



Hon Steven Miles MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure,
Local Government and Planning

Our ref: MC21/1925

Your ref:1040899

16 JUL 2021

Councillor Rachel Chambers
Mayor
North Burnett Regional Council
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Dear Councillor Chambers

Thank you for your letter about the sustainability of local governments and the challenges facing the North Burnett Regional Council.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, councils across our State have played a vital role in ensuring the ongoing health and safety of Queenslanders as we confront the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for the work you and your council have done and your partnership with the Queensland Government to support economic recovery and job creation outcomes. Working together, our two levels of government are continuing to protect the health and jobs of Queenslanders.

I note your concerns about the findings of the recent Auditor-General's report and can assure you that we understand the difficulties councils face in the current economic climate and that we are always looking at ways the State might be able to provide additional support to councils moving forward.

Recently, I met with the Federal Minister for Local Government and discussed, among other things, ways we can provide further support in terms of financial sustainability and capability. You can be sure that we will continue to advocate with the Commonwealth for a better deal for all Queensland councils.

The Queensland Government is also continuing to support local governments across the state to deliver projects that create local jobs and economic development outcomes. This includes programs like Works for Queensland (W4Q), which specifically targets jobs and investment in regional communities. As you are aware, at the 2020 State Election, we committed to another \$400 million for W4Q over the next six years and I'm pleased that the latest round of W4Q is now underway including a \$1.84 million allocation to North Burnett Regional Council.

Our 2021 State Budget also provided additional support for regional councils to improve their water supply and security by committing \$70 million to a new round of Building our Regions. Regional councils will be able to bid this \$70 million over three years to improve their water and sewerage systems. Eligibility and application guidelines are currently being developed and will be announced soon and I encourage you to actively engage with this program.

As you are also aware, local government legislation does not prescribe levels of service for Queensland councils. Councils' strong understanding of their local area and the needs of the community puts them in the best position to define service levels for their local communities.

I acknowledge this is a challenge for many councils, particularly in regional Queensland, as you balance community needs and expectations with responsible financial management. Engaging with the community about these matters, as you and your council are doing, is an important part of this process and supports transparent and accountable local government.

Finally, I can confirm that the council is not restricted from applying for borrowings through the Queensland Treasury Corporation. The council is able to make an application for borrowings at any time. Borrowing applications are subject to a credit assessment process, with recommendations made to the Director-General of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (the department) for consideration.

I have asked for Mr Stephen Robbins, Executive Director, Strategy and Service Delivery in the department to continue to assist you with any further queries. You may wish to contact Mr Robbins on (07) 3452 7133 or by email at Stephen.Robbins@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP
DEPUTY PREMIER
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