plan

In February 2016, the University of Southern Queensland's Institute for Resilient Regions under Professor John Cole, conducted a series of regional workshops across the region to better understand the community's aspiration for the longer term future of Central Western Queensland, the options for sustainable development and to better understand the ways the region can be made as resilient as possible.

The RAPAD group has been a strong advocate for connectivity in the region for many years. As individual councils and as a collective, the civic leaders of the region have lobbied hard for extra funding above and beyond the National Broadband Network (NBN). As this capability has been enabled, RAPAD, as the regional advocate, have been exploring ways in which digital tools can enable the aspirations outlined by the community.

In October 2016, with guidance from the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), RAPAD engaged Glentworth to undertake community consultation specifically on the digital aspiration of the region and produce a Smart Central West Digital Strategy.

Glentworth were in Western Queensland from 31 October until 4 November, during that period Glentworth conducted community round-tables in Blackall, Barcaldine, Longreach, Stonehenge, Jundah and Winton. In addition, phone conferences were held with participants from Diamantina and Boulia Shires. While in the region Glentworth, facilitated by RAPAD, made a particular effort to speak to as many people as possible, including both tourists and locals. Glentworth also visited tourist drawcards to test the experience. We estimate that Glentworth spoke to 105 people during the consultation period.



In addition, Glentworth undertook broad consultation with a number of people outside the region. We have made an attempt to speak to potential tourists and residents in key market segments: 'Generation Y', 'Baby Boomers', 'Grey Nomads' and overseas tourists.

From that process Glentworth produced a document summarising the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as outlined by the participants in this process. That document 'RAPAD Community Consultation Report' is the prelude to this document. Readers should read that document prior to this digital strategy.

The Smart Central West Digital Strategy articulates a comprehensive but pragmatic plan to seize the region's opportunities, mitigate the weaknesses, emphasise the strengths and avoid the threats. This reflects the geographical constraints and local conditions within the RAPAD region.

While digital connectivity is used as a tool to achieve these outcomes it is not used to the exclusion of other tools available. It is, instead preferred when it is the cheapest or most effective way of achieving an outcome.



Birdsville. Image: Tourism and Events Queensland

3 / Vision for the region

The Central West of Queensland has a vision to be a region of choice for families and individuals to build a rich, fulfilling life; a place to build a successful business; with the same levels of service experienced by those in more populated areas.

To enable that vision involves developing economic prosperity by building on existing strengths across our core industries including agriculture and tourism, building new, diverse businesses, encouraging investment and innovation and maximising our natural and built environment.

The strengths of the region, a strong entrepreneurial vision, supportive institutions, strong existing industries, a compelling lifestyle and a sense of community, bountiful resources, and a variety of different cultures in towns

across the region will be used to build an even better future for the region. The challenges, which include poor and expensive internet connectivity, a narrow demography of tourists, a skills gap, a fragmented identity to the outside world and the remoteness of the region will be mitigated through this strategy.

This will be achieved through a number of targeted investments to maximise the region's strengths, mitigate challenges and seize the region's many opportunities.

RAPAD will take a central role in the coordination of the implementation of the strategy, while the investments to enable the required change will be provided by RAPAD, the region's councils, grants from governments and not-for-profits, our partners and members of the community.

4 / RAPAD's role



Boulia. Image: Tourism and Events Queensland

RAPAD is resourced by the seven regional councils to provide a central point to undertake region-wide change. RAPAD has been a key enabler for the region.

A critical enabler of this plan is the assumption for RAPAD to expand its role. This need has been brought about by the lack of coordination in several key areas, these are:

- > Digital strategy, including a Chief Digital Officer for the region
- > Connectivity strategy
- > Economic development
- > Integrated branding
- > Major events, export and inward investment strategy
- > Collective negotiating power
- > Industry engagement
- > International development

RAPAD must take the lead in these key areas, while partnering with councils, telecommunications companies, technology vendors and state and federal governments in implementing this strategic plan.

Through RAPAD's deeper involvement, and with the oversight of the board constituting each of the region's mayors, greater region-wide change will occur because of the opportunity to leverage scale.

Further, RAPAD should seek to form an ongoing voluntary sub-committee of business leaders from across the region. This sub-committee should have business representatives for all types of business and should also include a digital leader from a major urban centre.

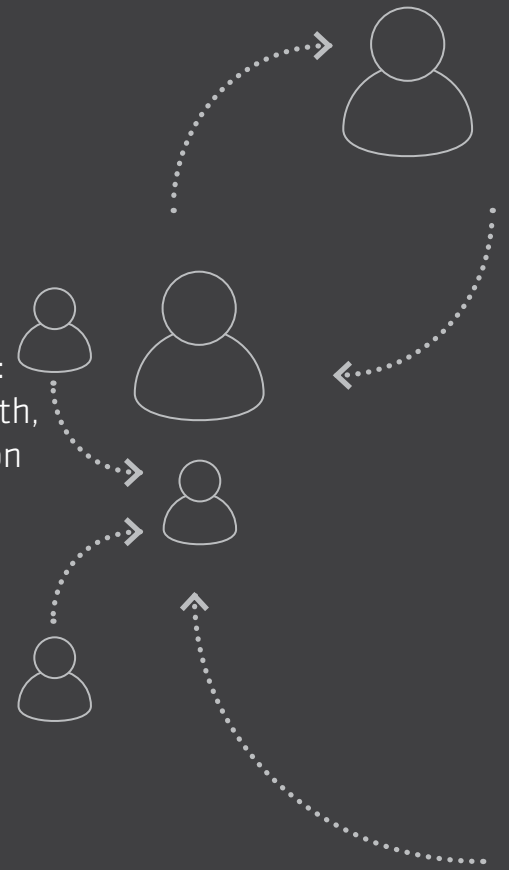
ACTION 1:

RAPAD will redefine its role to be more accountable for economic development for the region.



5 / What does this mean for the region?

This strategy prioritises areas in RAPAD’s five strategic areas: transport, service retention and expansion (emphasising health, education & training and housing), technology, communication and the digital economy, sustainable industries and regional planning & capacity building.



The below diagram outlines how each of the projects contained within this strategy relate to those current strategic areas.

PROJECT	Transport	Service retention & expansion	Technology communication & the digital economy	Sustainable Industries & regional planning	Capacity building
Increased digital infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Branding the region		✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism infrastructure		✓	✓	✓	✓
Relocation of services to the community		✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Entrepreneurship		✓	✓	✓	✓
Skills		✓	✓	✓	✓
Value adding to major industries		✓	✓	✓	✓
Data-led councils		✓	✓		✓
A strengthened community sector					✓
Collaboration					✓

6 / Projects



RAPAD has prioritised eleven projects to enable the vision of the Central West to be a region of choice for families and individuals to build a rich, fulfilling life; a place to build a successful business; with the same levels of service as is experienced as those in more populated areas and to fulfil our five strategic priorities.

Many of those projects are broken up into sub-projects allowing RAPAD and our partners to quickly make a difference in our communities while working towards a longer term outcome.

There is a mix of digital and non-digital projects, recognising that digital projects which create increased demand are useless where there isn't an increased level of supply. For instance, a tourism strategy requires both effective digital marketing and increased accommodation.

6.1 INCREASED DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.1.1 Council's advocacy
- 6.1.2 Use of existing infrastructure
- 6.1.3 Design thinking with infrastructure partners

6.2 BRANDING THE REGION

6.3 TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.3.1 One brand, many products
- 6.3.2 Wi-Fi
- 6.3.3 Experiential tourism
- 6.3.4 Effective cross promotion of tourism and experiences
- 6.3.5 Virtual tourism
- 6.3.6 Enabling multiple languages
- 6.3.7 Event-led tourism
- 6.3.8 Tourism data exchange
- 6.3.9 Mapping the history of the region

6.4 RELOCATION OF SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

- 6.4.1 Public services
- 6.4.2 Business services

6.5 ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6.5.1 LPWAN
- 6.5.2 iBeacons

6.6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- 6.6.1 Enabling entrepreneurs
- 6.6.2 Smart Hubs
- 6.6.3 Mobile Innovation Centre

6.7 SKILLS

- 6.7.1 Traditional skills
- 6.7.2 Regional e-Commerce
- 6.7.3 Digital skills

6.8 VALUE-ADDING TO THE MAJOR INDUSTRIES

- 6.8.1 Agricultural productivity
- 6.8.2 Differentiation and premiumisation of product
- 6.8.3 Food-led tourism

6.9 DATA-LED COUNCILS

- 6.9.1 Business change
- 6.9.2 Drone Centre of Excellence

6.10 A STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY SECTOR

6.11 COLLABORATION

- 6.11.1 Within the community
- 6.11.2 With other similar areas

6.1 / Increased digital infrastructure

The single largest concern across the region is the poor digital infrastructure. This lack of infrastructure is constraining the ability for businesses to start and grow, for the region to economically diversify and increase population. It is also constraining the ability for people in the region to access education, government services and healthcare.



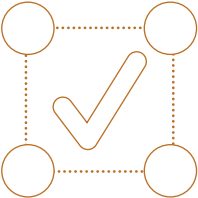
6.1.1 / Council's advocacy

To highlight the effect of the digital divide on the region and to better advocate for affordable digital technologies RAPAD will continually update a jobs map, a draft copy of which can be found at www.rapad.com.au/jobsmap, and use that as a way of constantly advocating for a greater investment in digital infrastructure for the region.

In addition, councils will focus attention on maximising digital infrastructure rather than physical infrastructure over the next three years.

ACTION 2:

RAPAD will publish, and continually update, a jobs map displaying where jobs could be created if there were greater connectivity in the region.



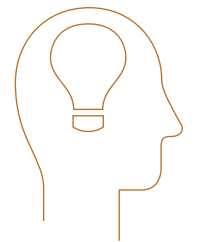
6.1.2 / Use of existing infrastructure

There are a number of owners of the digital infrastructure across the region. As well as commercial owners, Queensland Rail, Air Services Australia, Ergon, Queensland Health and Queensland Police Service have access to infrastructure in the Central West.

To ensure unused capacity, (regardless of the owner) is used for community benefit, RAPAD will write to all owners of non-commercial networks who have an asset in the region seeking clarification on the extent of the unused capacity and seeking to establish a mechanism to purchase unused capacity.

ACTION 3:

RAPAD will write to all digital infrastructure owners who have assets in the region seeking to understand the extent of underused infrastructure and seeking a mechanism for any excess capacity to be purchased for community use.



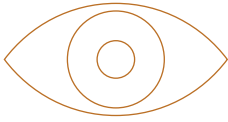
6.1.3 / Design thinking with infrastructure partners

Existing commercial telecommunications providers in the region are a key partner in the region's success. Telstra, Optus, South Western Wireless, and other companies have made a significant investment in the region and have the capacity to further invest. As such they are, and will continue to be, key partners in the further digital enablement of the region.

Understanding this RAPAD will organise and facilitate a series of region-wide design thinking events around particular regional challenges. Those events will bring together telecommunications companies, local governments, local businesses and RAPAD to examine the issue, to think broadly about options for solving them, to agree on an option and rapidly move towards its implementation.

ACTION 4:

RAPAD will organise the first Regional Design Thinking Summit in Longreach, inviting Telstra and partners to collaborate on solving one of the region's challenges.



6.2 / Branding the region

The Central West is an area rich in character and history and a land of unique landscapes. The region, as well as some of the iconic towns, occupies a special place in the hearts of all Australians.

However, the perception of the region is rooted in an idealised, historical perception as a frontier, remote area with poor infrastructure, rather than a family friendly, entrepreneurial, industrious area, rich in potential experiences, services and opportunities.

This fragmented view of the region with each town, region and attraction having a different brand, focusing on different issues with various levels of reach is not currently serving the region and explaining to the broader community the value and values of the region.

To improve market positioning, RAPAD and their partners will invest in the development of one single brand for the region, showcasing the various attractions, value and direction of the region. This will include information for tourists, locals, potential locals, transient workers, investors and entrepreneurs.

To ensure that the brand is well understood in key markets, the Central West will invest in a consistent multi-channel communications strategy including branding at key entry points to the region, the development of a website, an application and prominent use of social media consistent with that brand.

That brand can also be leveraged to better market the products of the region and provide a level of differentiation.

Each of the region's individual brands will be represented and joined through an existing narrative, showcasing, for instance, the dinosaur experience in Winton, the history of rebellion in Barcaldine, the Min Min lights of Boulia, and Longreach as the capital of the Outback.

This project will include the creation of a single consistent brand, the creation of signage at strategic places throughout the region, including at airports, on major road infrastructure, at train stations and digitally, as described in 6.3.1 over the next three years.

ACTION 5:

RAPAD will coordinate a media campaign and advertising in selected media to ensure broad public knowledge of the region's aspirations including some agreed examples.

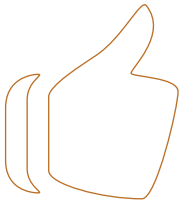
ACTION 6:

RAPAD will establish a brand presence on various social media platforms on behalf of the Central West.

ACTION 7:

RAPAD will provide a mechanism for the region's businesses to leverage the region's brand values in advertising skills vacancies.

6.3 / Tourism infrastructure



6.3.1 One brand, many products

To leverage the brand outlined at 6.2, the Central West will invest in the broad marketing of the region and its many tourism experiences through digital means.

We will promote the brand through Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn, YouTube, TripAdvisor, Weibo and Snapchat, as well as through a single application and website.

Each channel will allow for the targeting of particular demographics and demonstrate the experiential benefits of the region for tourists.

While it will leverage existing and emerging brands, the concept will be for the brand to interact with potential visitors, rather than being passive, and will represent the individual brands of each of the regions and towns through a single channel.

RAPAD, using funds from each of the councils, will offer an incentive-based part-time contract for someone to undertake this work. To do so we will conduct a global search, including through targeted advertising, earned media, social media and other means.

ACTION 8:

RAPAD will seek the approval of all councils across the region, Outback Queensland Tourism Association and other interested parties to create one regional brand with many products, and for each party to contribute to a regular funding stream to achieve its implementation.

ACTION 9:

Upon that approval being given RAPAD will employ a brand manager to live and work in the region to create and grow the brand as well as providing continual, updated content.

ACTION 10:

That brand manager will work with each council and other interested parties to ensure that each community is accurately and well represented within the brand.

ACTION 11:

RAPAD will contract centrally for the implementation of the brand including a website, signage, and a single application for the region.

ACTION 12:

RAPAD will seek funding from each council to employ a person from outside the region to provide content for those social media platforms consistent with the brand.

ACTION 13:

RAPAD will conduct a global search for a person to undertake that work. In doing so we will leverage earned media to articulate and advocate for the region's brand both nationally and internationally.



6.3.2 Wi-Fi

A key concern for potential visitors to the region is the lack of connectivity. For that reason, the Central West will, through our partners, ensure there is an investment in Wi-Fi hotspots for community and tourist use in Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall, Winton, Tambo, Boulia, Windorah and Birdsville. An investment by a third-party will be contingent on data arising from that Wi-Fi being made available to RAPAD for free distribution to the community including through the tourism data exchange (outlined at 6.3.7 below).

ACTION 14:

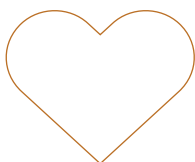
RAPAD will negotiate with the LGAQ, major telecommunications companies and others to ensure that free community Wi-Fi is available in eight towns across the region.

ACTION 15:

RAPAD will ensure that all data arising from the free Wi-Fi is owned by the region.

ACTION 16:

Should RAPAD provide the Wi-Fi we will contract with a local company or group to provide advertising to those using free Wi-Fi with all resulting funds being used to reduce the financial impact of the Wi-Fi on RAPAD.



6.3.3 Experiential tourism

Younger tourists with a higher disposable income tend to spend much of their leisure time acquiring experiences. While attending attractions is occasionally part of the entire experience of a region, it is not central to the reason for attending.

The region's tourism infrastructure is primarily set up for grey nomad and retiree tourism with a number of museums as key attractions as well as accommodation options being focused on this market.

To capture different demographics, and expand the base of tourism across the region, there needs to be an investment across the region to enable experiential tourism. While the Australian Age of Dinosaurs, and the dinosaur digs is a good start, the region requires many more experiences to attract these tourists.

To achieve this outcome, the Central West will advertise, in a number of different ways, across the region and around the world for those willing to start experience-led attractions in the region. The advertisements will include details of the resources at the disposal of the region, for instance relatively cheap land and water, the support the region is willing to offer the proponents, and the process to apply.

The advertisement will also include some specialised examples of the support the region may be willing to give proponents of particular types of proposals. For instance, if a person or company is interested in establishing a brewery in Barcaldine, council will be willing to provide subsidised water and a long-term lease of a few acres of land to grow local hops on the condition that the brewery conducted tours.

Alternatively, a large safari park, capitalising on the relatively cheap and savannah-like land, would be encouraged by the provision of connecting infrastructure and a mustering experience will receive automatic permitting to the travelling stock routes.

While the attractions themselves are important there is other tourism infrastructure required to capture this market. This includes differential dining experiences and a variety of accommodation options.

To enable investment in this infrastructure councils will waive application and license fees for food business licenses for new businesses within the region which are primarily for the benefit of tourists. RAPAD will facilitate a single point of contact for proponents of new accommodation options to negotiate and meet state regulations.

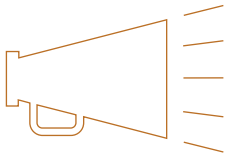
In addition to the advertisement, this strategy is likely to achieve earned media around Australia and potentially elsewhere and will add to the entrepreneurial brand of the region.

ACTION 17:

RAPAD will coordinate agreement between councils to simplify the processes and waive application fees for food business licenses for businesses primarily focused on servicing the tourist market.

ACTION 18:

RAPAD will coordinate with councils and the Queensland State Government to be a one-stop-shop for proponents of new accommodation options to negotiate and meet state regulations.



6.3.4 Effective cross promotion of tourism and experiences

Tourist activities are not currently well cross promoted across the region and with similar experiences across Australia.

Overseas tourists who are interested in going to the Gold Coast, for instance, are not offered the opportunity to have a real outback experience in addition to, or instead of attending a tourist park.

To assist in this RAPAD will invest in advertising of the experience at or near attractions which are likely to attract desirable tourism market segments.

We will also provide some targeted content to those using the mobile application to consider similar or complimentary experiences after spending some time at an attraction.

ACTION 19:

Using data created by the free Wi-Fi and the free application, RAPAD will ensure the application also ensures that tourists are aware of complimentary attractions and experiences elsewhere in the region.

ACTION 20:

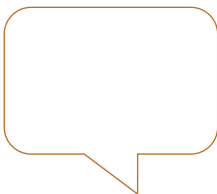
RAPAD, using funds from councils and the state, will invest in advertising the Central West brand in areas which are likely to be predominantly tourists or likely tourists.



6.3.5 Virtual tourism

Virtual tourism allows people to visit key parts of the region from their home or school. While this was once a relatively pale competitor to visiting in person, virtual or augmented reality as well as greater interactivity in real-time, is making this a much richer and more valuable experience.

With this in mind RAPAD will continue to advocate for iconic attractions to consider investing in this technology and will assist any attraction to advocate with telecommunication suppliers to enable sufficient bandwidth to allow this to occur.



6.3.6 Enabling multiple languages

In order to attract more diverse tourist segments to the region it is not only imperative to provide the services, food and accommodation options to cater for those markets, it's also imperative to ensure that those experiences are available in the native language of the people who will be consuming them.

To achieve those goals RAPAD will collate a list of translators who are certified in the following languages:

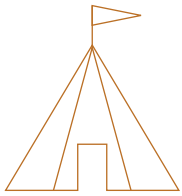
- > Japanese
- > Mandarin
- > Korean
- > Cantonese
- > Malay

Those translators will be available to all businesses throughout the region at a discounted cost.

In addition, each of the above languages will be available through the digital channels, showcasing the experiences and landscapes most likely to appeal to those sub-markets.

ACTION 21:

RAPAD will establish a panel with set rates for translators in five languages for the use of tourism operators across the region.



6.3.7 Event-led tourism

Much like experiential-led tourism, younger demographics tend to be motivated by attending events.

Major events like the Birdsville Races have been creating a lasting economic impact on the region since the 1880s, yet the events with a reach outside of the region are relatively small in number.

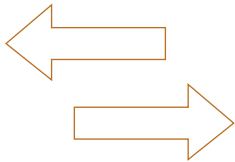
Arts, culture, food, music, exhibitions, festivals and sporting events tend to drive these types of tourists.

That's why, the Central West will also encourage entrepreneurs to establish events in the region by articulating our relative strengths.

We will do so in a similar way to the experiential tourism mechanism outlined above, with a number of potential examples of projects the Central West would be willing to support.

An example given would be a music festival on a common surrounding one of the towns, with council offering access to the land for two weeks, as well as assisting the organisers to defray the cost of extra police.

Alternatively, an endurance off-road motorsport event may be supported with council willing to liaise with affected landholders.



6.3.8 Tourism data exchange

Effective sharing of tourism data across the region is key to ensuring that the region is capturing as many tourists as possible and their economic impact on the region is maximised.

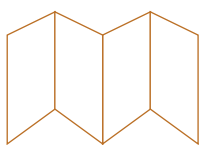
It also allows current and future tourism operators to have a greater understanding of the demands of the tourists, what products and experiences they are most likely to be interested in and the estimated demand in a particular period.

For that reason, the Central West will fund a tourism data exchange to distribute data arising from the free Wi-Fi and through the smart phone application.

We will also encourage a company to provide insights arising from that data.

ACTION 22:

RAPAD will work with the owner of Wi-Fi infrastructure, the free application developer, and information and communications technology vendors to create a tourism data exchange for the region's tourism operators to better understand their market and anticipated levels of demand.



6.3.9 Mapping the history of the region

The history of the region, both Anglo-Saxon and Aboriginal, is compelling and both histories are in danger of being lost.

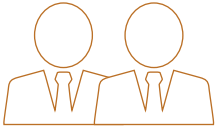
For that reason, RAPAD and our partners will invest in a mapping platform to allow local historians to capture names of features and our local stories.

The resulting digital maps will be made available for tourists to explore the region and better understand our varied and vibrant history.

ACTION 23:

RAPAD will work with a mapping software company to procure the rights for local historians and local indigenous leaders to use their maps to better explain the local history.

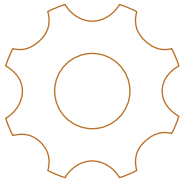
6.4 / Relocation of services to the community



6.4.1 Public services

RAPAD and our local councils understand the effect the decline in public servants has had on the region and will continue to advocate for a greater number of Queensland public servants to be based in the Central West.

Using a document which outlines our enviable lifestyle, increased connectivity, lower cost of living and low rent of premises we will mount a campaign to encourage the Queensland Government to relocate non-location sensitive public servants to the region.



6.4.2 Business services

In much the same way as we will actively advocate for public servants to be relocated to the region we will advocate for large businesses to relocate sections of their business to the Central West.

ACTION 24:

RAPAD will produce a single document which articulates the benefits of the region, both for the relocation of public servants and private sector jobs, using the region's strengths and resources.

ACTION 25:

RAPAD, and a designated person from one of the councils, will use that document to advocate on behalf of the region.

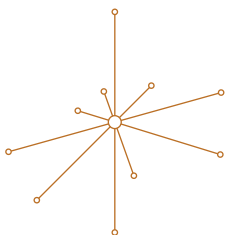
6.5 / Economic infrastructure

The region is prepared to invest in some key economic infrastructure in order to enable community, economic and social outcomes for the region.

In order to do so we have identified a number of gaps in the current infrastructure in the region. Much of this infrastructure is digital, and could be solved by a greater investment of telecommunications across the region. However, there is not a current technology to enable the entire region to have access to fast, reliable telecommunications at a cost which would allow a return on investment for a private sector company.

For that reason, the Central West will invest in a number of technologies to enable connectivity cost effectively.

We will also proactively invest in technology for broader community use.



6.5.1 LPWAN

Low-Power Wide-Area Network (LPWAN) or Low-Power Network (LPN) is a type of wireless telecommunication network designed to allow long range communications at a low bit rate among connected objects, such as sensors operated on a battery.

The technology allows sensors measuring everything from weather, soil moisture in a field, water and feed levels and even the weight of cattle to be remotely measured.

This allows someone receiving the resulting data to make better informed decisions.

To allow for this to occur RAPAD and our partners will invest in a trial of a network of LPWAN base-stations in a part of the region. On average those base stations cover an area of 1,256km² and cost approximately \$1,750 to purchase, with an additional \$50 per month payable.

RAPAD will apply for funding of \$100,000 to enable a network of 50 sensors covering an area of roughly the size of the Shire of Barcoo or Boulia. The individual landholders would be responsible for installing the sensors, the data storage and how they use that data.

RAPAD will assist by providing a list of options for sensors compatible with the LPWAN network, for storage of the data and on how it can be best used.

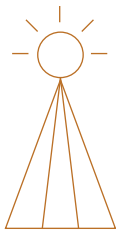
The resulting infrastructure will be known as the Central West LoRA Network (CWLoraN.)

ACTION 26:

RAPAD will partner with LGAQ or others to trial a Low-Power Wide-Area Network in an area of approximately 62,000 square kilometers.

ACTION 27:

If successful, the LPWAN network will be progressively expanded across the entire region pending further funding sources being identified.



6.5.2 iBeacons

iBeacons are bluetooth low energy devices which broadcast their identity, and the distance from, nearby portable electronic devices.

The combination of a number of iBeacons allows a smart phone to identify exactly where a person is by triangulating the signals.

This allows, for instance, the creation of a mobile museum where a person can walk throughout a town with an application discovering points of interest and learning more about them when they are in that relevant place.

Those iBeacons can be used for multiple purposes, for instance in advertising special offers, or options, to people nearby.

RAPAD will invest in the purchasing and installation of iBeacons, or similar technology, in:

- > Barcaldine
- > Longreach
- > Winton
- > Blackall

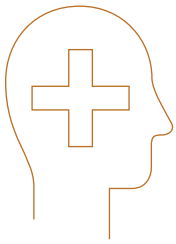
The positions of those iBeacons and their identity will be placed on the register of underutilised assets, outlined below at 6.6.1 for general community and business use.

We will also encourage major attractions and local airports to purchase, install and use iBeacons by providing access to bulk purchasing discounts.

ACTION 28:

RAPAD will work with councils to strategically install iBeacons or a similar technology in four towns across the region. RAPAD will purchase the iBeacons centrally, ensuring the best bulk rate, and councils will be responsible for purchasing and installing them.

6.6 / Entrepreneurship



6.6.1 Enabling entrepreneurs

To enable local entrepreneurs and to encourage the establishment of businesses in the region the Central West will:

- > Establish a register of underutilised, or shared assets
- > Establish a register of un-met asset demands
- > Establish a region-wide protocol for the assistance council and other actors are willing to provide in response to particular circumstances
- > Establish a one-stop-shop and digital process for requesting particular assistance from council and others

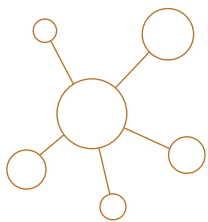
These registers and processes will be contained on the whole-of-region webpage.

RAPAD will be the single conduit for entrepreneurs to engage throughout the region, with each council to be responsible for updating the register of assets.

This may allow, for instance, a proponent of a solar farm to discover underutilised land close to high voltage powerlines which could be used for that purpose.

ACTION 29:

RAPAD will coordinate a register of the resources at the disposal of the region and the support the region's councils are willing to offer businesses in the region.



6.6.2 Smart Hubs

RAPAD understands that there are people across the region who have, or are in the process of, starting their own business.

Those business owners are constrained by a lack of reliable, inexpensive broadband at home and are often isolated from other entrepreneurs with whom they could collaborate, from providers of capital and potential customers.

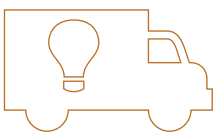
For these reasons RAPAD will apply for funding to establish a number of facilities across the Central West which will bring entrepreneurs together and enable them to access high-speed internet and assistance in building their businesses.

The first hubs will be established in Longreach, Winton, Barcaldine and Blackall with people signing up to the program gaining access to high-speed internet, telepresence facilities as well as assistance with finding digital channels for their products and services. In addition, the Central West Smart Hub program will encourage collaboration with participants in other Smart Hubs around the state including in Rockhampton, Ipswich and Brisbane.

The hubs will be managed locally by volunteers with assistance from RAPAD.

ACTION 30:

RAPAD will coordinate a single application on behalf of the region for state and federal funds to establish four Smart Hubs.



6.6.3 Mobile Innovation Centre

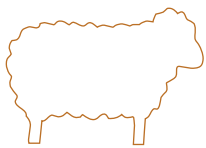
To underpin the work of the Smart Hubs, RAPAD and our partners will invest in a mobile innovation centre for the region.

That innovation centre will travel throughout the region speaking to people outside of the major towns about ways in which they can alter their business to make it more productive or profitable, using practical technology.

ACTION 31:

RAPAD will work with telecommunications and technology vendors to establish a Mobile Innovation Centre to showcase and encourage innovation across the region. The funding for this centre is contingent on sponsorship support.

6.7 / Skills



6.7.1 Traditional skills

The skills in the region are currently roughly sufficient to sustain the current level of economic activity and for any skills gaps which currently exist RAPAD has heavily invested in a skilling arm to meet a market failure.

However, as the region becomes more economically diverse as a result of this strategy, as well as through the projected increase in the sheep flock, a number of skills are under-represented in the region.

To meet the skills gap the Central West will advertise any jobs required using its brand, to link the lifestyle and broader adventurous brand with the job, as well as emphasise the low-cost of living and community benefits of relocating to the region.

In that way the brand can market both within region as well as market the opportunity to specialist, select groups around the world to fill the skills gaps.

For example, the advertising of hospitality or shearing jobs to British gap-year students could also be sold on the unique Australian outback experience at the same time.

Marketing the jobs, along with the experience and the brand of the region is also likely to ensure that potential applicants for jobs have an understanding of the region, as well as the benefits of living there, prior to applying.



6.7.2 Regional e-Commerce

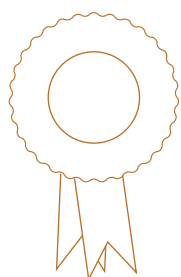
RAPAD understands the benefits of e-Commerce. It enables businesses to find new markets, to sell internationally, to lower the cost of sale and to be more productive. In remote areas e-Commerce is especially important as it reduces the effect of distance on business and enables businesses to grow larger than they would otherwise be able to.

With that in mind RAPAD will invest in a single BigCommerce platform and attempt to encourage businesses to offer products on that site.

This investment would be temporary and allow businesses to get a taste of the benefits of the digital economy before having to invest their time and funds.

ACTION 32:

RAPAD will invest in a single BigCommerce platform to demonstrate the ability of local businesses to use the digital economy with a view to encouraging businesses to invest in a digital shopfront themselves.



6.7.3 Digital skills

An increase in the digital skills in the region will be a cornerstone of the success of this strategy.

There is a large array of courses already in existence to increase the level of digital literacy in the community including those provided by companies, universities, TAFE, governments, not-for-profits and others.

Recognising the existence and utility of these existing courses RAPAD will not invest in replicating them in a local context. Instead the Smart Hubs will be a one-stop-shop for locals to learn about these courses and access their content. The volunteers manning the Smart Hubs will receive assistance from the RAPAD Chief Digital Officer in selecting and prioritising courses to best serve local needs.

ACTION 33:

RAPAD, as part of an investment in the Smart Hubs, will coordinate with providers of digital literacy and digital commerce programs to ensure residents of the region have access to those programs.

6.8 / Value-adding to the major industries



6.8.1 Agricultural productivity

The Central West LoRA Network (CWLoraN) can enable agribusinesses to invest in sensors on their properties reasonably cheaply to meet business problems.

They can allow the remote checking of water levels in tanks, soil moisture in particular paddocks and the weight of cattle as they cross weighbridges.

Together that data can allow decisions about daily tasks and which cattle are ready for market. Coupled with information about the current price of cattle, a producer could now be able to locate the cattle which are most ready to be taken to market.



6.8.2 Differentiation and premiumisation of product

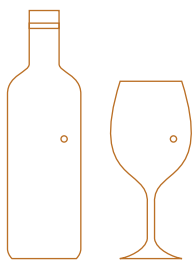
Through the use of the Central West LoRA Network (CWLoraN) agricultural producers will have access to a large amount of information about their livestock, the weather and conditions of the land. This data will enable producers to gain organic certification in a less labourious way, it also constitutes important information about the condition of the livestock, the environment in which they live, the path to market, the freshness of the meat and other information which will enable differentiation of the product in the marketplace.

Through a use of the CWLoraN a group of producers could set a standard for Channel Country Beef, for instance, which set a number of minimum standards independently verified by sensor data. Those standards may be about air and water quality in the region where the cows were raised, the distance from paddock to plate or a number of other variables.

Should local beef producers or a group of other producers wish to collectively establish a standard and a protected brand to jointly brand their product in this way, the Central West will assist with facilitation of the process and protection of the brand.

Alternatively, single producers may wish to individually market their products with these details and potentially find restaurants or other paths to market to differentiate that product.

Information arising from those sensors, as well as digital marketing can assist in bridging the divide between producers of food and consumers and begin to create a one-to-one relationship.



6.8.3 Food-led tourism

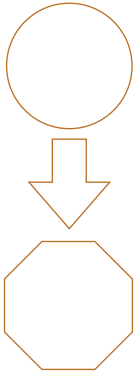
The differentiation of the food in a relatively homogeneous market can create a food-based tourism industry. Wine and cheese have been particularly successful in establishing tourism from a regional base with such locations as the Barossa Valley (for wine) and King Island (for cheese) being successful in creating a tourism drawcard from their differentiated products.

The brand attributes of the region (clean, green, authentic, sustainable and local), can create a similar effect on food based tourism in the Central West when coupled with a standard of accommodation and food acceptable to those tourists, as well as experiences like mustering and other farm work.

ACTION 34:

RAPAD will advocate for the use of data to increase digital productivity, differentiate product and create food-based tourism through regional and local events as well as through one-on-one advocacy.

6.9 / Data-led councils



6.9.1 Business change

Councils across Queensland are all experiencing similar issues, such as:

- > Limited revenue growth
- > Changing demographics
- > Escalating costs to provide services
- > Urban infrastructure requiring upgrades or replacement
- > Growing international competition
- > Expectations of citizens for 'Google-like' services

Councils across the Central West are no exception. For that reason, councils collectively will embark on a program of data-led change.

This change will include:

- > An investment in smart street lights, enabling savings in electricity costs and allowing for special event lighting in Longreach, Winton and Barcaldine.
- > An investment in the prioritisation of infrastructure repair on the basis of evidence.
- > An investment in digitally enabling the business process of council to allow citizens to interact more quickly with council and for council to more efficiently service their constituents.
- > The greater use of technology to better service the needs of the community including the use of drones and other technologies.
- > A closed loop for all interactions with council, for example, an acknowledgement of the receipt of the issue and an indication of when it's been resolved
- > The use of sensors attached to CWLoraN to make strategic, real-time decisions.

With a view to maximising the investment across the entire region, councils will work together to implement digital-led business change successfully used in other councils across the region.

ACTION 35:

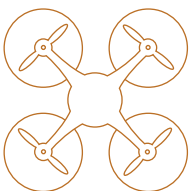
RAPAD will appoint a region-wide Chief Digital Officer (CDO) to assist councils transition to a data-led future.

ACTION 36:

That CDO will work with individual councils to ensure that innovation embraced by one council is shared across all councils where appropriate and to be a single point of contact for innovation in council services across the region.

ACTION 37:

That CDO will also progress the creation of data-led communities centrally, with assistance from individual council owners.



6.9.2 Drone Centre of Excellence

Drones are increasingly being used by councils around the world to safely, quickly and efficiently inspect infrastructure, provide situational awareness and undertake other similar tasks.

In more remote areas, like the Central West, drones will be increasingly important to the operations of council. For that reason, Central West councils will jointly invest in a Drone Centre of Excellence.

That Drone Centre of Excellence will be a one-stop-shop for councils around Australia and remote councils around the world, to understand the benefits and the use of drone technology.

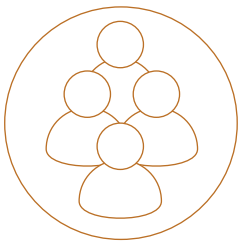
To establish the Drone Centre of Excellence we will seek in-kind sponsorship from commercial drone vendors.

ACTION 38:

RAPAD will seek in-kind sponsorship from vendors in the drone industry to create a Drone Centre of Excellence in the Central West.



Winton. Image: Tourism and Events Queensland



6.10 / A strengthened community sector

The social fabric of the community is seen as one of the region's greatest strengths. The willingness of locals to pitch in to achieve shared goals is a key part of the region's brand.

However, volunteerism is changing.

Fewer people are actively joining community organisations and working together in the same groups to achieve general community goals, they are now much more likely to form occasional groups to work towards a specific project.

For that reason, and to continue the region's proud tradition of community volunteerism, RAPAD will invest in the implementation of a program to allow community members to initiate, fund and work towards a common goal.

The program will allow people to participate in projects which catch their interest or meet their skills without having to participate in meetings, or feel compelled to join organisations.

This will also enable volunteerism, allowing tourists to volunteer for a few hours or a day on a project which leaves an impact on a community.

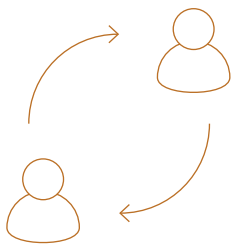
To enable these benefits RAPAD will implement Change By Us, a program successfully implemented in New York, Philadelphia and the Utah Valley.

ACTION 39:

RAPAD will implement Change By Us on behalf of the region and work with individual councils and community groups to ensure it is well used.



6.11 / Collaboration



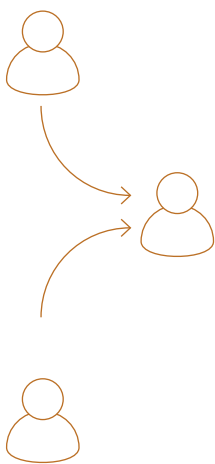
6.11.1 Within the community

Vast distances and different social networks prevent people with similar interests or views from across the region from collaborating.

For that reason, RAPAD will invest in a region-wide communication and collaboration tool, BaseCamp.

This will allow people to learn about projects in their community and collaborate on region-wide activities.

For instance, someone in the region may have an interest in establishing a health trail, leveraging the artesian spas across the region. Using this tool they could reach out to others in the different towns who may also have an interest in establishing such a trail.



6.11.2 With other similar areas

RAPAD understands that when this strategy is adopted it will be amongst the leaders in digital service delivery in remote areas.

We will establish a mechanism to share ideas, concepts, technology and experience with other remote areas across Australia to ensure that we continue to embrace the best technological and business solutions for our region.

ACTION 40:

RAPAD will agree with each council in the region a single point of contact and a process to liaise with ideas, concepts and business plans and a process to approve the use of the resources.

ACTION 41:

RAPAD will invest in a region-wide collaboration tool, Basecamp and encourage all interested people across the region to participate in the process.

ACTION 42:

The region-wide CDO will be a single point of access for other councils and regions across Australia to contact with a view to sharing ideas and challenges.

7 /

Conclusion

Digital disruption is occurring in every industry and locality around the world. While it is destroying some industries and business models, it is bringing opportunity to businesses and communities, shrinking vast distances and enabling better services.

RAPAD, and each of the region's councils, by producing and implementing this strategic plan are ensuring that the region is ready for that digital disruption and have a plan on how to best use digital tools to continually build a better community while avoiding, as much as possible, the negative effects of digital destruction.

We have engaged thoroughly with the community, through the Institute of Resilient Communities and Glentworth to deeply understand the community's aspirations as well as our challenges.

This strategic plan, and its eleven projects, will use digital and non-digital tools to support those aspirations and overcome the challenges.

While many of the projects are led by RAPAD and overseen by the region's mayors, community support will be vital and for that reason we will continue to update the community on the progress of these initiatives

