



20 December 2011

KERRY SHINE MP

State Member for Toowoomba North

Suite 2, ABC Building,
297 Margaret Street
Toowoomba, Qld. 4350
www.kerryshinemp.com

New strategy for a stronger Darling Downs South West

The benefits of population growth will spread to Darling Downs South West with the launch of a new tailored plan to strengthen the economy and liveability of the region.

Minister for Local Government Paul Lucas said the Queensland Regionalisation Strategy (QRS) and supporting *Actions for a Stronger Region* plans will attract more people to live, work and play in Darling Downs South West.

He said the *My Darling Downs South West* plan aims to strengthen the region's existing and potential economic opportunities and looks at how these link within and across regional cities and towns.

"For the past ten years Queensland's population growth has consistently exceeded, sometimes doubled, the nation's population growth," Mr Lucas.

"Our population will pass Victoria's in the next ten to twenty years and the population of South East Queensland is expected to grow from just under 3 million people to almost 4.4 million in that same period.

"While this population growth will be good for Queensland by growing our economy and allowing us to provide more services, Queensland is unique in Australia in that we are committed to spreading population on a regional basis.

"Regional parts of Queensland are crying out for more people and jobs, they help support more services and create more local demand, and that's why the QRS makes so much sense.

"The QRS aims to ease growing pains and strengthen prosperity by improving the economic links within and across our regional cities and towns.

"Darling Downs South West is a diverse region supported by the food and fibre industries with room for growth in the energy sector.

"The QRS will help to strengthen these industries to maximise the economic growth and liveability of the region.

"Upgrading the roads between Mitchell and Roma, including a new bridge across the Maranoa River, will help balance growth with liveability and improve freight efficiency.

"Innovation in the agriculture and tourism sector through consultation with regional leaders will promote the benefits of living and working in the Darling Downs South West.

"By 2031 this region, which extends from Toowoomba west to the South Australian border and south to the New South Wales border, will grow from 268,000 people to more than 376,000."

Member for Toowoomba North Kerry Shine said improvements to health services, additional trade training centres, refurbishing the Dalby Pool and implementing the *Surat Basin Regional Planning Framework* were highlighted in the plan.

"These projects will make Darling Down South West a more enjoyable place to live and work by supporting the growth and sustainability of the region," Mr Shine said.

“The production of coal seam gas in the Surat Basin is expected to increase tenfold by 2031.

“It will be serviced by strong and growing linkages to South-East Queensland and the Port of Queensland in Central Queensland.

“The Wellcamp Industrial Area also has the potential to be developed as a major intermodal freight hub supporting growth in the South-East and the Surat Basin.”

The six *Actions for a Stronger Region* plans, a part of the overarching QRS are:

- My Central Queensland
- My Darling Downs South West
- My Far North Queensland
- My Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday
- My North Queensland
- My Wide Bay Burnett

Underpinned by the Queensland Infrastructure Plan, the QRS underwent extensive public consultation in July with almost 500 people attending 13 forums across the state.

Based on feedback, 35 recommendations were adopted, four more than were originally planned.

For more information on the QRS go to www.waytogrow.qld.gov.au

Further information: Phone: 4638 5755 Fax: 4638 4056
Email: toowoomba.north@parliament.qld.gov.au

Web: www.kerryshinemp.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/kerryshine