

INDUSTRY *Today*

June 2024 edition

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The renewables state

By Gregor Mactaggart

Premier Steven Miles said his government is securing the future of thousands of regional Queensland jobs with a \$26 billion investment in renewable energy projects over the next four miles.

The ‘supercharged’ investment in the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan was confirmed in the State Budget earlier this month.

Modelling by Deloitte forecasts investment in regional Queensland will spike \$218 billion, attracting more than 85 per cent of the new jobs if the state reaches its 75 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035.

“Protecting regional jobs and acting on climate change is something I am passionate about, which is why I’ve taken steps to put Queensland’s transition to renewables at the forefront,” Mr Miles said.

“Because the transition to renewables isn’t just about emissions reductions – it’s about creating more jobs in new industries and opening up opportunities for our state to thrive.

“We’ve established landmark emissions-reduction targets to cut our carbon output 75 per cent by 2035.

“Importantly, we’re bringing our communities along for the journey, with a package of support, training and jobs within the Job Security Guarantee.”

Mr Miles said the funding will allow publicly owned energy businesses to invest in new wind, solar, storage, and transmission infrastructure, protecting thousands of jobs in construction, manufacturing and operations across all sectors of the economy.

“Because of public ownership of our energy system, which is now enshrined in legislation, we can ensure all Queenslanders benefit from the investment needed to decarbonise our energy system and deliver our renewable energy targets,” he said.

A total of \$8.686 billion in capital investment will be delivered in the 2024-25 financial year alone.

Powerlink is set to invest \$109.4 million to accelerate the state’s SuperGrid, for early works on Central Queensland transmission works and connection of the Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage, and a further \$712 million to continue delivery of CopperString 2032.

Energy Queensland’s investing \$2.683 billion in its 2024-2025 capital program.

Some \$376 million has been committed for upgrades and maintenance at existing state-owned power stations in 2024-25, ensuring the continued reliability of supply to Queensland and National Electricity Market.

The commitment is on top of transformative new energy investments by Stanwell, CS Energy, and CleanCo in 2024-25.

Further, Queensland Hydro will be continuing to progress works on the Borumba



Premier Steven Miles, pictured here at the Aldoga Solar Farm earlier this year, said his government is securing the future of thousands of regional Queensland jobs with a \$26 billion investment in renewable energy projects over the next four miles. Picture: SUPPLIED



Stanwell is among the existing power stations set to share in \$376 million for upgrades and maintenance in 2024-25. Picture: FILE

and Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro Energy Storage projects near Gympie and Mackay, respectively.

The state government said it had locked in job security for every worker in Queensland’s publicly owned power stations through the world-first \$150 million Job Security Guarantee.

Energy and Clean Economy Jobs Minister Mick de Brenni described the renewables transition as the “greatest jobs, economic and climate opportunity in a generation.”

“This additional investment shows our government’s commitment to ensuring Queensland takes full advantage,” he said.

“While other states talk, Queensland is

acting to secure our clean energy future, and the thousands of jobs it seeks to create and protect.

“Whether you’re a boilermaker in Bundy, a welder in Winton, or a miner in Mackay, the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan locks in job and energy security for all Queenslanders.”

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Industry diversity key focus of project

CQUniversity research has led a Queensland Resources Council (QRC) project to create job opportunities for groups currently under-represented in the mining and energy workforce.

Interpreters in job interviews, gender-specific safety gear, and pairing neuro-diverse employees with a work ‘buddy’ – these are some of the best-practice procedures Queensland’s resources companies can tap into, to improve workplace diversity across the \$94.6 billion sector.

The ideas feature in a new Queensland Resources Council (QRC) project to create job opportunities for groups currently under-represented in the mining and energy workforce. Supported by CQUniversity Human Resource Management academics, the Resources WIDE (Workforce Inclu-

sion & Diversity Engagement) initiative aims to make the sector a “rich mosaic of diverse people, ideas, backgrounds, genders, lifestyles and talents”.

That’s according to the project’s Digital Hub, offering supportive resources to guide diversity and inclusivity initiatives for organisations operating in the resources sector. QRC chief executive officer Janette Hewson said the hub will help resources sector employers to better attract, retain and advance people from diverse backgrounds. It builds on previous work to increase female representation within the sector. Women currently make up a record 22 per cent of the Queensland resources workforce.

The research-informed content was developed by Professor Huong Le and Dr

Upamali Amarakoon from CQUniversity, in response to findings from industry specific research and surveys conducted for the Resources WIDE project.

Professor Le said the research identified gaps, needs, and best practices for diversity and inclusion across the sector.

“Our multi-phase research informed a survey for resources companies in Queensland, to examine the issues and what has been done in the sector, and challenges for further progress,” she said. “The findings, based on more than 220 responses and in-depth interviews with employees and managers in the Queensland resources sector, helped us develop Resources WIDE’s relevant online tools and case studies, working iteratively to ensure they were practical for industry’s needs.”

Everyday Queenslanders talk about coal royalties

Everyday Queenslanders from across the state are the new face of the Keep Queensland Competitive campaign, highlighting the damage being done to their businesses and jobs by the world's highest coal royalty taxes.

Queensland Resources Council chief executive officer Janette Hewson said the "Everyday Queenslanders" advertisements would demonstrate the impact on regional and rural communities of sudden increases in tax rates. "Up until now, the Keep Queensland Competitive campaign has focused on the facts and figures – showing how suddenly introducing the world's highest royalties has led to billions of dollars of projects being cancelled or postponed," Ms Hewson said.

"Now we are handing the microphone to the everyday Queenslanders who are feeling the effects of those cancellations in their businesses and jobs.

"These are retail workers, publicans, farmers, trucking business owners, fencers, electrical engineers, admin officers and apprentices. They come from across regional parts of the state, including Clermont, Mackay, Charters Towers and Moranbah.

"They all rely on a strong and confident resources sector to help their local businesses thrive and to secure their local jobs. And their message is simple: they want politicians to sit down and have a genuine dis-

cussion about finding a fair and competitive level for royalties.

"That's what the sector has been asking for over the last two years, with little response from the government. Hopefully they will listen to these everyday Queenslanders who want the same thing."

The campaign started on 9 June and will run through until the state election on October 26. She said the message would be focused most strongly on regional areas of the state where businesses rely on a strong and stable resources sector, and would run across TV, radio, digital and outdoor platforms.

"We know that our campaign has resonated across the state, and our research shows that people everywhere have agreed with our message that when you hurt Queensland's resources sector you hurt Queensland," she said.

"However, we are now severely limited by the government's third-party electoral spending laws, so we intend to focus our efforts over the next five months in those parts of the state where everyday Queenslanders are feeling the greatest impact.

"We continue to invite both sides of politics to sit down with the sector and come up with a fair and sustainable royalties regime, that keeps Queensland competitive and protects and grows jobs and opportunities for everyday Queenslanders."



Queensland Resources Council chief executive officer Janette Hewson.

Rio Tinto ups BSL stake

Rio Tinto has agreed to acquire Mitsubishi Corporation's 11.65 per cent interest in Boyne Smelters Ltd (BSL), which owns and operates the Boyne Island aluminium smelter.

On completion of this transaction, and the recent agreement to acquire Sumitomo Chemical Company's 2.46 per cent interest in BSL, Rio Tinto's interest in BSL will increase to 73.5 per cent.

The acquisition, which is for an undisclosed price, is subject to various conditions precedent, including approval from Australia's Foreign Investment Review Board, and is expected to be finalised in the second half of 2024.

Rio Tinto looks forward to continuing to work with its remaining BSL joint venture partners and other stakeholders on securing a competitive low-carbon future for its Gladstone operations.

After completion of the two transactions, the BSL joint venture partners will be: Rio Tinto (73.5 per cent), YKK Aluminium (9.50 per cent), UACJ Australia (9.29 per cent) and Southern Cross Aluminium (7.71 per cent).



Rio Tinto has agreed to acquire Mitsubishi Corporation's 11.65 per cent interest in Boyne Smelters Ltd (BSL).

Picture: FILE



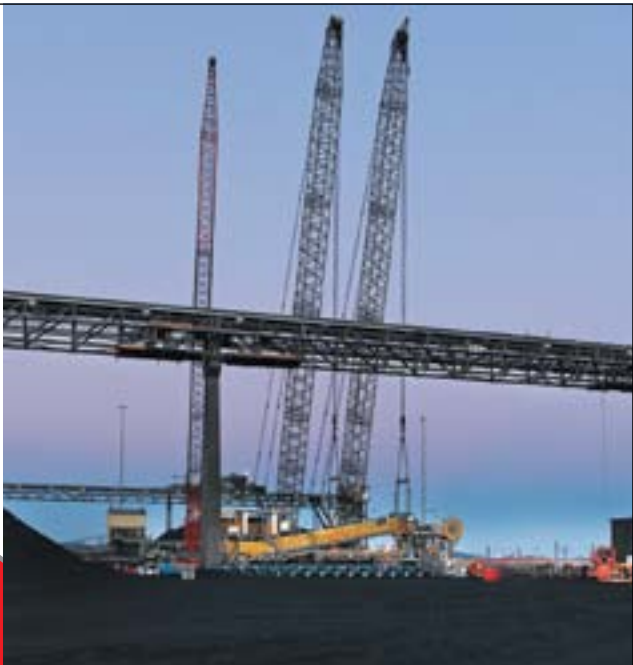


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Basin moves welcomed

By Matthew Pearce, with Fraser Barton and Savannah Meacham, AAP Brisbane

Longreach Mayor Tony Rayner and Maranoa MP David Littleproud have backed the State Government's decision to ban carbon capture and storage in the Great Artesian Basin, calling it the right decision.

Last month, Premier Steven Miles said he would ban storage in the basin, a water source for 180,000 inland people with an estimated 65 million gigalitres.

The proposed laws will extend the ban to any enhanced oil or petroleum recovery that uses a greenhouse gas stream.

The State Government had earlier rejected mining giant Glencore's controversial plan to inject tonnes of wastewater into the basin.

Cr Rayner said the State Government's decision would help protect one of the great environment assets of the world.

"I think the State Government has made a very sound decision, it was the only decision that they could make," he said.

"Whilst this technology has been used overseas for 50 years or so, the saline aquifers that they inject the CO2 into are not used for stock or domestic use, so that's a completely different scenario to what was being proposed for Queensland."

Speaking on Sky News, Mr Littleproud, who is also Nationals leader, said there was a place for carbon capture storage, but it wasn't in the Great Artesian Basin.

"We are using carbon capture storage. We're trying to use that offshore, but there are other places onshore you can do it," he said.

"But the Great Artesian Basin is a water source for much of my electorate and not just for stock and for agriculture, but also for some of our communities.

"So you've got to take the precautionary principle and I don't think Glencore has been able to demonstrate that.

"So it's the right decision, but there should be another layer (of protection) over the Great Artesian Basin.

"The Nationals tried to put in an amendment to the EPBC Act here to include the Great Artesian Basin and carbon capture storage to also have federal approval... Labor and the Greens voted against it for some bizarre reason."

Glencore had planned to capture carbon dioxide from a coal-fired power station, liquefy it and store it 2.3km underground, pumping more than 300,000 tonnes of wastewater into an aquifer as part of a three-year trial.

Glencore argued no damage would have been caused by injecting the waste product into the aquifer, a body of rock that holds groundwater.

That was rejected by the state environment department on the basis that it would cause "irreversible" change to groundwater



Steven Miles (right), with Water Minister Glen Butcher, says the Great Artesian Basin's waters are too important to mess with.

Picture: DARREN ENGLAND/AAP



Longreach Mayor Tony Rayner.

quality and environmental values.

Glencore called the decision disappointing and a missed opportunity for the state, saying it sent mixed messages to industry stakeholders looking to invest in low-emission technologies such as carbon capture storage.

Meanwhile, Queensland's decision to ban carbon capture and storage projects in the basin has sparked calls for the Federal Government to follow suit.

Environment lobby group Lock the Gate Alliance called on the Federal Government

to follow Queensland's lead and ban CCS projects.

"The Albanese government needs to scrap the dangerous Future Gas Strategy, and other states and territories that overlay the basin ought to follow Queensland's example," national co-ordinator Ellen Roberts said.

"Lock the Gate is also calling on the Queensland Government to protect the Great Artesian Basin from further damage by coal and gas projects."

Mr Miles said Queensland would lobby the Federal Government and other states to protect the basin, which intersects four Australian states and territories.

About 70 per cent of its area sits beneath Queensland.

The basin spans almost 1.7 million square kilometres, more than one-fifth of the Australian continent.

Mr Miles said the proposed laws would clarify that activities involving greenhouse gas storage or the injection of a greenhouse gas stream into the basin would not be permissible.

However, other carbon capture activities could continue elsewhere in Queensland subject to rigorous assessment and approval processes.

"We will continue to review the safety aspects of greenhouse gas storage in the state to support future generations of Queenslanders and to ensure Queensland's great natural environment is preserved," he said.

Katter's Australian Party leader Robbie Katter hailed the decision to protect the basin, saying community and crossbench lobbying had proven that "David can indeed defeat Goliath".

"Common sense and logic have prevailed and in one of the very rare occasions this parliament, the KAP will be strongly in favour of the government's legislation to protect the Great Artesian Basin."

Farmers for Climate Action CEO Natalie Collard said more than 180,000 people across inland Australia rely on the Great Artesian Basin for water.

"If we are to keep farmers farming, we need clean water to grow food. Clean water is sacred and we must protect it at all costs. Water quality and security is national security," she said.

"The idea that we could allow billionaire polluters to risk the clean water that grows our food was ridiculous. We need to move to clean sources of energy which don't pollute our air and water."



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Trent Scherer is the new general manager of Queensland Alumina Limited. Picture: SUPPLIED

CQ product new QAL GM

By Karen Simmons

It was an extensive recruitment process, but after weeks of intensive interviews, Trent Scherer feels it was his focus on his people and deep pride in the shirt he wears that was key to stepping into QAL's new general manager.

With over 10 years' experience in civil construction working on infrastructure, large building developments and mining projects across Australia and the UK, Mr Scherer joined Queensland Alumina Ltd (QAL) in March 2016 as superintendent in Raw Materials.

Since then, Mr Scherer has held various positions including Digestion Operations superintendent and Health, Safety and Environment manager.

As Tailings and Environment manager, Mr Scherer further engaged with his learning and achieved a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Engineering, to support the development of QAL's 5YES program, before moving into the role of Redside manager.

"It was a role I was eager to go into as I knew I could have a positive impact in the

role," he said.

"Being a really proud Central Queensland person, it's a real honour to be appointed general manager.

"Fundamentally our focus is on our people - There's a deep pride in the 'Q' - in the shirt that we wear, in the queue at the front gate - our history in the local community is amazing.

"(Also) understanding and knowing the passion of the people as they walk through the gate and knowing so many of our people so well, having worked in a number of different parts of the plant.

"Everything from Awoonga Dam to Yaralla Sports Club, QAL have been instrumental in leaving these positive legacy's behind.

"We've got a little over 1000 employees - all are based around Gladstone - we have no fly-in-fly-out workers."

The father of two who loves supporting local sport said having the respect of his peers and support of the workforce is really going to help him in the new role.

QAL made great strides to reduce environmental risks under our five-Year Environment Strategy during 2023, while also

delivering positive outcomes for the Gladstone community.

Since the strategy commenced in 2018, \$418 million has been spent, including \$175 million within the Gladstone region, on more than 60 projects classed under key focus areas of dust, alkali, odour, water, land and noise.

Mr Scherer said they are moving their operations forward to keep in step with the community's expectations for environmental performance as well as play their part in decarbonising.

"The announcement regarding the grant from the government is a huge win for us," he said.

"To be a part of the solution gives every energy.

"There will be many stakeholders we'll get to partner with to get through this very complex challenge - but its exciting.

"The challenge ahead is very clear for QAL - we need to on one hand execute this very complex Brownfield project in order to decarbonise and on the other hand we need to run this business as efficiently as we possibly can with laser-like focus, while hitting

our production plan.

"It's not just about decarbonising - the double-digestion project turns us into a very competitive business and really sets us up for the next 20 to 30 years - it modernises a very old business."

"QAL is not your standard, run-of-the-mill business - this business is still the heart of Gladstone and its roots are deep within the community.

"Any sort of upheaval is an upheaval in the community, so we've got an obligation to keep this business here and we keep it healthy."

Mr Scherer said he was honoured to be in the general manager's seat during what he described as a "very exciting time" for QAL.

He is looking forward to embracing a new type of work force and the world of automation.

Outside of work, Mr Scherer can be found surfing beaches throughout the region and contributing to the executive committee of Gladstone Toastmasters, where he has been actively involved for the last five years.

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St John's Catholic College students work on their designs.



These cool kids work on their aerodynamic designs.



Dressed to impress, this student sends his paper plane flying high.

Drones to paper planes

The full spectrum of flight, from the basics of a paper plane to the latest technology of drones, was explored by Gladstone students participating in the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy's Physics of Flight workshops last month.

The workshops were sponsored by ConocoPhillips as the downstream operator of Australia Pacific LNG (APLNG) with members of their team assisting the students and answering questions about the use of flight technology in the LNG industry.

Toolooa State High School principal Justin Harrison said the day could be described as a 'festival of flight' with the morning session focused on the design of paper planes followed by a workshop discovering the physics of drones in the afternoon.

"There were nearly 50 students from six local schools involved in the workshops which were held at our school and Chanel College," Mr Harrison said.

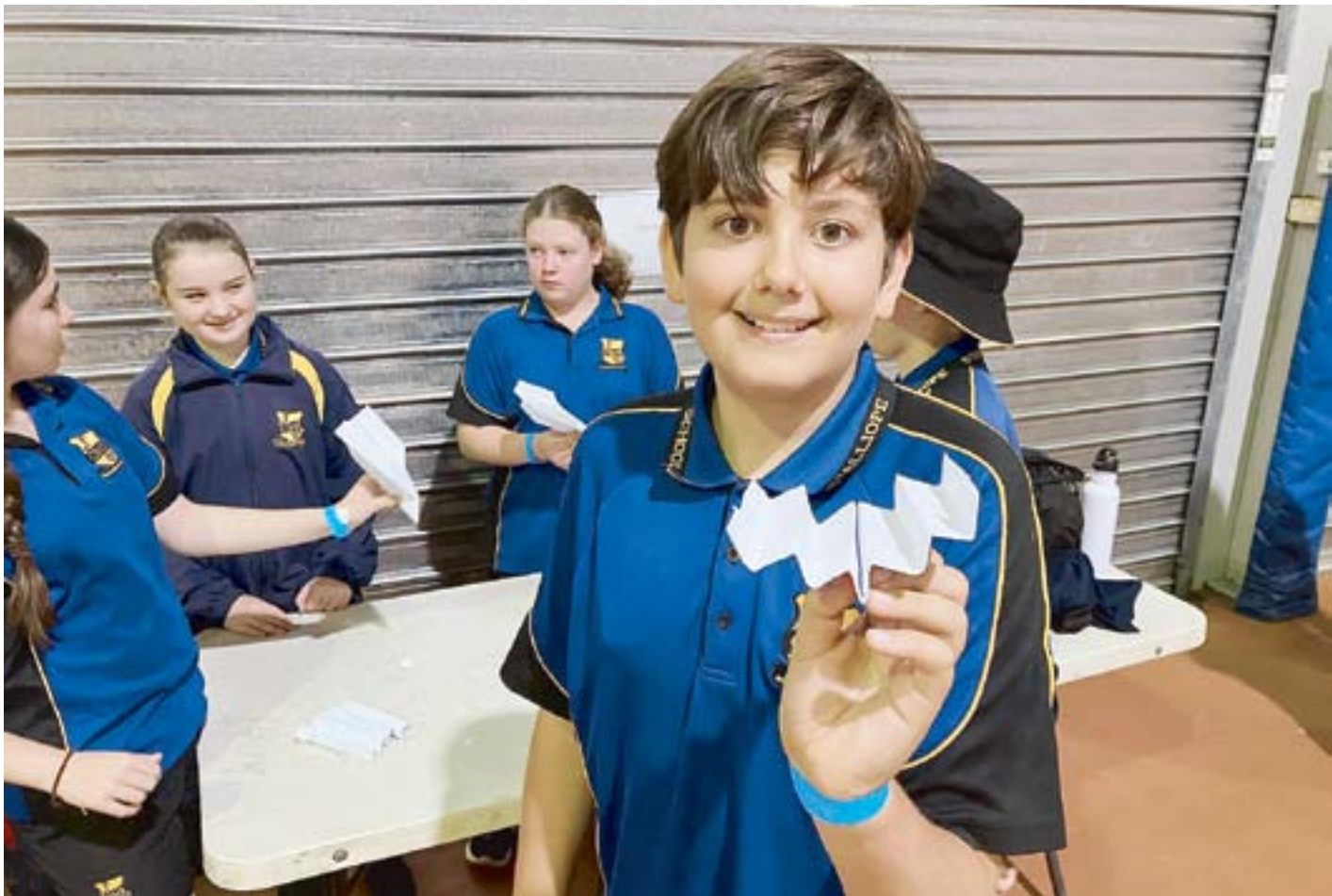
"They enjoyed the chance to connect with fellow STEM enthusiasts from other schools and participate in some friendly competition with the paper planes!"

ConocoPhillips stakeholder relations manager Chantale Lane said they were proud to support the education activities which had been developed to stimulate an interest in STEM and the resources/energy sector.

"Our team had a great time engaging with the students and giving them some insight into how drones can help us with our operations," Ms Lane said.

Queensland Resources Council's director of education, skills and diversity Katrina-Lee Jones said the day had been a great success for the students, the QMEA and ConocoPhillips.

"My hope is that now the students know



Calliope State High School students getting creative at the QMEA workshop.

Pictures: SUPPLIED

how to do basic programming and driving of a drone they will use this to excite their schools about entering in the QMEA drone

challenge happening in July," she said.

Students from Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 attended the workshops from Toolooa State High

School, Chanel College, Calliope State High School, St Francis School, St John's Catholic College and Star of the Sea School.



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QAL staff gather around Federal Energy Minister Chris Bowen (centre), QAL general manager Trent Scherer and Rio Tinto's Refinery Decarbonisation general manager Tim McDougall. Picture: SUPPLIED

Bowen's Gladstone visit

By Karen Simmons

Energy and Climate Change minister Chris Bowen was in Gladstone last month to highlight the Federal Government's \$94 million contribution to a Queensland Alumina Ltd project to help decarbonise its operations.

QAL Alumina is supplied locally to Boyne Aluminium Smelter as well as to Rio Tinto's other aluminium smelters.

The grant amount of \$93,979,069 will support the study phase of the Double Digestion Project and is estimated to reduce the company's emissions by 274,000 tCO₂-e per year.

The project will retrofit a low temperature double digestion unit into existing high temperature unit to reduce coal and gas consumption.

This will be a first of its kind for Australia and is set to create around 20-30 additional full-time equivalent roles and around 600 temporary roles at the peak of fabrication and construction period.

Mr Bowen shared with staff on site how important QAL was as a community employer.

"We all know that QAL has been a very, very important employer in Gladstone since

the 60s, and around the world investors and consumers will want to know that the products that they're buying or investing in are carbon-neutral, and if businesses can't do that, they're going to miss out on business," he said.

"So this is very important for QAL's future, it's a co-investment - we're investing and they're investing - to ensure that that wonderful site at Gladstone can continue for many years to come."

Mr Bowen addressed the issue of economic change in the employment landscape.

"I think we just have to be honest, Gladstone is of course, like many places going through economic change, and there are lots of great employers in Gladstone, and they will supply jobs for many years to come, but we want to make sure that there's enough jobs when that employment changes," he said.

"We want to ensure that there's enough jobs for young people in Gladstone to stay if they wish when they're finished school and TAFE and uni, that they can, and that's going to require big investments, and we want to give people, new people to the opportunity to go to Gladstone and live there."

Conference shows opportunity knocks in Sunshine State

The Connecting Industry Conference Queensland has heard how the state is being recognised globally an ideal location for growing industries in the renewables, hydrogen, and critical minerals space.

Connecting Industry managing director Kieran Moran said the event provided an overview of current and upcoming projects totalling more than \$30 billion to the Sunshine State's economy.

"The event assists the resource, construction, engineering and manufacturing

sector to think strategically in their planning for future work and procurement," Mr Moran said.

"Critical minerals like vanadium are vital to the creation of renewable energy technology and are supercharging our emerging renewable industry economy and helping to grow industrial hubs and manufacturing across the state.

The conference, held online to a wide audience, featured six projects from around Queensland focused on solar, wind, battery, hydro-electric, energy infrastructure, and critical minerals all presenting their business, work, and potential supply chain opportunities.

"Delivering more clean energy will be vital in supercharging our emerging renewable industry economy and helping to

grow industrial hubs and manufacturing across the state," Mr Moran said.

"From Powerlink Queensland presenting the CopperString 2032 to Ark Energy's wind and solar project, the Collinsville Green Energy Hub, and QEM Limited's Julia Creek Vanadium and Oil Shale project, the conference helped get a better understanding of what's coming and also plan ahead for future work opportunities."



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Jarron Dowson (silver medallist) and Kade Marsden (gold medallist).



Pictures: SUPPLIED The WorldSkills Bricklaying competitors and the judges.

Building brighter futures

Central Queensland's best bricklayers battled it out at CQUniversity's Rockhampton City campus earlier this month to kick off the official start of the WorldSkills Regional competitions.

Seven apprentices from around the CQ region converged on the bricklaying work sheds, tasked with crafting a custom brick wall. The apprentices Dylan Belleville, Kade Marsden, Thomas McNeill, Rhylee Murtagh, Lochlan Stowe, Cooper Zahra, and Jarron Dowson, represented companies including Nathan Hagenbach Bricklaying, MIGAS

Apprentices and Trainees, Shane Marsden Bricklaying, Boyne Smelters Ltd, Brick and Trowel Company Pty Ltd and Golden Trowel Brick and Blocklaying.

Kade Marsden, of Shane Marsden Bricklaying was announced as the gold medallist, with Jarron Dowson of MIGAS Apprentices and Trainees awarded silver, and Lochlan Stowe, of Boyne Smelters Ltd, receiving bronze. Kade will now wait to see if he'll proceed to the WorldSkills Nationals to be held in 2025.

"It's good to have won, I really didn't ex-

pect it to be honest," he said.

"It was my first time competing in WorldSkills and it was good fun."

CQU bricklaying teacher and WorldSkills co-judge Peter Carr said it was great seeing many of the apprentices who received their training at CQU TAFE taking the step of competing in WorldSkills.

"WorldSkills is a great way for these apprentices to put their skills to the test with this unique challenge," he said.

WorldSkills CQ coordinator and campus head for the School of Trades at CQU Mack-

ay, Jackie Campbell congratulated the medallists on their achievements.

"This was a great way to kick off the WorldSkills competitions in Central Queensland and CQU is very excited to host further competitions in Plumbing, Hairdressing, Heavy Vehicle and other trades areas between August and October this year," she said.

The bricks used in the competition were donated by Jake Chopping from Austral Masonry.

Visit the CQU WorldSkills page for more information on the upcoming competitions.



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Blow for Bonza workers

By Jacob Shteyman, AAP Canberra

Hundreds of sacked workers have been left in limbo after they were sacked from stricken budget airline Bonza without any way of accessing their entitlements.

Administrator Hall Chadwick told the company's 323 staff in a meeting on Tuesday, 11 June, their employment would be terminated after it failed to find a buyer for the grounded carrier.

Hall Chadwick says it is still talking with potential suitors, but has come under fire for not liquidating the company sooner so workers can become eligible for government support.

Interested parties had been set a deadline of 7 June to submit a purchase proposal, but no binding offers were lodged.

"While this is not the news stakeholders wish to hear, the administrators must make a decision with respect to the stand down of the employees," Hall Chadwick said in a statement. "Furthermore, customers need certainty regarding the operation of future flights. As a result, the administrators have no option but to terminate all employees and cancel all future flights."

Workers had been stood down without pay since April when the airline went into administration and its six Boeing 737 Max 8 planes were repossessed by lessors with debts of about \$110 million.

Hall Chadwick said it continues to investigate the airline's finances and will meet creditors to decide its future once completed.



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Shake it off is not enough

By Poppy Johnston in Canberra/AAP

Households managed to find space in their tight budgets for Taylor Swift concerts and other big-ticket events in the first three months of the year, delivering a bright spot in an otherwise dreary growth report card.

The Australian economy has taken a hit from higher interest rates and still-elevated inflation, logging its slowest through-the-year growth since 1992, outside the pandemic.

The 1.1 per cent annual growth rate was down from 1.6 per cent in the year to December, with the quarterly growth pace clocking in at an insipid 0.1 per cent.

A weak March quarter was expected, although the results were a touch below economists' expectations and where the Reserve Bank of Australia thought the economy would be tracking when it last updated its forecasts.

And while the households were still clearly under financial pressure, spending was a little stronger than expected, with weakness driven by other parts of the economy over the quarter, such as public and private investment and export growth.

The 0.4 per cent lift in the household sector reflected higher spending on essentials, like electricity rent and food, as well as select discretionary areas, including splurging on Taylor Swift concerts and the Formula 1 race in Melbourne.

Savings suffered as a result, with households stashing away just 0.9 per cent of their income over the quarter, from a downwardly revised 1.6 per cent and heading towards 16-year lows.

AMP Australia economists Shane Oliver and My Bui said the combination of a slowing economy and a weakening jobs market meant an interest rate cut was still on the cards for 2024.

"We continue to think that there will be scope for a rate cut later this year, as slowing economic growth leads to lower inflation and the RBA attempts to walk the fine line of avoiding a recession in Australia," they wrote in a note.

The economy has been losing steam as higher interest rates work to dampen demand and weigh on inflation, which has been moderating but remains above the central bank's two-three per cent target band.

A slower economy is an expected consequence of the central bank's series of interest rate hikes, but the goal is to tame inflation without nudging the economy into recession and pushing unemployment up needlessly high.

The economy was still on this "narrow path", RBA governor Michele Bullock con-



Taylor Swift's tour of Australia played an important role in ensuring quarter growth was positive, not negative.

Pictures: AAP

firmed during a parliamentary hearing in Canberra.

On the trajectory for interest rates, she reiterated the board was "not ruling anything in, ruling anything out".

Treasurer Jim Chalmers said he would not speak for the central bank on its interest rate decisions but "it's clear to Australians more broadly that the economy is barely growing".

His last budget, released in May, faced criticism for adding too much new spending and potentially fuelling inflation.

Dr Chalmers said the weak growth figures proved those assessments "dead wrong", with the budget strategy "exactly right" for a weak economy.

Shadow treasurer Angus Taylor said the national accounts were a "shocking set of numbers" and the federal budget was not helping as it would add to inflation.

"There's a whole row of economists out there all saying that (the budget is) expansionary," he told reporters in Canberra.



Treasurer Jim Chalmers said his Federal Budget strategy was "exactly right" for a weak economy.

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Proud history of mining

Batchfire Resources recently celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Callide Mine, located 20km northeast of the thriving Biloela township in the heart of the Callide Valley.

The mine has powered Queensland industry and homes and supported local prosperity with its ultra-low sulfur energy coal for 80 years.

"To have operated continually for 80 years is a tremendous achievement for Callide Mine, both under the management of Batchfire Resources and the previous responsible owners of this productive operation," Batchfire Resources chief executive officer Allan Fidock said.

"At a time when coal was considered to be of low value, early pioneers like the Thiess Brothers saw value where others didn't, understanding that the energy needs of Queensland would require a solution like Callide Mine's thermal coal.

"We continue to focus on powering Queensland industry and homes, while also supporting and caring for the local community, and engaging with the Gaangalu Nation People - Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate - taking Callide Mine into the future." To acknowledge the occasion and recognize the support of those who choose to work at the mine, Batchfire Resources is hosting a Family Day at Callide Mine in September 2024.

Last time the mine operator hosted a family day, back in 2022, it was a huge success.

"We acknowledge the importance of 80 years of Callide Mine by coming together within the community responsible for so much of the mine's success," Operations



Callide Mine workers.

general manager Scott Haynes said.

"Around 85 per cent of our workforce resides within the Callide Valley and always has, so we want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the families behind the scenes that support their family members who are responsible for keeping around 15 per cent to 18 per cent of the lights on across

Queensland.

"By welcoming family members for the day, it gives children, partners and even parents a look at the impressive machinery, technology and teams that make it happen at Callide Mine."

The 80th anniversary of Callide Mine coincides with another momentous occasion



The Callide Mine is celebrating 80 years in operation.

- the 100th anniversary of the Biloela township.

Batchfire Resources is contributing to the celebrations throughout Biloela, joining locals in celebrating the thriving community.

HIDDEN TREASURE

The story of Callide Mine started in the 1890s when a seam of 'black gold' was discovered by three state-aided prospectors - at a time when coal was worth less than a dollar per tonne.

Until the coal was discovered, gold fossickers scoured the Callide Valley in search of a precious-metal payday, with moderate success.

Gold fever throughout the region remained into the 1900s, but there was an equally valuable resource right under the noses of fossickers.

In 1891, Government Geologist William Rands sunk six shafts at the site, which would become Callide Mine, to reveal a 9m thick coal seam that was one of the largest in Australia at the time.



BATCHFIRE RESOURCES, ON BEHALF OF CALLIDE MINE, THANKS OUR PARTNERS, WORKERS, AND THE WIDER CALLIDE VALLEY COMMUNITY FOR 80 YEARS OF SUCCESS

BATCHFIRE CALLIDE MINE CELEBRATING 80 YEARS

12056434-JF25-24

However, some 30 years passed as the forgotten treasure remained untouched, with cattle grazing on the scrub around Dunn Creek and Petersen's Gully and people unaware of how valuable the land on which they roamed would become.

In those days, coal was used primarily to power steam trains and was deemed to be of little value compared with more desirable resources like gold, but early pioneers saw its value as a commodity of the future.

Those innovators were none other than the iconic Thiess Brothers, who were commissioned to remove overburden for the new open-cut coal endeavor when a second head of steam and need emerged.

What resulted was a period of coal discovery that would change the Callide Valley forever and leave an indelible stamp on the economic development of Central Queensland, as the booming coal mining industry was born.

The Thiess Brothers took the hand-dug mining operation, which relied on horse-and-cart transport, into the future with a fleet of high-productivity machinery.

A major post-WWII machinery shortage required innovative thinking, which is why the enterprising Thiess Brothers looked further afield in their search for the biggest machinery they could get their hands on.

Thiess Brothers combined their political clout, mechanical know-how and willingness to do whatever it took, heading to the jungles of Papua New Guinea to buy abandoned war-time machinery 'by the acre.'

Much of the machinery was rusted beyond repair, but mechanical genius Cecil Thiess restored and modified the equipment – which would ultimately shape the way we mine today.

On April 26, 1944, Thiess Brothers began excavations at Callide Mine using a single D7 tractor and ripper to move 2400 cubic yards of overburden in just four days, expos-



The machinery has grown in size and efficiency.

ing one of the best seams of black gold.

Before long, the D7 was joined by a fleet of new-age machinery, trucks, and equipment that were responsible for extracting and transporting the coal to the nearby port town of Gladstone for domestic and international customers.

By the 1960s, a 25-year contract with nearby Calcap Power Station (now decommissioned Callide A) would open the door to lasting prosperity for the Callide Mine at a time when the operation had a staff of just 23 men.

This was the beginning of Callide Mine's longstanding reputation as a leading provider of thermal coal, powering Queensland homes and businesses.

Another jewel in the crown for the Callide Mine was a 22-year contract with Callide B power station that landed in 1988, which led

to a major increase in staff and the need to look 'to the future' to remain competitive as a leading energy supplier into the twenty-first century.

In 1993, the Callide Mine was taken to another level, with an \$80 million investment in the state-of-the-art Marion 8750 dragline, which is still operating today.

The Marion 8750 was the largest dragline in Australia at the time, with a 128-metre boom, 80 cubic metre bucket and the capacity to move 20 million cubic metres of overburden each year.

INTO THE FUTURE

Callide Mine continued to grow into the 2000s, before being purchased by Batchfire Resources on 1 November 2016.

Batchfire Resources has since increased production, while also achieving greater ef-

iciency and reduced environmental impact using new technology and rehabilitation strategies.

Diesel-electric drive machinery, emission-reduction initiatives, and improved environmental practices have positioned Batchfire as a responsible mine operator.

As Callide Mine acknowledges 80 years of continuous operation, Batchfire Resources, the current owner, looks to the future with sustainability at the heart of its business.

The resource provider is committed to responsible extraction while also respecting and safeguarding the land on which it operates, aiming to achieve a business target of reduced emissions over an extended period.

A range of important rehabilitation programs are in place at Callide Mine, enabling a pivot to sustainable post-mining land uses for future generations under a proposed Progressive Rehabilitation and Mine Closure Plan (PRCP).

Batchfire Resources is exploring options for soil carbon sequestration, sustainable agricultural partnerships leveraging water and rehabilitated land resources and bushland regeneration.

As the Callide Valley region's largest combined direct and indirect employer, supporting over 1,250 families, Batchfire Resources remains committed to supporting the local economy and its people.

Batchfire Resources is proud to acknowledge a strong relationship with the Gaan-galu Nation.

People who Batchfire recognises as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it operates, and with whom Batchfire constantly seeks to increase ongoing employment and business partnership opportunities.

The Callide Mine has supported the Callide Valley for 80 years and during that time has kept the lights on in homes and businesses across Queensland – shaping the state as we know it.

LOOKING FOR A CHANGE?

JOIN THE TEAM AT CALLIDE MINE



SCAN TO CHECK OUT
AVAILABLE JOBS



Upskilling plan launched

In a strategic move to address the pressing skill shortages within the Australian coal industry, Batchfire Resources has unveiled a comprehensive dual upskilling initiative.

The innovative program is designed to facilitate the career transition of light vehicle technicians to diesel fitters, and diesel fitters to auto electricians, ensuring a versatile and robust workforce capable of adapting to the industry's evolving demands.

The initiative is a collaborative effort between Batchfire Resources, Apprentices and Trainees Queensland (ATQLD), and TAFE Queensland.

Together, they aim to tackle the persistent trade shortages affecting the coal mining industry.

By bridging the skills gap, Batchfire's aim is to ensure a sustainable and proficient workforce for the future.

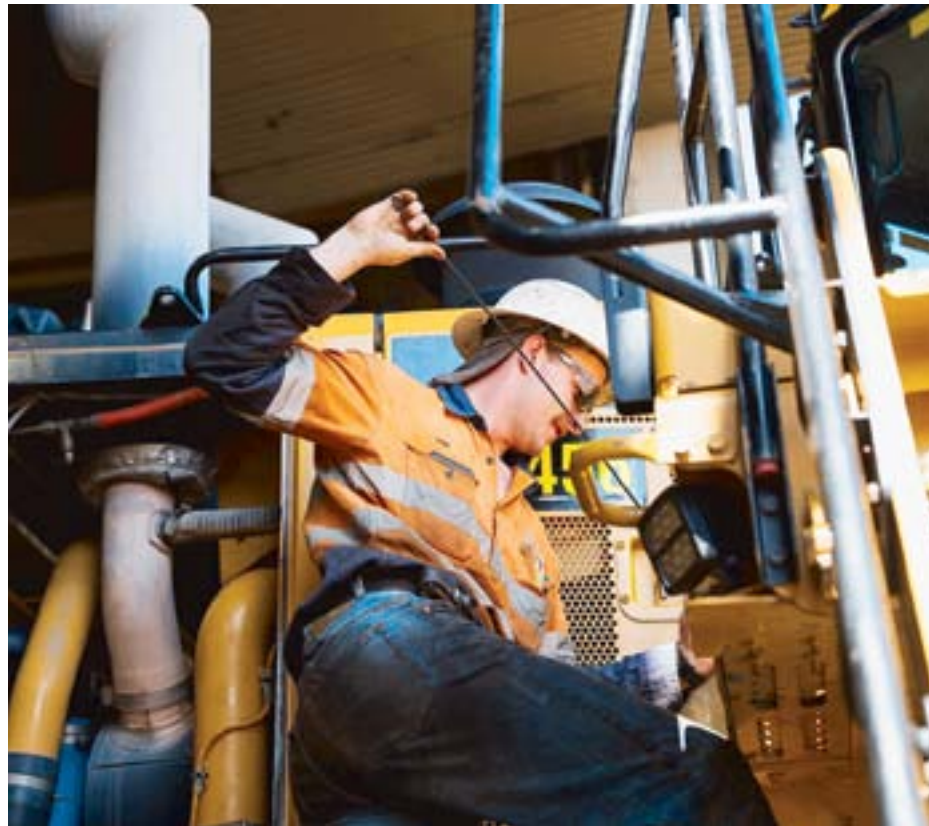
"We are a residential mine with a focus on local people, and we recognise there are skills gaps, so we want to upskill the incredible tradespeople we already have here now," Batchfire Resources Training and HR Systems manager Breohny Burnett said.

Recognising the critical need for skilled tradespeople, Batchfire Resources is working closely with ATQLD and TAFE Queensland to develop and deliver tailored training programs.

ATQLD field officer Sally Cowen expressed her enthusiasm, having been closely involved in establishing the important industry initiative.

"This program is a game-changer for the industry," Ms Cowen said.

"By providing comprehensive training



In a strategic move to address the pressing skill shortages within the Australian coal industry, Batchfire Resources has unveiled a comprehensive dual upskilling initiative.

Picture: SUPPLIED

and clear career pathways, we address current skill shortages and assist Batchfire Resources in ensuring long-term success for

their workforce and mine.

"The collaboration with Batchfire Resources and TAFE Queensland is crucial in

making this initiative a reality."

The programs are designed to equip workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the mining industry, utilising a blend of on-site practical training and theoretical modules.

This dual approach not only enhances the skills of current workers but also establishes clear career pathways within the Batchfire Resources workforce.

"This is all about fostering the growth of our existing workforce, as we acknowledge those who are eager to learn and grow as tradespeople," Ms Burnett said.

"We want to reward the talented apprentices within our workforce, by spotting talent early on and helping those people accelerate their mining industry career."

By promoting from within, the company is helping skilled tradespeople advance, fostering a culture of growth and development.

"We are developing the future leaders here at Batchfire, through programs like this one," Ms Burnett said.

"Many of our dual-trade apprentices will go on to tackle leadership roles, so we are proud to be able to fast track their careers with this program."

This strategic initiative by Batchfire Resources highlights the company's commitment to proactively addressing industry challenges, and the investment in developing a skilled and adaptable workforce is one that aims to contribute to the broader stability and growth of the Banana Shire regional economy and in turn the Australian coal industry.

BATCHFIRE

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Mentor Tammy Alden and Business Leader Shanah Stewart from Community Solutions.



Judy Ramm and her son Paul taking some merchandise from vendors at the expo.



Teresa Pitino from IPA at the Mount Morgan Careers Expo.

Expo's golden approach

The future of the Mount Morgan community is looking golden, with hundreds of current and future jobs highlighted at the Mount Morgan Jobs Expo on Wednesday, 12 June.

Attended by students from Mount Morgan State High School and more than a dozen employers and training providers, the tailored careers expo aimed to improve employment outcomes for the Mount Morgan community and offer well-paid and stable jobs which support the town's future growth.

Rockhampton Regional Council, through its lead economic development agency, Advance Rockhampton, delivered the event in partnership with Workforce Australia, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training and various job active agencies.

Rockhampton Region Deputy Mayor Drew Wickerson said employers are increasingly turning to Mount Morgan to fill high-value positions.

"Major projects from Heritage Minerals, Mort and Co, and in the energy sector are creating exciting opportunities for Mount Morgan through new employment options and economic stimulus from businesses into the town," Cr Wickerson said.

"Having organisations such as Heritage Minerals, Construction Skills Queensland, BMD, Neoen, Teys and JBS taking part in the expo shows the incredible potential they see in the future of Mount Morgan, and the wealth of career pathways available to locals.

"Through Advance Rockhampton, council continues to advocate for a strong future for Mount Morgan, whether that be through the construction of the permanent water



About 120-150 school students and job seekers attended the expo in Mount Morgan.

Pictures: SOPHIE MOSSMAN

pipeline or supporting events like the Mount Morgan Jobs Expo."

Since Rockhampton Regional Council's adoption of the Advancing Mount Morgan Strategy, the unemployment rate across the Mount Morgan district has dropped from 18.3 per cent in 2016 to a low of 11.7 per cent in 2022 but is starting to increase again to

17.7 per cent in 2023 according to ABS data, which is another good reason to undertake this expo.

Rockhampton councillor Cherie Rutherford said the expo provided direct employment opportunities for job seekers and supported the creation of employment pathways for school students.

"The passion Mount Morgan residents hold for their community is second-to-none," Cr Rutherford said.

"By supporting young people to find employment close to home, we're doing everything we can to encourage the next generation to put down roots and commit to a future in Mount Morgan."

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Fairer approach needed



The lone stockman—whether ringer, drover, jackaroo, or cowboy—has long symbolised the vastness and ruggedness (or perhaps the masculinity) of the Australian West, represented in events and tributes like Longreach’s Stockmans Hall of Fame and Rockhampton’s Beef Australia.

This stylised, often romanticised image helps us picture the tribute or event, yet it only reflects a portion of the human story in the Australian livestock industry.

What about the plus one?

The women of the West—shouldn’t their image stand alongside the lone stockman?

Together, these images would more accurately depict what the Stockmans Hall of Fame or Beef Australia stands for.

A testament to the industry and all the people who contributed, and continue, to it.

Women and the roles they performed, and continue to do so, are indeed recognised in the history of the Australian livestock industry.

The Stockman Hall of Fame itself exists thanks to Nancy Button (nee Coade), whose initiative and drive led to its establishment in Longreach.

Her contribution is acknowledged at the entrance to the impressive building. However, it is the large statue of the male



The Australian Stockmans Hall of Fame, Longreach.

‘Ringer’ that dominates, both physically and mentally, shaping our expectations of the Hall’s stories.

Banjo Patterson’s romanticised image of Clancy out on the Cooper (Clancy of the Overflow) only tells part of the story.

If Clancy had a partner, where was she and what was she doing while Clancy was droving?

As you will discover at the Stockmans Hall of Fame, some women accompanied their partners as drovers, even head drovers.

More often, they were home alone for months, raising children, cooking, caring, gardening, repairing, teaching, nursing, pro-

tecting—waiting for their husbands to return, not for respite, but simply for an adult company in their isolated existence.

The epic tales of properties like Bowen Downs and its offshoot, Mt Cornish, capture the imagination with stories of drought, flood, and Harry Redford’s cattle duffing.

The Hall of Fame features the story of Edward Roland Edkins, the first manager of Mt Cornish, who drove 10,000 cattle from the Gulf to Bowen Downs.

Longreach honours Edward Roland Huey Edkins, the son of Edward and known as the father of Longreach, with Edkins Memorial Park.



Pic of the ‘Ringer’ out front of Australian Stockmans Hall of Fame, Longreach.

Yet, what about Edwina, Edward’s wife and Huey’s mother?

Her story, ‘For Love They Faced the Wilderness,’ is equally remarkable.

The daughter of a Tasmanian doctor, she left Melbourne in 1866 with Edward, becoming the first white woman in the Gulf country.

She composed music, including for George Essex Evans’ poem “Women of the West,” and served as the region’s de facto doctor.

Where would the father of Longreach be without his mother?

As we look forward to Beef Australia 2027 in Rockhampton, the Beef Capital of Australia,

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Before a Renewable Energy Zone can be declared, we have to undertake a thorough readiness assessment to understand the opportunities and potential impacts, so that’s what we’re doing now.

A series of engagement sessions will be held across Central Queensland throughout June, July and August so keep an eye on local media, community notice boards or search the Department of Energy and Climate’s website to find a session near you.

Session Dates:

Banana 19 June 10 July 14 August	Gladstone 4 June 4 July 6 July 6 August	Rockhampton 12-14 June 17-19 July 26-28 July 8 August
Biloela 20 June 9 July 13 August	Moranbah 10 June 16 July	Taroom 17 July
Calliope 5 June 5 July 7 August	Moura 9 July 16-17 August	Theodore 18 June 11 July 15 August
Dululu 11 June	Mt Larcom 22-23 June	





Edkins Memorial Gardens, in Longreach.



Pictures: SUPPLIED

Recognition of Nancy Button role in getting the Australian Stockmans Hall of Fame at Longreach.

it would be a sign of the event's maturity to include the image of a woman alongside the stockman in its main imagery and logo. Not be the ancillary, arguably generally overlooked, 'plus one'.

George Essex Evans rightly said: "The hearts that made the nation were the Women of the West."

Recognising their contributions, in a more prominent way, further enriches our understanding of the past and duly honours more of those who shaped our nation's history.

Women Of The West

They left the vine-wreathed cottage and the mansion on the hill,

The houses in the busy streets where life is never still,

The pleasures of the city, and the friends they cherished best:

For love they faced the wilderness -the Women of the West.

The roar, and rush, and fever of the city died away,

And the old-time joys and faces-they were gone for many a day;

In their place the lurching coach-wheel, or the creaking bullock-chains,

O'er the everlasting sameness of the never-ending plains.

In the slab-built, zinc-roofed homestead of some lately taken run,

In the tent beside the bankment of a railway just begun,

In the huts on new selections, in the camps of man's unrest,

On the frontiers of the Nation, live the Women of the West.

The red sun robs their beauty and, in weariness and pain,

The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes again;

And there are hours men cannot soothe, and words men cannot say

The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away.

The wide bush holds the secrets of their longing and desires,

When the white stars in reverence light their holy altar fires,

And silence, like the touch of God, sinks deep into the breast

Perchance He hears and understands the Women of the West.

For them no trumpet sounds the call, no poet plies his arts

They only hear the beating of their gallant, loving hearts.

But they have sung with silent lives the song all songs above?

The holiness of sacrifice, the dignity of love.

Well, have we held our father's creed?

No call has passed us by.

We faced and fought the wilderness, we sent our sons to die.

And we have hearts to do and dare, and yet, o'er all the rest,

The hearts that made the Nation were the Women of the West.

-George Essex Evans, 1901



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Small business secrets



Are you a “typical” small business owner?

The Queensland Small Business Commissioner recently engaged our own Central Queensland University to undertake some research to help figure out what makes a small business owner tick. If you’ve ever run a small business yourself, you’ll understand the complexity of that question!

So, what did the study find?

- There are four stages in the life cycle of a small business: initiation, growth, stabilisation, and exit and small businesses cycle between periods of positive or negative growth and stabilisation many times across this lifecycle.
- Above all else, the study found that it is stability, not growth, that small business owners seek!
- The mindset of small business owners remains relatively consistent across the life-cycle of the business.
- Small business owners are highly customer-focused—making their customers their top priority. They also have a good understanding of their competitors and are open to innovation but not highly enthusiastic about it.
- In the main, small business owners tend to avoid risk-taking, even when high returns are possible and are not keen on being the first to adopt new technologies, products, and services.



The Queensland Small Business Commissioner engaged CQUniversity to research small business owners. Picture: FILE

■ Most do not use analytics, research, or external advice to help inform their decision-making.

If I was to pose the opening question to you again, how would you respond now?

From the Chamber’s perspective, there is some low hanging fruit here that we can all work on. And the most obvious one is that last point.

One of my favourite sayings is, “you can’t read the label of the jar you’re in”. Time and again I see examples of businesses that make decisions based on a hunch or by hatching a plan they think will be amazing, without checking with anyone else. (I have been guilty of this myself!) Sometimes it works out, and sometimes you’re way off the mark.

From your accountant to a business coach, from your customers to others at Chamber events, it’s wise to seek external advice and different perspectives. Ask someone from “outside your jar” so they can read the label properly!

One big advantage that smaller businesses have over larger ones is agility – the power and flexibility to make changes quickly as circumstances change. I’d encourage you to use this superpower, but temper it with just a little bit of what the big corporation do. We don’t need to commission a huge study; we can simply rely on our trusted networks to gather some external feedback, advice and guidance.

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Your small business is no different.

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Construction slowdown

Construction proved to be the economy's weakest link during the March 2024 quarter, with industry output suffering a sharp 2.6 per cent reverse in the first three months of the year.

The decrease was driven by a 2.3 per cent fall in construction services, a 3.1 per cent fall in building construction and a 2.6 per cent fall in heavy and civil engineering construction.

Overall, GDP scraped the smallest gain of 0.1 per cent – the worst outcome in almost two years.

Master Builders Australia chief executive officer Denita Wawn said when the building and construction industry is strong, so too is the economy.

"We know for every dollar invested in the industry sees three dollars returned to the broader economy," Ms Wawn said.

"In 2023, construction was one of the main drivers of economic growth, but today's sobering figures reflect a continuous decline in building approvals across all sectors of the industry.

"This comes at a time when an increasing supply of housing is needed to bring down inflation in the rental market.

"The drastic lengthening in build times for new homes and an increase of costs by 40 per cent since pre-COVID is making it extremely difficult to get projects off the ground.

"We can't keep turning a blind eye to the crucial role of productivity in growing our economy and combating inflation.

"This will only be achieved if the federal, state and territory governments get a move on and speed up planning reforms, finalise the migration review, introduce new incentives to grow the workforce, and introduce



Construction proved to be the Australian economy's weakest link during the March 2024 quarter, with industry output suffering a sharp 2.6 per cent reverse in the first three months of the year. Picture: FILE

an industry regulator with real teeth.

"If we are going to undo decades of under-building and resolve this housing crisis, we need to change the economic environment to encourage investment across all sectors: residential, civil and commercial

construction."

Ms Wawn said Treasurer Jim Chalmers and Housing Minister Julie Collins had introduced an important policy lever to encourage investment in build-to-rent which will play a role in bringing down

rental inflation.

"Master Builders (Australia) is still working through the details of the legislation but supports the principle of diversifying the housing supply mix in our economy," Ms Wawn said.

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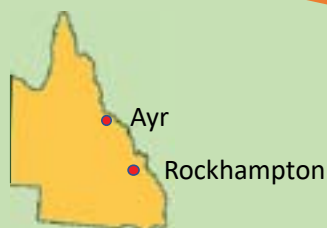
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Weaker global markets

Global beef production is expected to contract in the second half of 2024, providing support to global prices, according to a new report by agribusiness banking specialist Rabobank.

In its recently released Global Beef Quarterly Q2 2024, the bank says global beef production for quarter two is forecast to be marginally higher than in the same quarter last year, but volumes for quarters three and four are expected to fall year-on-year (YOY).

Rabobank says more beef is expected to be produced in Australia and Brazil in the second half of this year, however these increases are likely to be outweighed by production contractions in Europe, the US and China.

“Contractions in beef production in Europe and the US are expected to be too big for the increases forecast in Australia and Brazil to offset. And China’s production is set to increase in the second quarter before contracting later in the year,” the report’s lead author and RaboResearch senior animal protein analyst Angus Gidley-Baird said.

Looking at global pricing, Mr Gidley-Baird said, a two-speed cattle market continues to exist with the North America tracking close to record highs – amid the contraction in local production – while other regions remained more subdued.

“Europe finds itself in the middle ground, despite a recent uptick in production,” he said.

The report said these regional disparities were beginning to influence international trade flows, with the US ramping up its import volumes and major Asian markets maintaining steady import levels.

The report said the Australian beef market remains balanced, but increasing import



Global beef production is expected to contract in the second half of 2024, providing support to global prices, according to a new report by agribusiness banking specialist Rabobank, but there is still good news for the Australian industry. Picture: FILE

demand from the US was starting to bite as the contraction in production flow through locally.

“Australian export volumes to the US were up 117 per cent in April and year-to-date volumes to the US are up 89 per cent,” he said.

Meanwhile export volumes to other major markets are not showing the same increase.

“The contraction in US production – particularly the reduction in cull cow and bull slaughter – provides opportunities for Australian lean trimmings export volumes,” Mr Gidley-Baird said.

“It also provides opportunities for Australian volumes into key Asian markets where the US is a comparable supplier to Australia.”

Mr Gidley-Baird said while export volumes to the US and US import prices had increased, this had not completely flowed through to Australian cattle prices yet.


“Cattle supply volumes in Australia, ongoing soft demand in Asian countries and relatively full supply chains, we believe, are the reasons for not seeing prices transfer through,” he said.

The report said first-quarter Australian slaughter and production volumes had seen


a 17 per cent and 15 per cent increase year-on-year respectively, reflecting the increased number of cattle in the system following consecutive years of rebuilding activity.

The Rabobank report noted volumes in the first quarter of 2024 were similar to those in the last quarter of 2023 – illustrating a sustained increase in Australian beef production.

Without any strong demand or supply forces on the horizon, Mr Gidley-Baird said, the bank believed Australian cattle prices would continue to trade around current levels into the third quarter.




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A smiling farmer at a recent hay drop by Rural Aid. The demand for fodder in large parts of the country remains high despite recent rains. Picture: SUPPLIED

Demand for fodder still high despite recent rain

Rain across four states has failed to dampen demand for fodder to feed drought affected livestock.

Rural Aid said the sigh of relief from farmers who received rain in early June was almost audible such was the desperation of some; none more so than producers in south-western West Australia where the region had experienced its driest conditions on record.

“This rain could not have come at a better time given the circumstances producers had in front of them,” Rural Aid chief executive officer John Warlters said.

“But we don’t expect the demand for fodder, or the challenge in sourcing it, to change in the short to medium term.”

The challenge was still ahead of many farming families whose enterprises had received only light relief and where still hoping for more rain in coming weeks.

Mr Warlters said Rural Aid, Australia’s renowned rural charity, would support those farmers doing it tough.

“Rural Aid continues to be active right across the country at this time providing hay for livestock, drinking water, and financial relief,” he said.

“Our counsellors are particularly active in providing one-on-one support, but are also attending a wide cross-section of industry events to ensure they are visible and easily accessible to anyone that wants to chat.”

Producers impacted by bushfires in late 2023 across the Southern and Western Darling Downs were recently supported with hay and counselling.

Mr Warlters said Rural Aid relied heavily on community and corporate support to fund its activities and was encouraging tax-time donations to help sustain its efforts.

“With June 30 just around the corner now is an opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation in support of Rural Aid and ‘our mates in the bush’ – the farming families that need our help,” he said.

Nats in live exports fight

Nationals' leader David Littleproud has re-affirmed a future Coalition Government will reinstate the live sheep export trade if elected.

Debating the Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024, Mr Littleproud told Parliament the industry has seen major reforms since 2019 and is now world leading.

"It is senseless to remove ourselves from the market, because the Middle East will simply find other markets which don't have our animal welfare standards," Mr Littleproud said.

"Australian exporters can measure the pants of a sheep per minute and the length of their wool to the millimetre on a boat. Animals Australia and the RSPCA are morally bankrupt, because they are valuing the life of a sheep in Australia over that from another country.

"The market overseas will continue, this is a food security and cultural issue."

Mr Littleproud pointed out live sheep exports from Australia increased from 380,000 in 2022 to more than 654,000 in 2023.

Although it's a growing market, Labor plans to phase out the industry by May 1, 2028.

Labor announced a live sheep phase out Standing Committee inquiry, which must report back by 21 June, despite voting down The Nationals' motion for an inquiry in the House of Representatives.

"This committee will inevitably be rushed and once again cause more anxiety among farmers. Agriculture Minister Murray Watt is avoiding a Senate inquiry and is still unable to explain the science behind closing the industry and destroying the livelihoods of 3000 farmers," Mr Littleproud said.



Nationals' leader David Littleproud says the Coalition will reinstate live sheep exports if it gains power at the next Federal Election.

Picture: FILE

"Labor's transition package of \$107 million only includes \$64.6 million for sheep producers and the supply chain – it isn't good enough. We also need answers into the so-called independent panel that travelled around WA and the callous way our farmers have been treated by Labor. The Nationals will always back our farmers – a future Coalition Government will reinstate the live sheep export trade."

Committee chair Meryl Swanson MP said that the Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024 fulfils the Federal Government's election promise to end the live export of sheep while providing time and funding for industry to adjust to the end of the trade.

The committee will examine the provisions of the Bill and its application to the live sheep export trade, especially in

Western Australia.

This includes the end of live sheep exports by sea and authority for Commonwealth spending to assist sheep farmers, businesses and communities to prepare and adapt.

"There are a range of views on this issue. The committee is looking forward to meeting and talking with stakeholders in Western Australia," Ms Swanson said.

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Dramatic tale leaves a lasting mark

In October 2015, the life of then 3 year old Skye White and her family took a dramatic turn when the curiosity and enthusiasm of a toddler had horrific results. Skye's mother, Mandy White, recounts the experience and expresses her deep gratitude for services like RACQ CapRescue.

The incident occurred on the White family's property, where Mandy was tending to a newly arrived horse and had instructed Skye to stand outside the yard.

"I had my back turned to Skye while I was feeding the horse," Mandy recalls.

"I felt the horse surge over my shoulder and thought it was his nervous behaviour. However when I checked to see where Skye was and saw her getting up from the ground, I immediately knew she'd been kicked. She had a deep cut from her eye to her hairline and her right side of her face was starting to sag with a lot of blood."

Mandy's husband quickly came to their aid, and they called 000 while trying to calm Skye and stop the bleeding. Skye began to drift in and out of consciousness. The Marlborough ambulance road team arrived quickly, stabilising and preparing Skye for transport. The aeromedical crew landed in the front yard and took over with remarkable efficiency and compassion.

"Skye wouldn't go in the helicopter alone, so they accommodated us by letting me lie on the stretcher with her on top. I was terrified she might die and hoped the chopper would reach the hospital quickly," Mandy said.

Upon arrival at the hospital, Skye was immediately taken into emergency surgery.

"The kick had marginally missed her skull, and whilst she required numerous internal and external stitches, we were sent home with Skye recovering well."

Reflecting on the ordeal, Mandy shares, "It was life-changing and traumatic for me. The scar on Skye's face is a constant reminder of that day."

Skye, however, does not remember the incident and has not developed any fears of horses. The family does ensure that the children always wear helmets these days when they saddle up.

"I'm so grateful Skye is with us today and I can't thank her rescuers enough for their kindness and professionalism. We would definitely encourage people to donate to a service that makes a real difference in rural Queensland."

A decade of lifesaving support

RACQ CapRescue proudly commemorates a decade of life-saving efforts with the 10th anniversary of the Rescue300 club, launched in 2014. This milestone is underscored by the commitment of over 30 original members, who continue to be the backbone of the club that saves lives.

Over the years, membership has grown, with over 160 like-minded businesses and individuals now annually contributing to CapRescue.

CapRescue Communications and Engagement Officer Kim Walters, said the Rescue300 club is such an important part to assisting in fundraising and creating awareness about the service.

"Watching this club grow over the years has been such a positive reflection on the community's belief in what we do. With a mission to now raise \$6 million each year, Rescue300 members play an important part not just financially but also getting our messages out to the public, they're part of our team."

Members of the Rescue300 club enjoy a multitude of benefits, but most

importantly is the privilege of being part of the CapRescue family and helping to keep Central Queensland safe.

Additionally, the Rescue300 club offers the unique opportunity to win a sponsor-sized logo with pride of place on the rescue helicopters. Past recipient and original member Callan Bucholz of Stage & Audio - Event Solutions, attests to the invaluable impact of CapRescue.

"We believe that the service is absolutely essential to the well-being of our region, and we are honoured to be a part of their efforts," said Callan.

Within the Rescue300 club, there have been notable members who have elevated their businesses and involvement to higher levels of partnership with CapRescue. Including previous sponsor Coxons, ongoing event partner QMAG and most recently Jemena.

Their increased support not only demonstrates their dedication to the community but also signifies the trust and confidence they place in the world-class capabilities of CapRescue.

As CapRescue celebrates this significant milestone, they extend their heartfelt gratitude to all Rescue300 club members, past and present, for their unwavering support. Together, they continue to save lives and make a real difference.



2024 Annual Appeal

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