



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional
Development
Australia

IPSWICH & WEST MORETON

Annual Business Plan

Connecting the region.

July 2026 - June 2027



Acknowledgement of Country

Regional Development Australia Ipswich & West Moreton Inc. acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders of all communities who also work, live and represent land across the region.



Overview

The Regional Development Australia (RDA) program is a national network of RDAs which are critical to the delivery of the Australian Government's vision for regional Australia of regions that are strong, connected and resilient.

RDAs play a role in helping to drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in regions through facilitating investment in community, industry and the environment. RDAs assist to bridge the regional development gaps in regions by working with a broad range of stakeholders across sectors and supporting the delivery of identified Australian Government strategic priorities.



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, Regional Development Australia Ipswich and West Moreton (RDAIWM) does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of the information presented in the 2026–2027 Annual Business Plan and accepts no liability for any loss or damage arising from reliance on any statement, information, or advice contained within this publication.

Our Committee

Local leadership, regional insight, shared commitment.

RDA Ipswich & West Moreton is guided by a Committee with deep local knowledge, strong regional connections and broad experience across local government, business, agriculture, education, training, industry, infrastructure, governance and public policy. Committee members bring practical insight from across Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset, helping ensure the region's priorities are informed by lived experience, local leadership and a clear understanding of both urban growth and rural opportunity.



Cr Nicole Jonic
Chair



Katey Banks
Deputy Chair



Cr Sally Jess
Secretary



Cr Anthony Wilson
Treasurer



Cr Duncan McInnes
Member



Cheryl Gaedtke
Member



Stephen Robertson
Member

Executive Summary

Supporting regional growth, workforce development, infrastructure advocacy, investment, and community resilience across Ipswich and West Moreton.

Throughout 2026–2027, RDA Ipswich & West Moreton will continue to take practical, place-based action on the issues shaping the region's growth, resilience and long-term prosperity. Guided by the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework, the Committee will work with government, industry, local councils and communities to ensure regional investment reflects local voices, is informed by evidence, and supports coordinated outcomes across people, places, services, industries and local economies.

Ipswich and West Moreton is one of Southeast Queensland's most diverse and fast-growing regions. Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset are together home to more than 388,000 people, according to 2025 estimates, but growth and opportunity are not evenly distributed. Rapid urban expansion in Greater Springfield, Ripley and surrounding areas is increasing demand for housing, transport, education, health, childcare, digital connectivity and local employment. At the same time, rural and peri-urban communities across the wider region face pressure relating to water security, telecommunications, workforce supply, infrastructure capacity and access to essential services.

The Committee will use its regional knowledge, evidence base and partnerships to help governments and industry respond to these challenges in ways that reflect the distinct strengths of each local government area. Ipswich will continue to play a major role in population growth, employment, services and urban development. The Lockyer Valley remains nationally significant for food production and agribusiness. Scenic Rim brings together agribusiness, tourism, events, food processing and rural enterprise. Somerset supports agriculture, tourism, lifestyle growth, water resources and the renewal of small towns.

Consistent with the Regional Investment Framework, RDA Ipswich & West Moreton will support investment that builds on local strengths, responds to structural change, and helps ensure that no community is held back or left behind. This includes updating regional profiles, reviewing priority projects, strengthening employer-led workforce initiatives, supporting the Greater Springfield Regional Jobs Committee, leading Women in Agriculture initiatives, promoting local job portals and employment events, and identifying opportunities that can activate industry growth and diversification.

The Committee will also advocate for better infrastructure and services across the region, including transport, water, telecommunications, health, education and community infrastructure. It will support clean economy opportunities, decarbonisation, regional resilience and investment in industries that can create long-term local jobs. RDA Ipswich & West Moreton will seek to advance opportunities for First Nations people, support gender equality, and promote inclusive participation in regional economic development.

Cr Nicole Jonic
Chair
Regional Development Australia Ipswich & West Moreton Inc.



Strategic Context and Regional Priorities

Understanding regional change, setting priorities, and guiding coordinated action across Ipswich and West Moreton.

External influences for 2026-2027

1

Population growth and service demand

As more people move to Ipswich, Greater Springfield, and Ripley, demand for housing, jobs, and transport will increase. Fernvale, Lowood, and Plainland will also need better digital access, local services, and infrastructure. Some areas in the Scenic Rim will require improved housing, visitor services, and community facilities.

4

Infrastructure and connectivity gaps

The gaps in roads, public transport, and water infrastructure will impact growth and liveability. Digital connectivity, available industrial land, and visitor facilities will influence the region's readiness for investment. Projects that support housing and community services will stay important as the population grows.

2

Industry growth and investment competition

Industry growth and competition for investment will also shape the region. There will be new business and job opportunities as demand grows for food security, clean supply chains, and manufacturing. Defence, logistics, and renewable energy will increase the need for skilled workers and investment, which may make it harder to keep workers.

5

Net zero and business transition

As the region improves its infrastructure and prepares for investment, the move to net zero will affect agriculture, waste management, and energy. Manufacturing, construction, and logistics will also be affected. Transport operators and local businesses will need clear information, project partners, and access to funding.

3

Workforce shortages and skills pathways

Workforce shortages and skills development will remain important issues. Health, construction, and manufacturing still face shortages, and agriculture, transport, and education are also affected. Childcare, hospitality, and community services will need better ways to attract and train workers.

6

Government policy and major event planning

Government policy and planning for major events will be important as businesses change and work towards net-zero goals. Decisions by the Australian, Queensland, and local governments will determine which projects receive funding and when they occur, directly affecting community programs.

Regional priorities adopted for 2026-2027

1

Collect local data, identify key stakeholders, and create project lists for each local government area. Prepare issue briefs to support regional advocacy.

2

Coordinate workforce planning, introduce job platforms, and hold local job events. Improve training pathways for important sectors and specific groups.

3

Encourage investment, highlight industry strengths, and provide business support. Support urban, rural, and peri-urban communities.

4

Find gaps in transport, water, and digital access. Work together to advocate for better housing, health, and childcare infrastructure. Highlight tourism assets that help regional growth.

5

Look for opportunities in clean energy and the circular economy. Move forward with practical projects in climate-smart agriculture and low-emissions sectors.

6

Strengthen partnerships, collaboration, and governance. Update systems for governance, reporting, and stakeholder engagement. Make sure the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan shapes yearly actions.

Photo: Cr Nicole Jonic, Hon Kristy McBain MP, Adj. Prof Rees Banks



Alignment with adopted partner strategies

Plan or Strategy	RDAIWM Complementary role in 2026-2027
Ipswich Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027	Support workforce pipelines, investment attraction, defence and manufacturing supply chains, infrastructure advocacy and regional promotion.
Lockyer Valley Economic Development Strategy 2021-2026	Support agribusiness, water security advocacy, workforce development, investment and supply chain opportunities.
Scenic Rim Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030	Support investment promotion, workforce development, infrastructure advocacy, tourism workforce pathways and regional collaboration.
Somerset Economic Development Strategy	Support investment narratives, digital connectivity advocacy, workforce participation, business growth and infrastructure coordination.
Wivenhoe Local Jobs Plan	Support employer-led workforce pathways, inclusive jobs initiatives, transport-to-work advocacy and collaboration with employment providers.
Queensland State Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028	Align advocacy with the priorities of economic prosperity, liveability, infrastructure coordination, and industry diversification.
Australian Government Regional Investment Framework	Use People, Places, Services, and Industries and Local Economies as the organising frame for delivery and reporting.



Outcomes and performance indicators

Timeframe	Outcome for the region	Performance indicators
Short term: 2026-2027	Regional evidence base refreshed; priority projects and gaps documented; workforce and industry intelligence updated; governance and reporting aligned to the Funding Agreement.	Number of regional profiles, issue briefs, submissions, stakeholder meetings, project lists, employer consultations, jobs events, workforce actions and Board reports completed.
Medium term 2027-2028	Stronger partnerships, clearer investment opportunities, improved employer-led workforce pathways and more consistent regional infrastructure advocacy.	Evidence of joint projects, funding proposals, investment briefs, roundtables, partner feedback, and use of RDA information in planning or funding work.
Long term: 2028-2030	Stronger workforce participation, increased investment confidence, better policy recognition of regional needs, and improved regional resilience.	Case studies demonstrating RDA's contribution to investment, jobs, policy, infrastructure, funding, services, or clean-economy outcomes.



Previous year: significant events and achievements

- We continued to deliver and promote IWMJobs and Springfield Jobs as free local job platforms for both employers and job seekers.
- We also supported the Springfield Regional Jobs Committee by engaging with employers, running sector activities, helping students move into work, and coordinating the local workforce.
- We worked with partners across the region through the Local Jobs Program, Trade and Investment Queensland, energy transition projects, digital connectivity efforts, water security advocacy, and support for small businesses.
- We also advanced the Women in Agriculture project, which supports women's workforce participation in Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, and Somerset.
- To back up these efforts, we gathered regional data through project updates, economic reports, stakeholder briefings, and work on key projects.

Lessons carried into 2026-2027

- We get the best results when our projects have a clear scope, are based on local evidence, and have strong lead partners.
- Employers appreciate practical, time-saving programs that connect them with qualified candidates for open positions.
- Rural and peri-urban communities need digital, transport, and service challenges to be seen as part of economic development.
- To advocate effectively for investment, we need up-to-date project lists, clear messages, and direct links to government goals. It is also important to document case studies during projects, not after, to keep them accurate and detailed.

Committee and employee capability

Our committee brings together experts from local government, business, community, and regional development. We use our networks to set priorities, connect people, review risks, and lead advocacy. Our staff manage projects, build relationships with stakeholders, write clear reports, organise events, handle communications, and deliver results to the Board and our funding partners.

Annual Work Plan

Focus areas	Inputs	2026-2027 Activities	outputs	Short-term outcome	Funding Agreement alignment	Performance indicators
Regional intelligence, leadership and advocacy	Regional data; council plans; stakeholder advice; Board and staff expertise	Refresh LGA profiles; update stakeholder maps; prepare issue briefs; maintain priority project list; provide briefings and submissions.	Regional profiles; issue briefs; project list; ministerial and agency briefing notes; Board reports.	Government, councils and partners have clear, current information on regional needs and opportunities.	Outcome 2 and Outcome 4. RIF: People, Places, Services, Industries and Local Economies.	4 LGA profiles refreshed; 4 issue briefs; 4 priority project updates; 8+ government or agency briefings; 2+ formal submissions.
Workforce, skills and inclusive participation	Springfield RJC; IWMJobs; employers; schools; TAFE; universities; community providers; Women in Agriculture funding to Sept 2026	Run employer roundtables and jobs events; promote local jobs portals; support the delivery of Women in Agriculture; connect employers with training providers; support digital skills and job-readiness activities.	Roundtables; jobs campaigns; portal reports; participant referrals; training pathway information; project reports.	More employers and jobseekers connected to local pathways, with better evidence on skills gaps.	Outcome 1. RIF: People. Priority focus: skills, gender equality, First Nations opportunity and inclusive participation.	6+ workforce events or roundtables; 150+ participants engaged; portal metrics reported quarterly; Women in Agriculture milestones met; case studies collected.
Investment, industry development and local economies	WMTIG; councils; chambers; TIQ; industry data; investors; business networks	Update investment opportunity material; support WMTIG meetings; connect businesses to grants and programs; promote priority sectors and regional strengths.	Investment briefs; WMTIG actions; business referrals; sector stories; grant and program updates.	Regional opportunities are clearer for investors, businesses and government partners.	Outcome 1, Outcome 2 and Outcome 3. RIF: Industries and Local Economies.	4 WMTIG or industry meetings; 2 investment/opportunity briefs; 30+ businesses connected to support; 6+ regional promotion stories.
Infrastructure, connectivity and regional services	Council priority lists; Telstra partnership; service data; project proponents; government programs	Document infrastructure and service gaps; continue advocacy for digital connectivity; support discussions on water security and transport; prepare shared messages for priority projects.	Infrastructure gap list; connectivity prospectus input; water and transport advocacy material; stakeholder meeting records.	Priority infrastructure and service needs are documented and ready for advocacy or funding pathways.	Outcome 1, Outcome 3 and Outcome 4. RIF: Places and Services.	4 LGA priority lists reviewed; 2 connectivity or service briefings; 2 infrastructure submissions or advocacy packs; 6+ multi-stakeholder meetings.

Annual Work Plan (Continued)

Focus areas	Inputs	2026-2027 Activities	outputs	Short-term outcome	Funding Agreement alignment	Performance indicators
Resilience and sustainable regional growth	Councils; industry partners; researchers; regional data; grants and funding programs; business networks	Identify practical opportunities for sustainability and resilience; share funding information; support discussions on the circular economy, water security, climate resilience, and resource efficiency; connect businesses and stakeholders with relevant programs.	Opportunity notes; grant leads; partner meeting records; project concepts; case studies.	Partners have clearer project options for resilience, circular economy, resource efficiency and sustainable regional growth.	Outcome 1. RIF: Services, Industries and Local Economies. Priority focus: decarbonisation and sustainable regional development.	1 regional sustainability and resilience opportunity summary; 2 project concepts; 4 partner meetings; 10+ businesses or stakeholders engaged.
Partnerships, governance and reporting	Committee; staff; policies; funding agreement; stakeholder network; project partners	Update annual reporting templates; track risks and performance; maintain Board reporting; hold partner meetings; review communications and stakeholder engagement.	Annual work plan; risk register updates; Board reports; stakeholder register; project status reports; performance case studies.	Delivery is monitored, risks are visible, and evidence of reporting is captured during the year.	All Funding Agreement outcomes. RIF: local decision-making and regional collaboration.	Quarterly Board reporting; 1 annual review; stakeholder register updated; 6+ case studies or evidence notes prepared.

Rationale for selected focus areas

RDAIWM focuses on areas where its role is well defined, such as providing regional evidence, coordinating across boundaries, building workforce connections, supporting investment, advocating for infrastructure, and promoting sustainability, resilience, and project development. Activities that are the responsibility of a single council, agency, or service provider will be a lower priority, unless regional coordination is needed or there is a clear funding or policy reason.

How RDAIWM will add value

RDAIWM will turn local issues into briefings for government and investors. It will connect employers, training providers, and community partners to address workforce needs. The agency will also keep priority projects in view and ensure they align with funding programs. When issues affect more than one local government area, RDAIWM will help with regional advocacy. It will also gather case studies as projects are delivered.

Communications Strategy

Communications will support delivery by making regional priorities visible, improving access to information, promoting local jobs and business support, and keeping government, industry and community partners informed. Communication will be practical, timely and linked to funded projects, regional priorities and stakeholder needs.

Communication objectives for 2026-2027

- Promote workforce opportunities, jobs events, training pathways and local job portals.
- Share regional data, project updates and priority infrastructure messages with government and partners.
- Promote investment opportunities, industry strengths and local business support programs.
- Support Women in Agriculture, Springfield RJC, IWMJobs, WMTIG, connectivity, energy and water security activity.
- Use case studies to show outcomes, barriers addressed and RDAIWM's role.

Stakeholders and communication needs

Stakeholder group	Communication need	Main channels
Australian and Queensland Governments	Clear regional evidence, project status, funding alignment and local intelligence.	Briefings, submissions, meetings, reports, and email updates.
Local councils	Shared priorities, project coordination, data, advocacy messages and funding information.	Meetings, working groups, direct emails, and regional forums.
Employers and industry	Workforce support, grant information, investment opportunities and ways to connect with job seekers.	LinkedIn, newsletters, jobs portals, forums, and roundtables.
Education and training providers	Employer feedback, skills gaps, pathway opportunities and project partnerships.	Working groups, roundtables, and direct briefings.
Community organisations and jobseekers	Accessible jobs, training, support services, events and practical resources.	Facebook, websites, newsletters, partner networks.
Media and public	Plain updates on regional priorities, outcomes and community benefit.	Media releases, website, social media, case studies.

Platforms and use

Platform	Use in 2026-2027	Indicative frequency
Website	Central source for projects, funding information, reports, events and regional updates.	Weekly or as needed.
Facebook	Community-facing updates, jobs campaigns, events, grants and project promotion.	Several times per week.
LinkedIn	Business, government, investment, workforce and partner updates.	Weekly.
Newsletter / eDM	Curated grants, events, jobs, training, regional projects and partner updates.	Monthly or campaign-based.
Job portals	Local vacancies, employer promotion, talent communities and jobseeker resources.	Daily to weekly.
Events and forums	Direct engagement with employers, councils, agencies, training providers and community partners.	Quarterly or project-based.
Other media	Major project milestones, funding announcements, case studies and public interest updates.	As needed.

Communication measures

- Website visits, page views and project page engagement.
- Newsletter subscribers, open rates and click-through rates.
- Social media reach, engagement and referral traffic.
- Event registrations, attendance, evaluation results and follow-up actions.
- Number of stories, case studies, submissions and briefings produced.
- Partner feedback and examples of communication leading to action.

Significant third-party arrangements

The arrangements below should be confirmed against executed agreements before submission. Values and dates should be updated if new contracts are executed during 2026-2027.

Organisation	Activity	Contract period	Value	Status / planned 2026-2027 activity
Queensland Government - Department of Trade, Employment and Training	Springfield Regional Jobs Committee	1 October 2025 to 30 September 2027	\$400,000	Continue employer-led workforce planning, sector engagement, local solutions, events, reporting and promotion of government workforce programs.
Queensland Government - Department of Trade, Employment and Training Growing Workforce Participation Fund	Women in Agriculture	1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026	\$200,000	Complete remaining delivery, reporting, participant support, industry engagement and acquittal activity.



Priority matrix

The table below records the areas most relevant to RDAIWM's 2026-2027 work program.

Category	Priority	Applies	Comment
Infrastructure investment	Infrastructure, water, energy and renewables	Yes	Priority for water security, energy transition, industrial land and enabling infrastructure.
Infrastructure investment	Transport and integrated connections	Yes	Relevant to workforce access, freight, tourism and growth corridors.
Infrastructure investment	Telecommunications and digital economy	Yes	Relevant to connectivity audits, digital inclusion and economic participation.
Economic development	Supporting local government and funding proposals	Yes	RDAIWM complements council priorities through regional coordination, evidence and advocacy.
Economic development	Regional snapshot and economic modelling	Yes	Core part of regional intelligence and policy advice.
Economic development	Defence, manufacturing and supply chains	Yes	Relevant to Ipswich, Amberley, advanced manufacturing and local procurement.
Economic development	Agribusiness, food and tourism	Yes	Relevant to Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Somerset and regional workforce needs.
Skilled and ready workforce	Education, learning and jobs pathways	Yes	Core focus through RJC, IWMJobs, Women in Agriculture and partner programs.
Skilled and ready workforce	Workforce development and employment diversity	Yes	Priority for youth, women, First Nations peoples, CALD communities and disadvantaged jobseekers.
Skilled and ready workforce	STEM and digital skills	Yes	Relevant to digital skills, workforce transition and future industry pathways.



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