



CHARTERS TOWERS  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# ADVOCACY PLAN

2021





# OUR PRIORITIES

## Transport Infrastructure

Urgently needed upgrades:  
Gregory Developmental  
Road & Flinders Highway

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## Improved Health Services

Build new replacement  
hospital in Charters Towers  
to ensure vital health  
services for the region.

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## Drought Assistance

Support for Queenslanders  
in drought stricken  
communities.

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## Defence

Ensure that ASTMI & CTRC  
communicate to secure  
local procurement where  
possible.

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## Telecommunications

Nominate Charters Towers  
localities for the Mobile  
Black Spot Program.

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## Our Fair Share

Restore the Financial  
Assistance Grants to fund  
local governments.

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## Pest Weed Management

Allocate more funding for pest  
weed management in  
Regional areas.

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## Flying Fox Management

Provide adequate support to  
enable communities to  
manage flying foxes.

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## Waste Levy

Exclude Charters Towers  
Regional Council from  
the QLD Waste Levy Zone.

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# THE CHARTERS TOWERS REGION AT A GLANCE

**\$868M**

**GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT**

\*30 JUNE 2020

## KEY ECONOMIC PILLARS



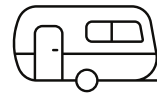
**Mining**



**Agriculture**



**Education**



**Tourism**

**\$19.9M**

**TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SALES**

2019/20

**LAND AREA**  
**68,367**  
**(SQ KM)**

**7**

**COUNCILLORS**

**The top industries for employment include:**

Education & Training (13.1%)

Health Care & Social Assistance (11.6%)

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery (13.8%)

Mining (14.5%)

**FAMILIES 2,831**

21.6% Couples with children

23.6% Couples without children

10.1% One parent families

**\$2,500**  
**AVE HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER WEEK**



**POPULATION**

**11,739**

# ABOUT ADVOCACY

## WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Simply put, advocacy is about having a voice and being heard.

Charters Towers Regional Council lists Advocacy as a strategic focus area in its 2018–2023 Corporate Plan with the goal:

*"To be a strong and respected regional Local Government voice to promote and facilitate growth on behalf of our community" .*

To do this Council is committed to strengthening both opportunities for community consultation, for example through surveys and increased community representation on Council-led committees, and relationships with key stakeholders who can assist us to achieve our goals, such as state and federal government.

Council has appointed an Advocacy Committee consisting of; Mayor Frank Beveridge, Deputy Mayor Sonia Bennetto, Councillor Julie Mathews and Council's Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Johansson.



Picture | Charters Towers Regional Council 2020 Councillors: (L-R) Cr Robertson, Deputy Mayor Bennetto, Cr Hastie, Mayor Beveridge, Cr Lohmann, Cr Mathews, Cr Barr

## ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

Our advocacy priorities relate to matters that represent our Region's needs and desires and therefore will not come as a surprise. Many will also be found in regional plans where Council has worked to ensure that local priorities are strategically identified.

These priorities can evolve over time as milestones are achieved, the community's interests change, or new opportunities and challenges arise.

## OUR ADVOCACY PARTNERS & AUDIENCE

Our advocacy priorities relate to matters that represent our Region's needs and desires and therefore will not come as a surprise. Many will also be found in regional plans where Council has worked to ensure that local priorities are strategically identified.

These priorities can evolve over time as milestones are achieved, the community's interests change, or new opportunities and challenges arise.





*"To be a strong and respected regional Local Government voice to promote and facilitate growth on behalf of our community"*



Picture | Charters Towers Regional Council



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It gives me great pleasure to present the Charters Towers Regional Council Advocacy Plan for 2021. This strategy is designed to provide a platform for key initiatives that we need "outside" support to drive our community forward. Advocacy is a powerful way for communities to progress matters that are important to them and is most effective when community, Council and other levels of government work together constructively. In fact, anyone can be an advocate for causes they believe in, and I invite you to consider being proactively involved in community discussions, surveys and committees when opportunities arise, or alternatively connecting with Council if you wish to work together for a positive community outcome.

These are ways we can continue to ensure we share a strong, united voice on the matters that are important to our Region.

*Frank Beveridge*

**Mayor Frank Beveridge**  
Advocacy Committee Chair



# 1. Transport Infrastructure



## SOLUTION:

The State & Federal Governments support long-term planning for strategic Regional freight and tourism routes through the Region and fund state identified works on the inadequately funded Gregory Development Road and the Flinders Highway.

## THE ISSUE:

To ensure economic prosperity and delivery of essential services and supplies throughout the Region, and beyond to western communities, it is imperative that roads infrastructure is maintained and developed to keep up with the ever-increasing demand.

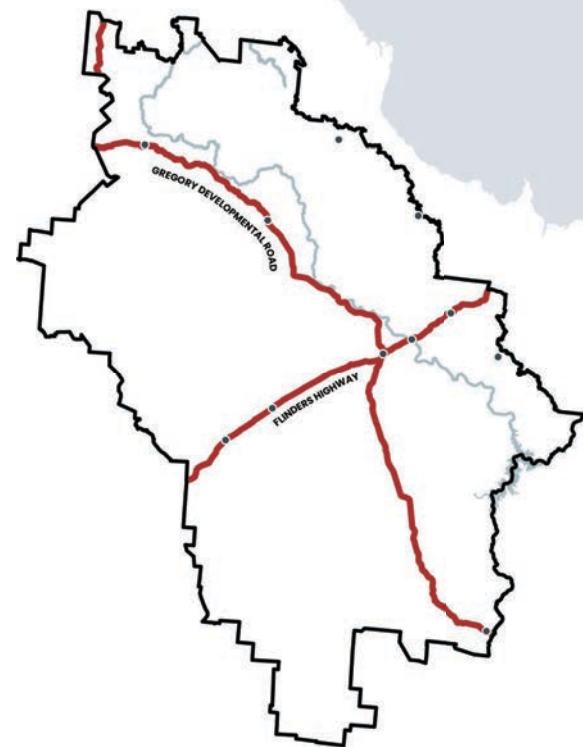
Two of the state's major highways run directly through the centre of the Charters Towers Regional Council's local government area - the Flinders Highway and the Gregory Development Road. This makes the Region a favourable strategic location for logistics and transport companies alike and connects remote communities to goods, services, and essential medical treatments.

There are many proposed large scale projects underway throughout the Region including: Big Rocks Weir, Agripower's Rail Project, Copper String 2.0 and the Australian-Singapore Military Training Initiative. With the Australian-Singapore Military Training Initiative's Regional training area being established near the Greenvale Township in the Region's north, the busy Gregory Highway that services the area is underdeveloped to maintain an ever-increasing traffic load.

Although the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) has provided guidance for the next four years, it is not keeping up with the everchanging needs of the Region in the maintenance and development of transport and roads infrastructure.

## RISKS OF DELAY:

Delaying adequate funding for development and maintenance of keyroads infrastructure will impact the impending growth and economic opportunities in the Region. More importantly, the drastic increase of industrial transportation and work traffic on these underdeveloped highways will lead to increased travel dangers and impacts to road safety, posing a major health and wellbeing risk to visitors, workers, and community members alike.

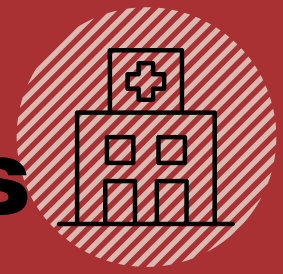


## ABOVE:

Flinders Highway & Gregory Development Highway - two major highways that run through the Charters Towers Region that require urgent funding

[1] Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) 2020-21 to 2023-24 - Datasets | Publications | Queensland Government

# 2. Improved Health Services



## SOLUTION:

The State Government fund a new, replacement hospital to be built in Charters Towers, alongside Eventide Aged Care Facility with increased specialty services in Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Renal Medicine; Radiology and Ultrasound.



## THE ISSUE:

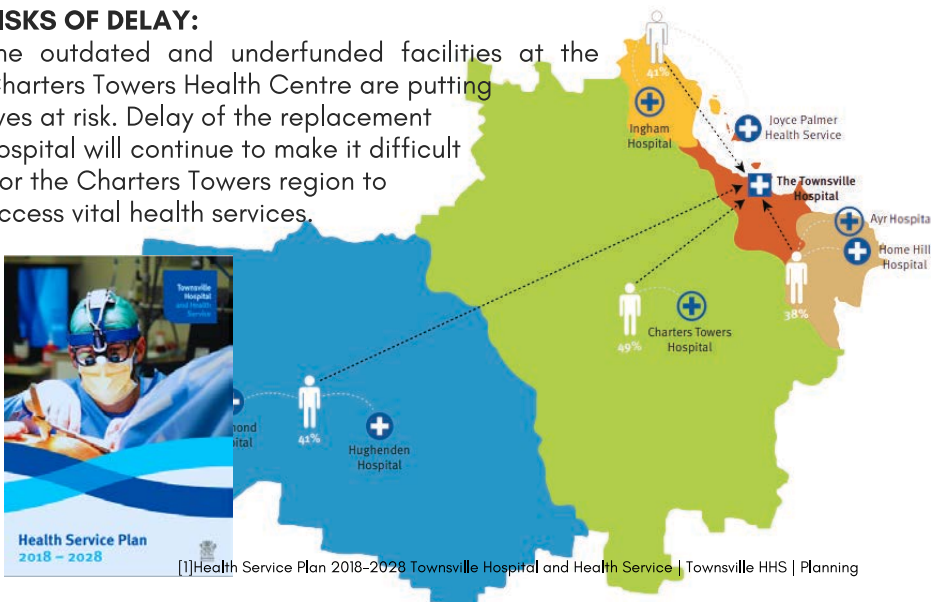
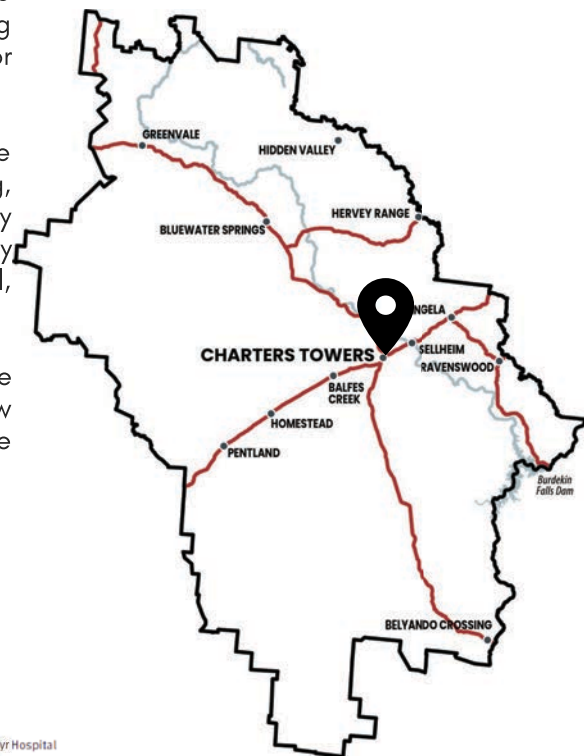
The Charters Towers Hospital was founded in 1887. As a health and medical facility, it is grossly outdated and presents with many issues. These include piping, plumbing, inadequate layout and obsolete design. Most concerning of all, many of its treatment and service areas do not meet health, safety or fire standards.

Residents in our Region are having to conduct frequent travel to Townsville to receive essential, life-saving medical treatments. These include birthing, gynaecological treatments, x-rays, ultrasounds and computed tomography (CT) scanning. This puts additional pressure on the Townsville University Hospital in coping with additional patients and causes undue financial, physical and emotional distress to travelling patients.

A recent business case conducted by Queensland Health and the Townsville Hospital and Health Service has outlined the need for the new development to keep up with future infrastructure requirements (Townsville Hospital and Health Services-Health Service Plan 2018-2028<sup>1</sup>).

## RISKS OF DELAY:

The outdated and underfunded facilities at the Charters Towers Health Centre are putting lives at risk. Delay of the replacement hospital will continue to make it difficult for the Charters Towers region to access vital health services.



## ABOVE:

Central location: Charters Towers is the ideal location for the proposed new hospital that will service Western Queensland and provide lifesaving medical treatments.

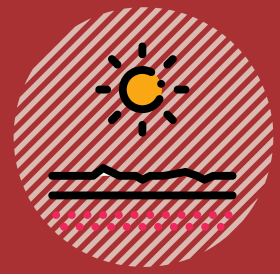
## LEFT:

"Rural Flows to the Townsville Hospital". Map depicts the high percentage of rural and remote patients sent to the Townsville Hospital for treatment.

Picture | Charters Towers Regional Council



# 3. Drought Assistance



## SOLUTION:

The State and Federal Governments adopt a bipartisan, coordinated and whole-of-government response to the hardships and financial impacts of ongoing drought in Queensland communities.

### THE ISSUE:

The effects of a relentless drought on Queensland's Regional areas has been economically and emotionally taxing for many communities. Many parts of the State have experienced the ongoing effects of drought for almost a decade which is having a devastating toll on industry and the livelihoods of primary producers and the communities in which they live.

As at 1 February 2021, there are a total of 41 councils and 4 part council areas drought declared. These declarations represent 67.4% of the land area of Queensland. There are also 31 Individual Droughted Properties (IDP) in a further 12 Local Government Areas.<sup>1</sup>

The Charters Towers Region has been partly or wholly drought declared since 2013. In 2018, part of the Region's drought declaration was revoked however, 28.5% of the Region remains drought declared.<sup>2</sup> This situation is particularly concerning given the agricultural industry is a key economic pillar to the Region. Drought has a greatly damaging impact on the community's livelihood, stability and growth.

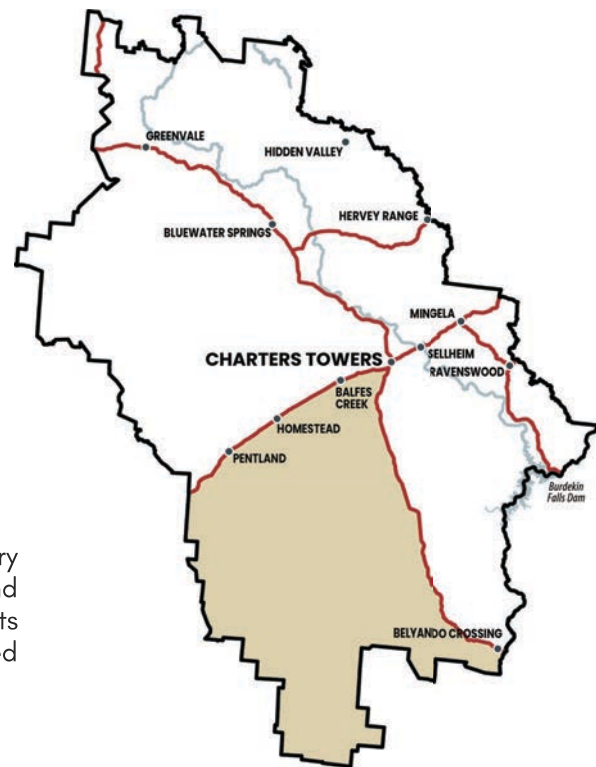
### RISKS OF DELAY:

The Charters Towers Region cannot afford to lose the agricultural industry as one of its major economic pillars. Drought brings both financial and mental pressures to individuals experiencing it and has devastating effects on the community as a whole. Delaying help to drought effected communities will have severe ongoing affects.

[1] <https://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/drought/drought-declarations>

[2] 20210201.pdf (longpaddock.qld.gov.au)

[3] Agricultural industry statistics | charters-towers | economy.id




### HIGHLIGHTED ABOVE:

Charters Towers Region's 28.5% drought declared area as at Feb 1, 2021.

### Charters Towers Region's Agricultural Industry Statistics<sup>3</sup>:

  
600,000+  
Cattle  
in Region

  
98.3%  
Livestock  
Slaughtering

  
\$242M  
Agricultural  
Output

  
13.8%  
Agri Industry  
Employment



# 4. Defence Opportunities



## SOLUTION:

The ASMTI and Charters Towers Regional Council liaise closely regarding local procurement opportunities to ensure local jobs and businesses are at the forefront when potential opportunities arise.

## THE ISSUE:

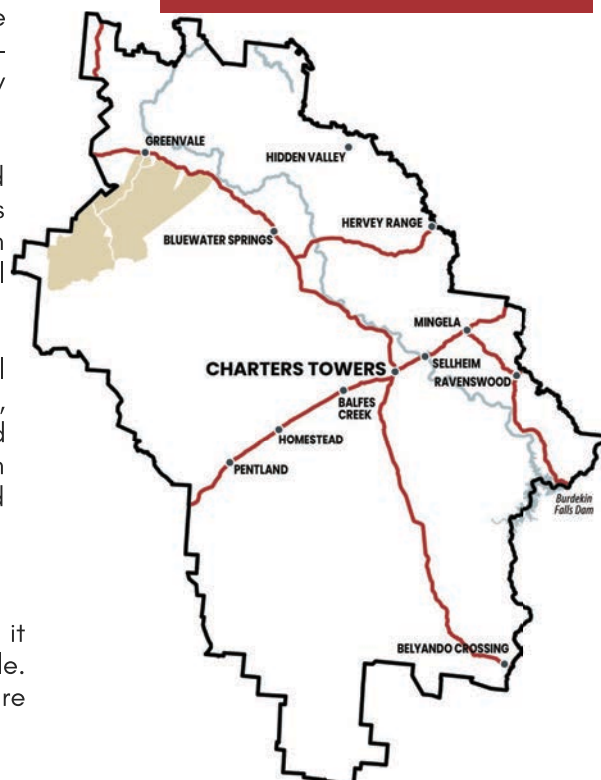
The Australia-Singapore Military Training Initiative (ASMTI) has acquired land to establish a new advanced training area near Greenvale in the Charters Towers Regional Council Local Government Area. The large-scale project is estimated to cost over \$2 Billion and works have already started with contracts being awarded since November 2020.

Where possible, it is important to ensure that supply of goods and services for the construction and maintenance of the training area is locally retained. There are many dangers associated with transient Fly In Fly Out (FIFO)/ Drive In Drive Out (DIDO) workforces, both for the mental and social wellbeing of the worker and the local community at large.

In most cases, FIFO/DIDO workforces have negative impacts on local livelihoods and economies by decreasing housing affordability, inadequate investment in community safety and infrastructure and decreases in local business profitability as non-resident workforces often don't spend as much money in the community (except on alcohol and fuel).

## RISKS OF DELAY:

To avoid negative social and economic impacts on the local community, it is important procurement opportunities are kept local where possible. Engagement of local communities and develop local industry will ensure the ongoing success of the ASMTI and the region.



## HIGHLIGHTED ABOVE:

Approximate boundary of the ASMTI located in the Northern part of the Charters Towers Local Government Area near the township of Greenvale.



# 5. Improved Telecommunications



## SOLUTION:

Nominate Charters Towers Region localities for the provision of telecommunication infrastructure through the Mobile Black Spot program and invest in these important telecommunications assets.



## THE ISSUE:

The Charters Towers Region is vast in area (68,382km<sup>2</sup>) and has insufficient and/or unreliable mobile coverage, within the City and surrounding areas. This negatively impacts the safety, productivity and livelihoods of local residents and visitors to the Region. Improving connection and reliability is paramount to the health, wealth and quality of life of the Region's residents and visitors.

With two major highways running from North to South and East to West through Charters Towers, the Region is host to a busy major corridor that connects Western communities across Queensland. These highways allow for recreational, commercial, and essential services and supplies transportation. Unfortunately, much of the Region's telecommunications are inadequate and unreliable leaving motorists at risk should an emergency arise.

Industries throughout the Region are also in jeopardy, due to the current lack of telecommunications available. Education, mining, defence, and agriculture are major industries in the Region that are facing ongoing struggles to operate effectively due to the barriers in communication and connectivity.

These deficiencies have been highlighted in the 2018 Australian Government Regional Telecommunications Review ([www.rtrc.gov.au](http://www.rtrc.gov.au)).

## RISKS OF DELAY:

The Charters Towers Region needs essential telecommunication infrastructure for the continued growth of the Region. The community is put at risk in emergency situations and industry and development cannot progress without it.



## ABOVE:

Although there is some mobile connectivity across the region, vast areas of the Charters Towers Local Government Area receive with little to no connectivity.



# 6. Our Fair Share



## SOLUTION:

The Federal Government restores Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) funding to local governments to a level of at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

### THE ISSUE:

The Charters Towers Regional Council supports the Local Government Association's push to review Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to a sustainable level for local government. The growth in Commonwealth taxation revenue over the past 20 years has not been matched by a growth in distributions to local government. Nor has the growth in partnership funding – although very welcome – filled the gap. With major key projects already being undertaken around the Region, the community at large is struggling to keep up with medical, industrial and social infrastructure which is taking a huge toll on the livelihood and liveability of the area and overcrowding the resources of neighbouring local governments' essential services.

Given the steady, long-term decline of FAGs funding to local government from 1996 onwards, Charters Towers Regional Council has been under immense pressure to meet ongoing and increased demand for essential services and infrastructure. This is felt most hard by the Region's community and was affirmed in the Community Satisfaction Survey conducted in November 2018 that outlined that Council is under pressure to meet community expectations in areas such as 'Basic Services and Infrastructure' and 'Community Lifestyle Services'.

### RISKS OF DELAY:

A delay in funding will see a growing decline in the ability of the Region's private and public sectors to keep up with the demand for essential services and infrastructure. This impacts all aspects of our Region's livability, placing further stress on facilities and services that are already overextended.



ABOVE:  
All of the Charters Towers Region will benefit from the restoration of the Financial Assistance Grants.



# 7 Weed Management



## SOLUTION:

The State and Federal Governments allocate more funding for pest weed management in Regional areas where funding is often underdelivered to cover the vast areas.



### THE ISSUE:

With 68,382km<sup>2</sup> to cover and limited resources, Charters Towers Regional Council requires urgent assistance to meet the increasing challenge that pest weeds present. The cost of pest weeds to the Australian agricultural industries is estimated to be at least \$3.4 billion a year and the cost to the environment, human health and native ecosystems is believed to be even higher.<sup>1</sup>

With two major highways dividing Charters Towers Regional Council from North to South and East to West, the Region is a busy corridor for inter and intra state traffic. The heavy usage increases the risk of pest weed spread and puts pressure on Council to control and maintain outbreaks.

Other major spreaders of pest weeds are water ways, livestock and wildlife all of which are prevalent in the Charters Towers Region. Highly invasive weeds such as Bellyache Bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*), Parthenium (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) and Rubber Vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*) are just a few of the species threatening the grazing lands, waterways and national parks throughout the region by outcompeting native vegetation and pasture growth.

Pest weed management must take a universal approach across Queensland to stop spread. An outbreak in one local government area can quickly spread to others having costly and devastating effects on native flora and fauna, industry and in some cases, human health.

### RISKS OF DELAY:

Prevention is better than cure - failure to act quickly on pest weed management will have costly consequences, not just for the Charters Towers Region, but for all of Queensland.



ABOVE:  
All of the Charters Towers Region will benefit from government assistance in the management of weeds.

[1] The Economic Impact of Weeds in Australia: Summary #8 | CRC for Australian Weed Management | [https://weeds.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/tech\\_series\\_8\\_summary.pdf](https://weeds.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/tech_series_8_summary.pdf)



# 8. Flying Fox Management



## SOLUTION:

The State Government to provide adequate support to equip and enable communities to manage the impacts of flying foxes, including a change in legislation assigning the full responsibility of flying fox management to the State Government.



## THE ISSUE:

The presence and management of flying foxes in the Charters Towers Region is a contentious and long-standing issue. Since 2001, Charters Towers and the surrounding areas have been experiencing increasing numbers of flying foxes. Over many years, both Charters Towers and Ravenswood have experienced major recurring influxes of Little Red Flying Foxes, a protected native species. The flying foxes roost in public spaces such as parks, school grounds and key community recreation facilities.

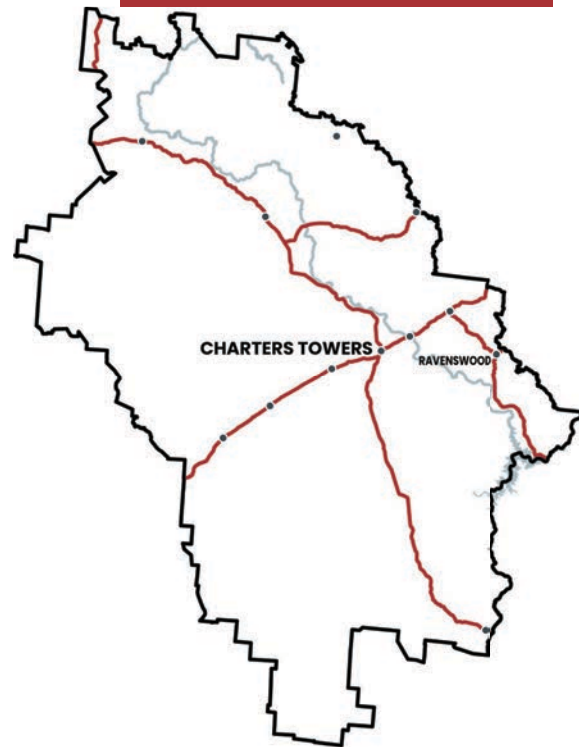
On numerous occasions, the town has experienced major numbers of over 250,000 flying foxes at the peak of an influx. At such times, mass closure of public areas, education centres, pool facilities and affected businesses occurs, to mitigate the risk to community health and safety. This causes major economic and social disruption, posing severe risks to the health and quality of life of residents, impacting visitor experiences and threatening the livelihood of local businesses. The Council is then faced with the full brunt of managing the public disruption and risks that arise and is left wearing the significant financial and social repercussions of the flying fox impacts.

Offensive odour; damage to trees, local heritage and property; restricted access to outdoor spaces; unsightly and unsanitary mess and the overwhelming noise - all of these factors cause major distress to those living, working or operating within and around flying fox infested areas.

These colossal animal numbers also bring with them the threat of flying fox related infections, posing a great risk to human health. Australian bat lyssavirus and Hendra virus are two human threats that are of major public concern.

## RISKS OF DELAY:

For far too long, the management of flying foxes has exhausted Council budgets and resources and hindered the lifestyle and livelihoods of the communities of the Charters Towers Region. Delaying the safe, permanent relocation of flying foxes will continue to prolong the economic, environmental, heritage and health and lifestyle impacts on our community.



## ABOVE:

The townships of Charters Towers & Ravenswood have been the most heavily affected by the flying foxes.



# 9. Waste Levy



## SOLUTION:

Exclude Charters Towers Regional Council from the Queensland Waste Levy Zone to ensure the Region is not exposed to illegal dumping and unnecessary financial and administrative burdens.



### THE ISSUE:

The Queensland Government has imposed the waste levy since 1 July 2019. Although the State Government has not included some 38 regional western councils, Charters Towers Regional Council remains in the levy zone despite having a much smaller population than other councils included.

The aims of the waste levy are not being realised in the Charters Towers Region, due to several factors including the sparsely populated 68,580 km<sup>2</sup> of the region which provides considerable opportunity to dispose of waste illegally.

Given that Charters Towers Regional Council does not have access to fully equipped transport networks, competitive markets and waste industry access, Council is at a considerable financial disadvantage compared to other councils in the levy zone.

### RISK OF DELAY:

Charters Towers Regional Council is at a disadvantage when compared to the other local government areas included in the waste levy zone, and as such, cannot continue to meet the ongoing costs and obligations associated with being included in the levy zone.



### ABOVE:

The entire Region will benefit from the exclusion of Charters Towers Regional Council from the waste levy.











**CHARTERS TOWERS**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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