

Lockyer Valley Economic Development Plan 2018 - 2023



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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

Stafford Strategy¹ (Stafford) was commissioned by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Council) to develop and update the 2013 Economic Development Plan (Plan) for the Lockyer Valley region, including updates to the Regional Food Sector Strategy (Strategy), covering the period 2018-2023. This report also aligns to Councils Corporate Plan 2017-2022 which sets out Councils vision for the region.

This Plan also aligns with Councils corporate goals of:

- Lockyer Business – our business community is a thriving and inclusive network where it is easy to do business. We create opportunities and encourage innovation that inspires business confidence and collaborative partnerships.
- Lockyer Farming – as custodians we manage our water and land assets to ensure our farming future. We pride ourselves on our innovation and clean, green reputation. We work together to support our farmers of current and future generations.
- Lockyer Livelihood – we are a community where lifelong learning opportunities exist. Our quality education facilities are highly regarded and provide diverse career pathways. We look to develop skills and generate job opportunities for all.

This report provides key findings from consultation, site visits, desktop research and analysis. It also identifies key opportunities for economic growth and some challenges to address.

The purpose of the Plan is to:

- recognise the key outcomes from the 2013 Plan and Strategy, including development and investment opportunities that have been realised, are ongoing or yet to be fully achieved;
- update the region's economic profile, including key demographic and labour force characteristics;
- identify key industry sectors, including emerging sectors;
- identify partnership opportunities;
- re-evaluate economic development strategies;
- develop strategies to support business and industry; and
- identify competitive advantages and how to capitalise on them.

This report is part of a suite of strategies and plans, including the update to the Tourism Destination Plan. As such, there will be a degree of overlap, although every effort has been made to avoid excessive duplication.

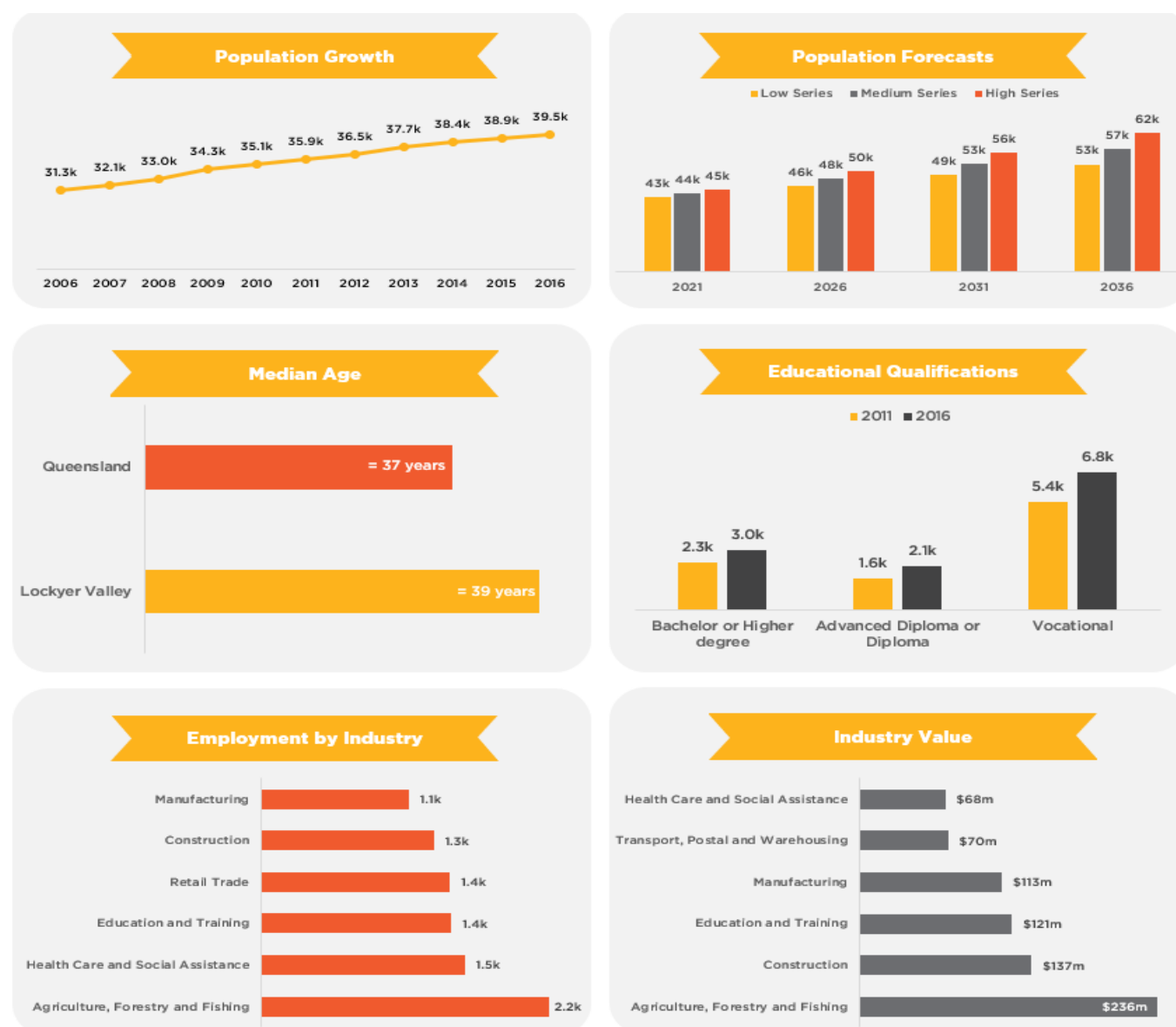
¹ Formerly The Stafford Group till rebranded to Stafford Strategy in November 2017

1.2. Situation Analysis

As shown in Figure 1, the Lockyer Valley's population is forecast to grow from current levels of 39.5k to a range of 53k to 62k by 2036. Coupled with a slightly older age profile (compared to the state average), this will result in increased demand for civic services and supporting infrastructure.

In addition, the regional economy is primarily driven by the agricultural industry, in terms of overall employment (14% of direct jobs), as well as industry value (21% of total value). Therefore, opportunities to stimulate further economic growth and meet growing demand for goods and services should be focused in a variety of sectors including extracting maximum value from the agricultural sector, while also leveraging off other regional strengths, such as proximity to Brisbane and the Gold Coast, accessibility via the Warrego Highway (and surrounding airports – Toowoomba, Brisbane and Gold Coast), the location of the University of Queensland Gatton Campus (with strong agricultural and veterinary science faculties) and the ability to attract international backpackers (seasonal farm workers) amongst other niche markets.

Figure 1: Lockyer Valley Situation Analysis



1.3. Context

The following categorises the key elements and characteristics of the Lockyer Valley economy, identifying areas to help stimulate sustainable greater economic growth.²

Table 1: Key Challenges

 Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population base is projected to grow (ranging from 53k to 62k by 2036), helping to achieve a 'critical mass' of residents to support key civic services, supporting infrastructure and retail amenities As the population is reasonably dispersed across the wider region, Council must ensure adequate provision of key civic services to reduce the need for residents to commute to surrounding metropolitan centres. 	 Marketing & Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the Lockyer Valley brand and marketing strategy will enhance the region's ability to position itself as one of Australia's primary producers of vegetables and other fresh produce along with becoming a major food bowl. Brand recognition, particularly by the average consumer, creates flow-on economic benefits for the region and further value adds. 	 Accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are sufficient commercial accommodation facilities to attract overnight visitation and facilitate business events and conferences The quality of accommodation also needs to be maintained to meet the needs of the visitor market. 	 Tourism Precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tourism precinct, providing a critical mass of tourist activities and product (food and beverage, retail, accommodation, etc) could attract and support visitation. Opportunities exist to develop walkways, mountain biking trails and cycleways and to expand boating and recreational facilities around lakes and water ways.
 Indoor Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is the potential to increase the provision of retail and entertainment facilities in the Lockyer Valley. This could include recreational activities or product that appeals to, and attracts, children and young families, with future examples being more cultural entertainment, shopping centres, or additional restaurant facilities. 	 Workforce Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to lower its unemployment rate. provide job opportunities for younger families. Through increased linkages to the University of Queensland Gatton Campus, this could result in more educated, professional and highly-skilled workers in the region, which would increase their attractiveness in the jobs market. In addition, the development of additional quality accommodation facilities will help attract and retain additional international and seasonal workers. There is a need to pursue investment that provides jobs in the region and which also fits with the values identified in the Council's Community Plan. 	 Water Supply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the key challenges for growers/farmers is water security and certainty in water supply. This is critical to future proofing the agricultural sector and the region's economy through securing additional water sources. Council has recently completed a pre-feasibility study to highlight the benefits this will have for major agricultural and broader farming activity, as well as recreation and tourism potential for lakes and other water ways. Council has also been collaborating with surrounding LGAs as part of a joint application to the Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Program (MIPP), aiming to transfer water from Lake Wivenhoe and to supply the region with recycled water from the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. 	 Industry Diversification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agricultural sector is vulnerable to external economic and/or environmental impacts particularly with the size of locally based major producers and packaging/distribution companies being vulnerable to take over from national and international corporations not domiciled in the Lockyer. Council needs to facilitate diversification of industry sectors whilst industry should explore the changes needed to implement and develop into other sectors. Diversification is needed to mitigate sectoral risk, including expansion of the visitor economy, the construction sector, the manufacturing sector, etc.
 Town Centre Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Towns in the region are in need of revitalisation to generate business and economic activity (and make them more attractive to visitors). This could include improvements to streetscapes and diversification of retail stores. Working partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses for promotional campaigns and activation 			

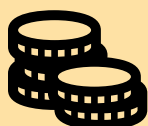
² Some of these challenges are consistent with the 2013 Economic Development Plan, while other new challenges have also been identified.

1.4. New and Updated Opportunities

In response to the opportunities already achieved, as well as an examination of the broader context, a range of new and updated opportunities have been identified to support sustainable economic growth in the region and to attract more people to come and work in the Lockyer. This includes broader development initiatives, infrastructure projects, as well as other opportunities that directly focus on employment growth. These are summarised in Table 2 (and explained in greater detail in Section 5 of the report).

Table 2: New and Updated Opportunities

Major Economic Development Initiatives



- Secure government funding to ensure the supply of sustainable additional water.
- Collaboration with regional partners to advocate for a distribution pipeline to secure water and increase its supply for the region.
- Activating the GWIZ site which is dependent on major infrastructure investment to offer acceptable access and egress for traffic coming from both directions on the Highway.
- Activating the GWIZ site for greater industry development and job creation.
- Harnessing economic benefits such as investment attraction from the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing along with job creation.
- Assisting existing businesses to expand and strengthen their competitiveness.
- Investigate the need for supporting infrastructure to support the Inland Rail Project including effective barriers to reduce noise around townships

Agri-Tourism Opportunities



- Develop additional farmgate and food trail experiences, by leveraging off regional produce and experiences across South East Queensland.
- Develop and promote a signature food event, with the potential to leverage off an existing regional festival to gain a higher profile for the Lockyer Valley.
- Promote the potential to develop a Bio-Processing Facility, utilising waste from the agricultural sector, to maximise production output and harness potential bio-energy for the region.
- Investigate the development of higher end branded destination holiday parks as a key tourism product and to support tours and food experiences within the Lockyer.
- Attract value added benefits to the Agricultural Sector through working with growers, advisers and relevant state and federal agencies on new products and to offer a greater diversity of produce all year round.

Town Revitalisation Opportunities



- Continue with town centre activation across Gatton, Laidley, Withcott and other townships, to stimulate business and economic activity.
- Continue to identify and develop further urban redevelopment which in turn will help offer the critical mass of population to support greater medical services, other professional services and recreation and entertainment facilities such as cinemas etc.
- Look at offering flexibility in zoning requirements to encourage key lifecycle development such as transition to care establishments, retirement homes, and a broader range of housing typology.
- Investigate the potential for additional development and support services around access points onto and off the Warrego Highway, to support priority areas along with the Department of Transport and Main Roads plans for the area and strengthen the appeal of various towns within the Lockyer.
- Work with relevant Federal and State Government agencies to actively address the slow uptake of the NBN and to encourage greater technology application by both households and businesses across the LGA.

Industry Growth Opportunities

- Investigating skills development across various sectors including health, retail, construction, education and agriculture.
- Sustaining and growing the agricultural sector through value-add opportunities that offer options for additional distribution chains, linking growers, packers and distributors and raising the profile of locally grown and packaged produce.
- Facilitating stronger partnerships and collaboration between agricultural businesses, including growers, freight companies and logistics companies, to achieve industry growth
- Continue to grow the Lockyer as a major packaging, distribution, logistics and freight distribution centre for not only local producers but those from throughout Queensland and northern NSW.
- With the potential for stronger intermodal freight options including the export of high value produce by both air and shipping, continue to build the reputation of the Lockyer as the logical centre for this for fresh produce distribution with the easy links to both the ports and international airports of the Gold Coast and Brisbane and Wellcamp International Airport in Toowoomba.
- Explore opportunities to increase collaboration with the University of Queensland Gatton Campus to drive additional investment in the region, both in terms of infrastructure, and research and development.
- Investigate partnerships and growth opportunities in the equine industry.

Environmental Opportunities

- Support growth in natural attractions and visitation using conservation zone lands for walkways, cycle ways etc., to improve and enhance the range of nature-based product, to attract visitors to these areas and stimulate the visitor economy.
- Improve environmental sustainability and help support the region's agricultural sector, contributing to growth in the industry and economy.
- leverage off the Toowoomba Region Trails Network Strategy (2016) for strategic direction and funding to improve and expand the region's trails network
- Continue support for biosecurity and to preserve agricultural farmland and eradicate threats to production output. Maintaining the land quality is vital for the Lockyer's position and brand as a leading production area and helps future-proof agricultural production, which is vital to generating sustainable economic growth.



2. Introduction

2.1. Overview

Stafford Strategy (Stafford) – formerly The Stafford Group – was commissioned by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Council) to develop and update the 2013 Economic Development Plan (Plan) for the Lockyer Valley region, including updates to the Regional Food Sector Strategy (Strategy), covering the period 2018-2023.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this Plan included:

- consultation with key personnel, including Councillors, Council staff and industry stakeholders (including local businesses, growers, industry bodies and developers);
- site visits to the Lockyer Valley, including assessing key towns and landmarks;
- a thorough re-assessment of the 2013 Economic Development Plan and Regional Food Sector Strategy developed by Stafford;
- a review of relevant strategies and policies to build the context for the updated Plan;
- a review of economic, demographic and labour force data;
- identification of key strengths, opportunities and priorities for economic growth;
- development of an Action Plan and recommendations, including an update to the 2013 Plan.
- preparation of the draft updated Plan and presenting interim recommendations and findings to Council; and
- finalising the updated Plan and Strategy.



3. Situation Analysis

3.1. Overview

This section provides an overview of demographic and economic trends and projections. It will help to inform the challenges facing the region and sets the context for assessment of economic development opportunities.

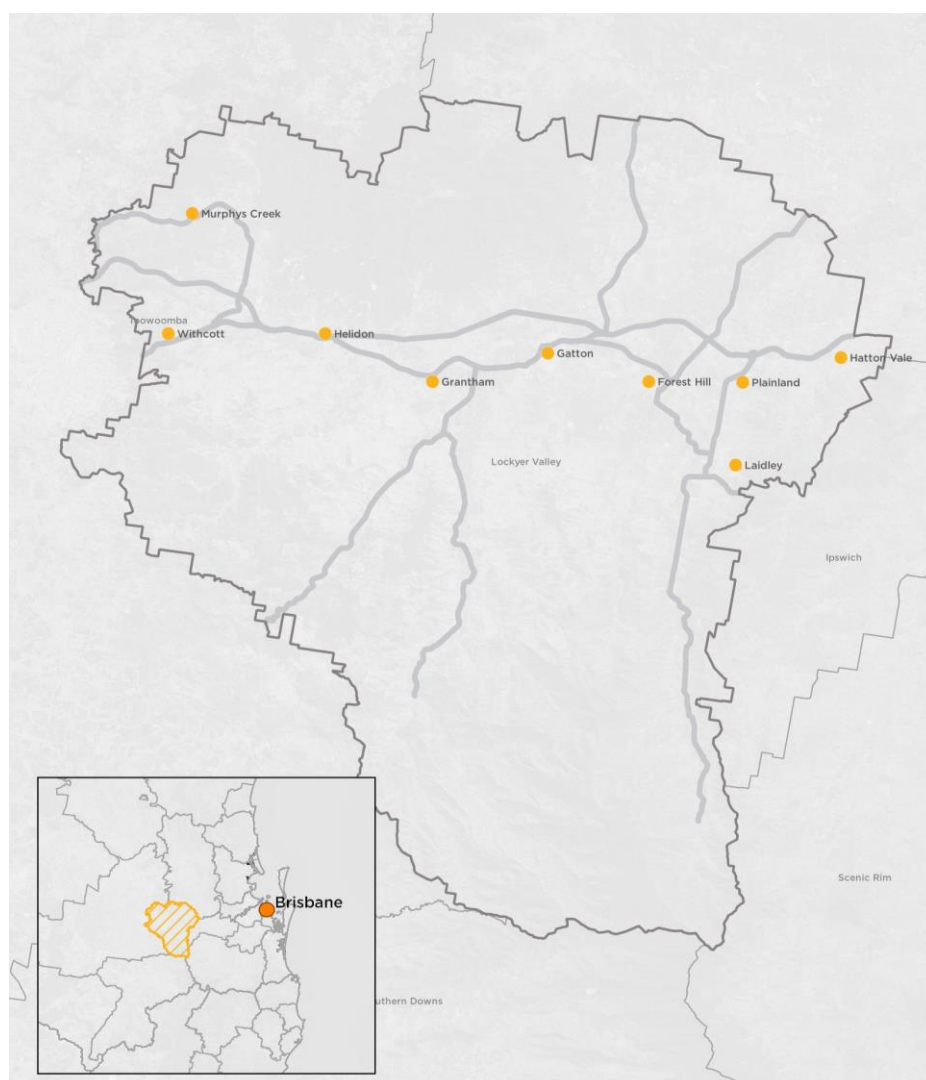
3.2. The Lockyer Valley

The Lockyer Valley Local Government Area (LGA) is located in South-East Queensland, around one hour's drive – or 70km – to the west of Brisbane (along the Western Growth Corridor) and borders Toowoomba to the east. It is easily accessible by road, via the Warrego Highway, which runs in an east-west direction through the LGA and provides key transport routes to Brisbane, South East Queensland and inland.

The region covers approximately 2,200km². It is primarily an agricultural region and recognised as one of the “top ten most fertile farming areas in the world.”³ Most of the land is rich agricultural farmland and produces “the most diverse commercial range of vegetables and fruit of any area in Australia”. As such, the region is often referred to as “Australia’s salad bowl” and comprises 12-14% of the Queensland agricultural economy.⁴

Figure 2⁵ illustrates the relative size of the region and its proximity to Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

Figure 2: Map of the Lockyer Valley



³ <http://lockyervalleygrowers.com.au/>

⁴ <http://lockyervalleygrowers.com.au/>

⁵ Queensland Government

3.3. Demographic Profile

3.3.1. Population

3.3.1.1. Population Growth

As shown in Figure 3, the population of the Lockyer Valley was 39.5k in 2016.⁶ Between 2006 and 2016 it has experienced relatively high population growth, increasing by over 26% (or over 8.1k residents). This is greater than the total state average growth of 21%, as well as the Brisbane growth rate of 20%.

To continue and to support the population growth, there is an ongoing need to retain and grow services, civic amenities and supporting infrastructure to meet the growing needs of residents. This includes enhancing civic amenities, transport infrastructure as well as the provision of additional employment opportunities to ensure that residents can live and work within the Lockyer.

Figure 3: Lockyer Valley Population Growth (2006-2016)⁷

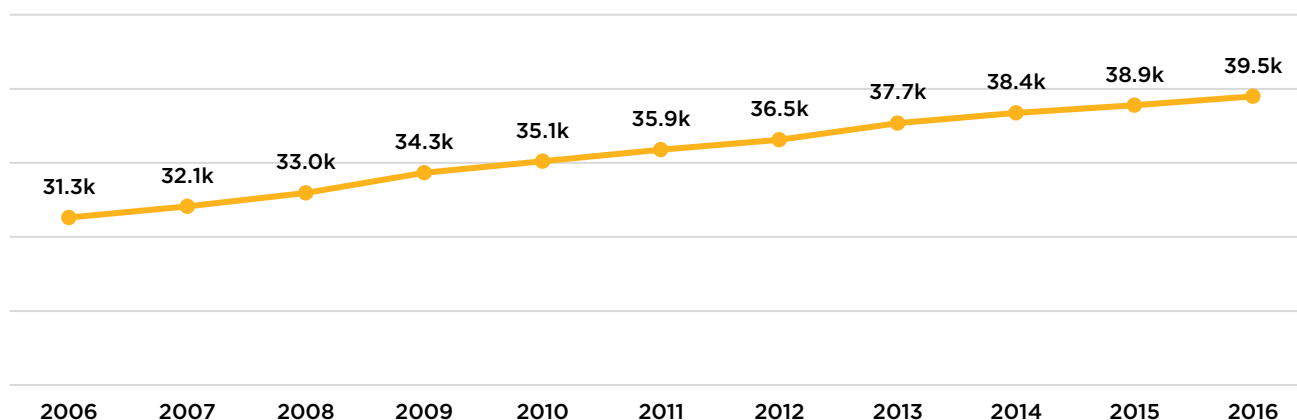


Table 3 shows the concentration spread of residents across the LGA's major town centres. The largest concentration of residents is in Gatton (18%), which serves as the region's 'hub', followed by Laidley (10%). The population is reasonably dispersed, due to the spread of farms across the LGA; while the remaining Lockyer Valley residents reside in smaller townships across the LGA.

Table 3: Population of Major Towns within the Lockyer Valley⁸

Town	Population (2016)	Percentage of Lockyer Valley Population
Gatton	7,101	18%
Laidley	3,808	10%
Withcott	1,844	5%
Plainland	1,596	4%
Hatton Vale	1,521	4%
Helidon	1,059	3%
Forest Hill	968	2%
Grantham	634	2%
Murphys Creek	629	2%
Rural residential development in NE of the region	8,644	22%
Total	27,804	72%

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 3218.0, Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016 and Queensland Treasury estimates.

⁷ <http://profile.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/population-estimate>

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2016

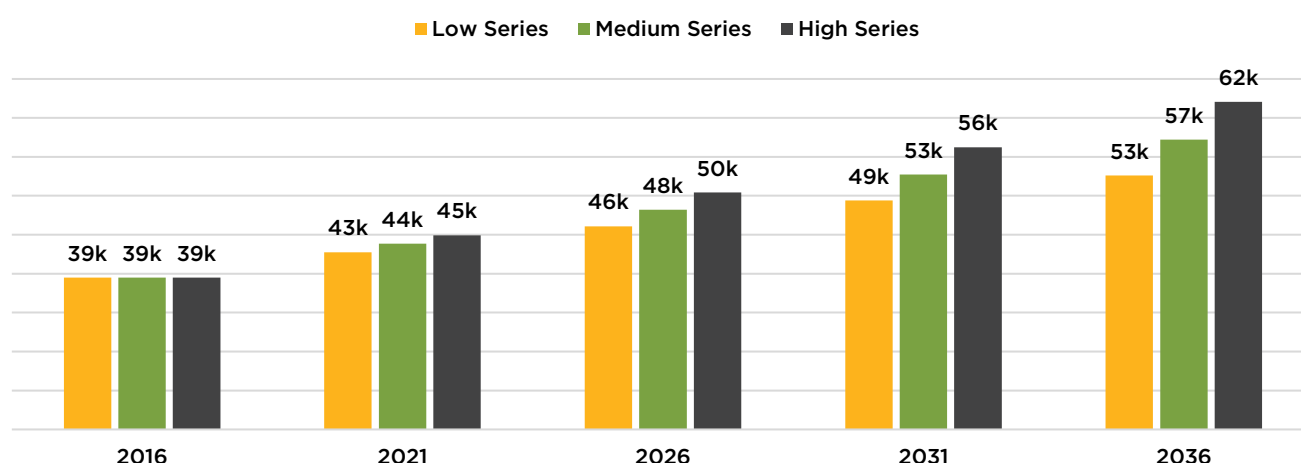
3.3.1.2. Population Forecasts

Figure 4 shows the Queensland Government's projected population growth of the region to 2036, which provides the following results:

- Using a 'low series' growth scenario, at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 1.6%, the population could grow to 53k (a 33% increase) by 2036.
- Using a 'medium series' growth scenario, at an AAGR of 2.1%, the population could grow to 57k (a 45% increase) by 2036.
- Using a 'high series' growth scenario, at an AAGR of 2.7%, the population could grow to 62k (a 57% increase) by 2036.

With population growth, there will be a commensurate increase demand for services, jobs and supporting infrastructure. We note that as the Lockyer has experienced higher population growth than the Queensland State average over the period 2006-2016, a medium to high growth scenario should probably be applied.

Figure 4: Lockyer Valley Population Forecasts to 2036⁹



3.3.2. Age

The Lockyer Valley has a relatively older age profile when compared to the Queensland state average. According to Table 4, the median age of Lockyer Valley residents is 39 while the Queensland average is 37. Between 2006 and 2016, the median age of the Lockyer Valley increased at a faster rate than the Queensland average, growing by 1.4 years compared to 1 year. In comparison, the median age in surrounding regional areas is higher with Somerset (42) and Scenic Rim (44), though Ipswich is 32.3. The challenge all regional areas face is the ongoing loss of younger people to jobs in major urban centres such as Brisbane (34.5) and the Gold Coast (38) unless new employment options can be found locally.

Table 4: Median Age of Lockyer Valley (2006 to 2016)¹⁰

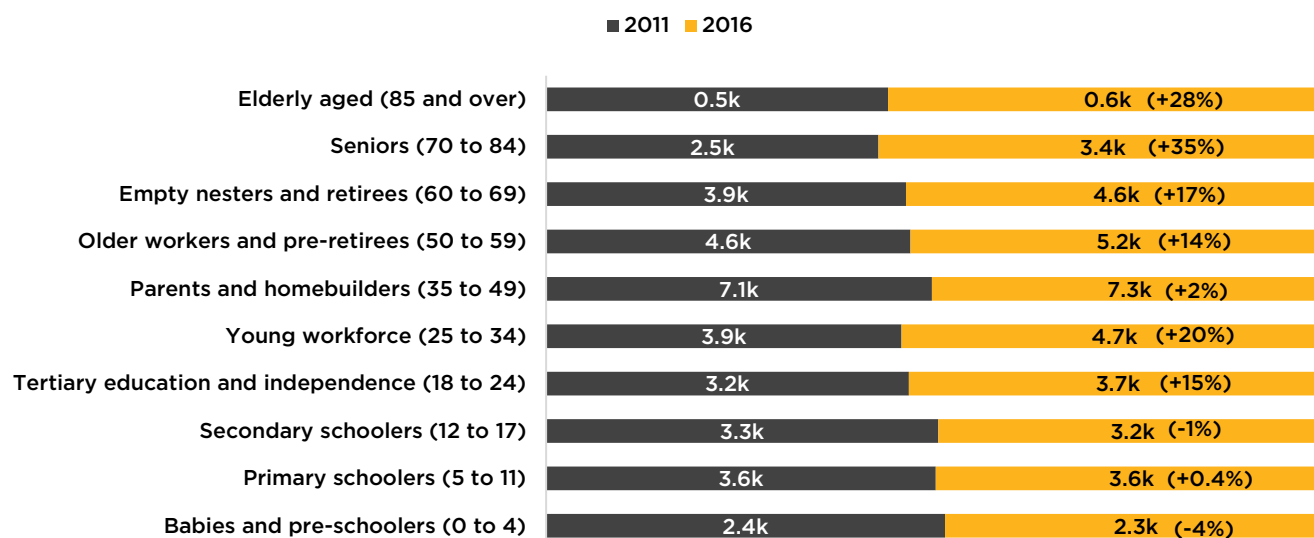
Area	2006	2011	2016
Lockyer Valley	37.6	37.4	39.0
Queensland	36.0	36.6	37.0

⁹ Queensland Government population projections, 2015 edition; Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional population growth, Australia, 2013-14

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2016

Increases in the median age are driven by an ageing population in the Lockyer Valley. Figure 5, shows that between 2011 and 2016, the number of residents under the age of 34 reflected modest growth, while the number of residents aged over 50 shows slightly higher growth.

Figure 5: Change in Age Structure, Lockyer Valley Population (2011 to 2016)¹¹



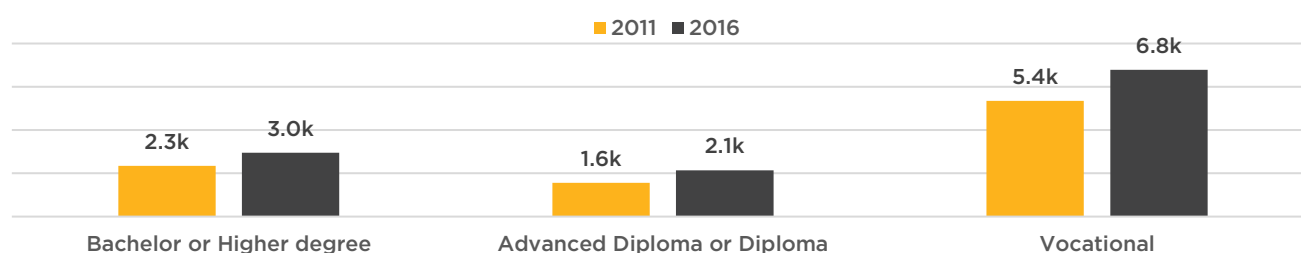
An ageing population will put a strain on public services and amenities. Therefore, keeping young people in the LGA (living and working) is strongly desired. Retaining and growing the number of younger residents is critical, (particularly families) through widening employment opportunities, access to education and training and improved school and early childhood facilities. These younger families are needed to help grow and support education facilities, health services and recreational amenities.

3.3.3. Education Qualifications

Figure 6 illustrates the change in the education qualifications of Lockyer Valley residents aged over 15 years between 2011 to 2016. In this period, the number of qualified residents (Bachelor Degree, Advanced Diploma and Vocational certificate) grew by 2.6k or 28% which is significant. This was driven by growth in all qualification types, particularly Advanced Diplomas (38%). Part of the growth can be attributed to the close proximity of the University of Queensland Gatton Campus, which provides education and training opportunities for the region's youth.

The results reflect the growth in an ongoing skilled workforce within the Lockyer, which in turn is helping to support the growth in civic amenities and wider community services.

Figure 6: Change in Educational Qualifications, Lockyer Valley (2011 to 2016)¹²



¹¹ <http://profile.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/service-age-groups>

¹² <https://profile.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/qualifications>

3.4. Labour Force Profile

3.4.1. Labour Force

Between 2011 and 2016, the total labour force (including employed and unemployed persons actively seeking work) grew by 10% (1.5k residents) As shown in Table 5, this is driven by growth in both employed residents (1.1k) and unemployed residents (c.370).

Since 2011, the unemployment rate in the Lockyer Valley has only marginally increased by 1.6 percentage points to 8.1%. This is higher than the state unemployment rate of 7.6% but is anticipated to reduce in the short term with major development projects in commercial accommodation, corrections services etc.

Key is also needed in data analysis due to the Lockyer's high seasonal workforce movements with many coming into the region to work in agricultural production etc.

Table 5: Labour Force Profile (2011 to 2016)¹³

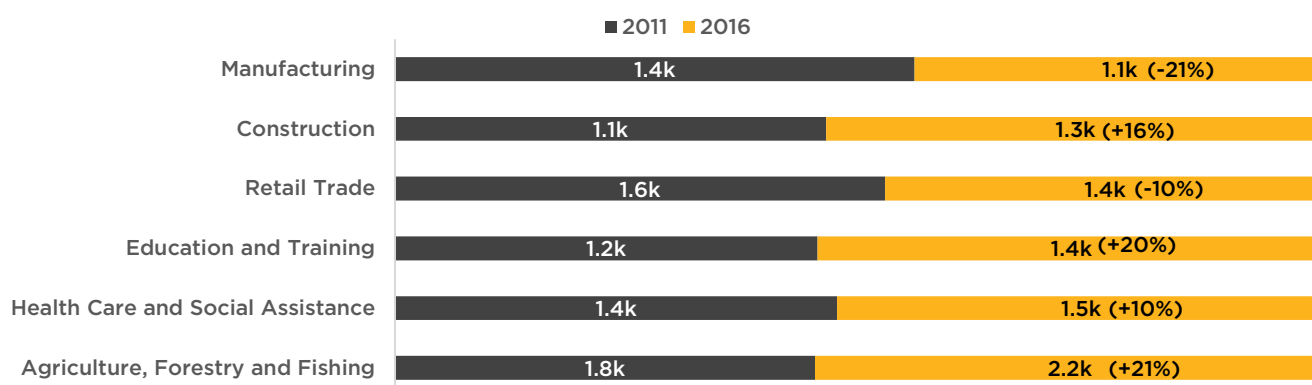
	2011	%	2016	%
Employed	14.6k	93.5%	15.8k	91.9%
Unemployed	1.1k	6.5%	1.4k	8.1%
Total labour force	15.7k	100%	17.2k	100%

3.4.2. Industry Employment

Figure 7 shows the top 6 industry sectors in the region for employment. It also shows changes in employment levels from 2011 to 2016. In 2016 the top industry sector for employment was the 'agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector, which employed 2.2k people, followed by: 'health care & social assistance' (1.5k), 'education & training' (1.4k), 'retail trade' (1.4k), 'construction' (1.3k) and 'manufacturing' (1.1k).

Over the 5-year period, the agriculture sector experienced the greatest growth in employment, increasing by 21% (385 jobs), followed by education & training (20%), construction (16%) and health care & social assistance (10%). Conversely, the manufacturing and retail trade sectors experienced negative job growth (-21% and -10%, respectively). Overall, the scenario for employment reflects a modest 5% growth over this period.

Figure 7: Employment by Industry (2011 and 2016)¹⁴



¹³ <https://profile.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/employment-status>

¹⁴ <https://profile.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/industries>

3.5. Economic Profile

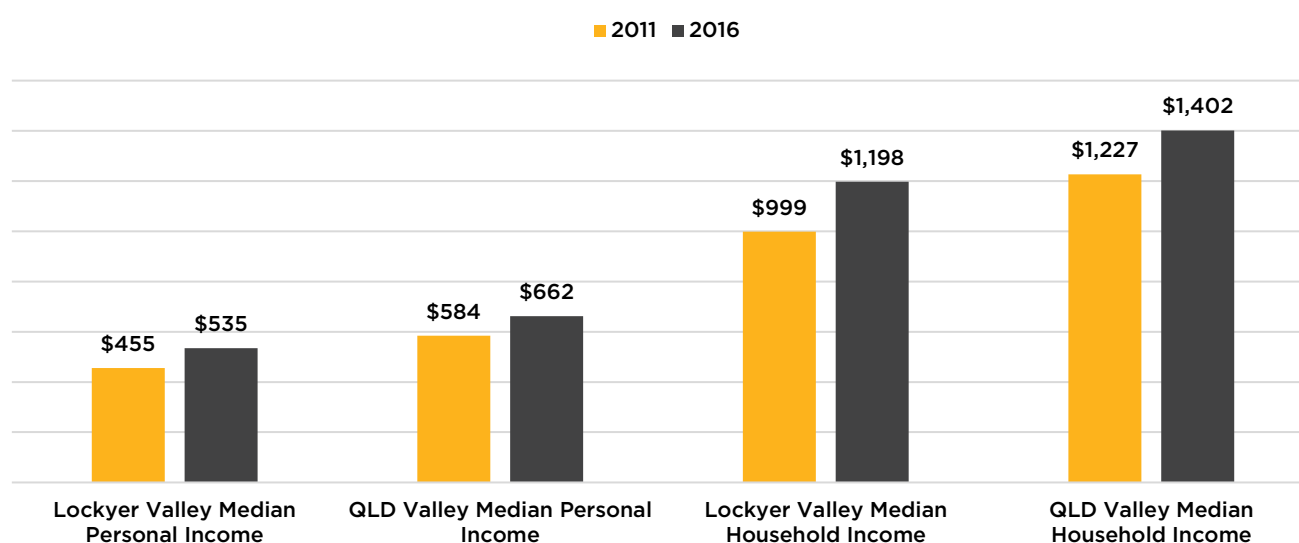
3.5.1. Income Levels

In terms of the region's economic profile, Figure 8 details the median weekly income – personal and household – for the Lockyer Valley, benchmarked against the state average.

From 2011 to 2016, the Lockyer Valley median personal income increased by \$80 per week (or 18%) and the region's median household income increased by \$200 per week (20%). These increases are greater than the state average (personal income (13%) and household income (14%)).

The Lockyer Valley median income levels are growing at higher rates than the state average, with an expectation of reaching state averages in the short term.

Figure 8: Median Weekly Income (2011 to 2016)¹⁵

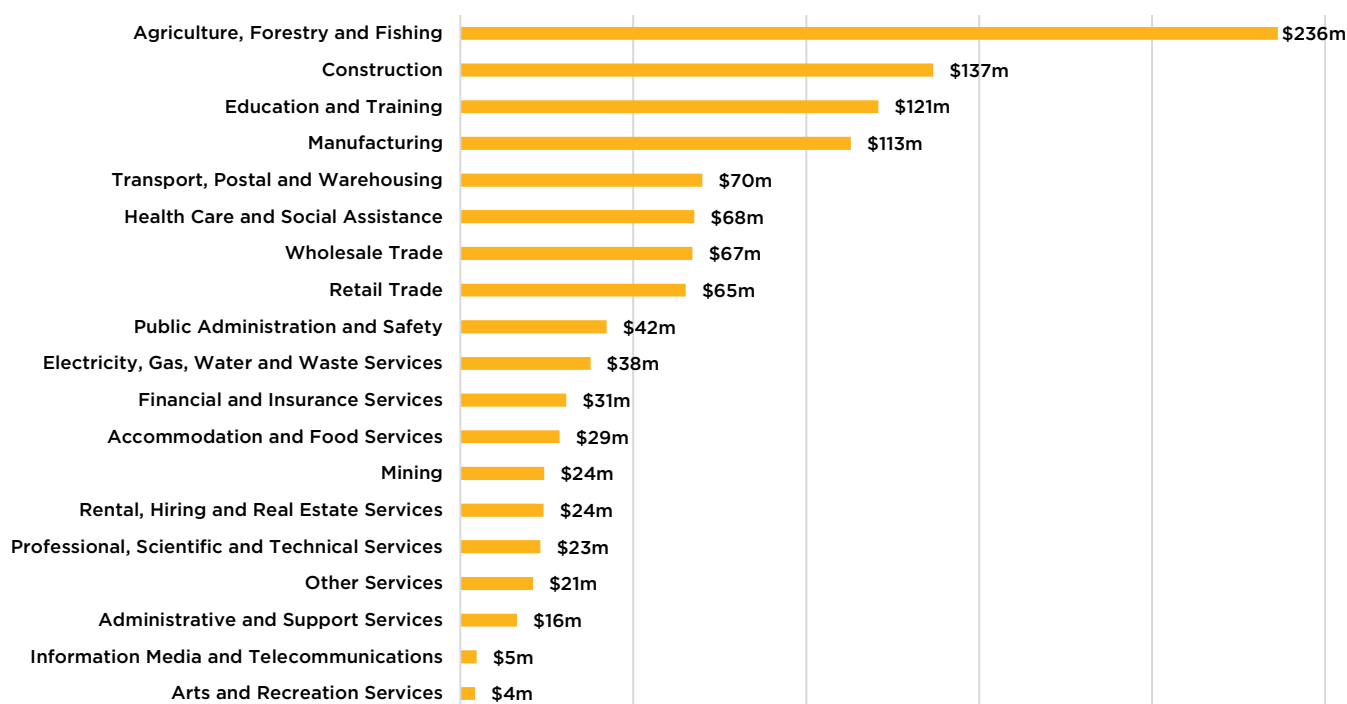


3.5.2. Industry Value

As shown in Figure 9, the 'value add' by industry is dominated by agriculture, forestry and fishing, which generated \$236m in economic value, or 21% of the total. This is almost double the value of the next closest industry, construction, which generated \$137m, or 12%.

This is the Lockyer's unique point of difference, noting that the concept of agri-tourism and paddock to plate food tourism is a global phenomenon. The Lockyer needs to be developing all forms of agri-tourism as recommended in this Plan, to maximise the opportunity and strengthen this major point of regional difference.

¹⁵ ABS Census Data, 2011 and 2016

Figure 9: Value Add by Industry (2015-16)¹⁶

3.5.3. Gross Regional Product

Table 6 shows the Gross Regional Product (GRP), highlighting the percentage change over time. Between 2011 and 2016, the GRP was relatively constant, increasing by \$7m (or 1%). Over the same period, the Queensland Gross State Product grew by 15%.¹⁷ The results need to be seen within the context of major floods which had devastating impacts during this period throughout the Lockyer but which the Lockyer has not only recovered from but has moved ahead strongly.

Table 6: Headline GRP (2011-2016)¹⁸

Year	Headline GRP (\$m)	% change
2011	\$1.40b	-4.8%
2012	\$1.41b	+0.6%
2013	\$1.40b	-0.4%
2014	\$1.42b	+1.2%
2015	\$1.41b	-0.9%
2016	\$1.41b	0.0%

¹⁶ <http://economy.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/value-add-by-industry>

¹⁷ ABS, Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, 2016-17

¹⁸ <http://economy.id.com.au/lockyer-valley/gross-regional-product>

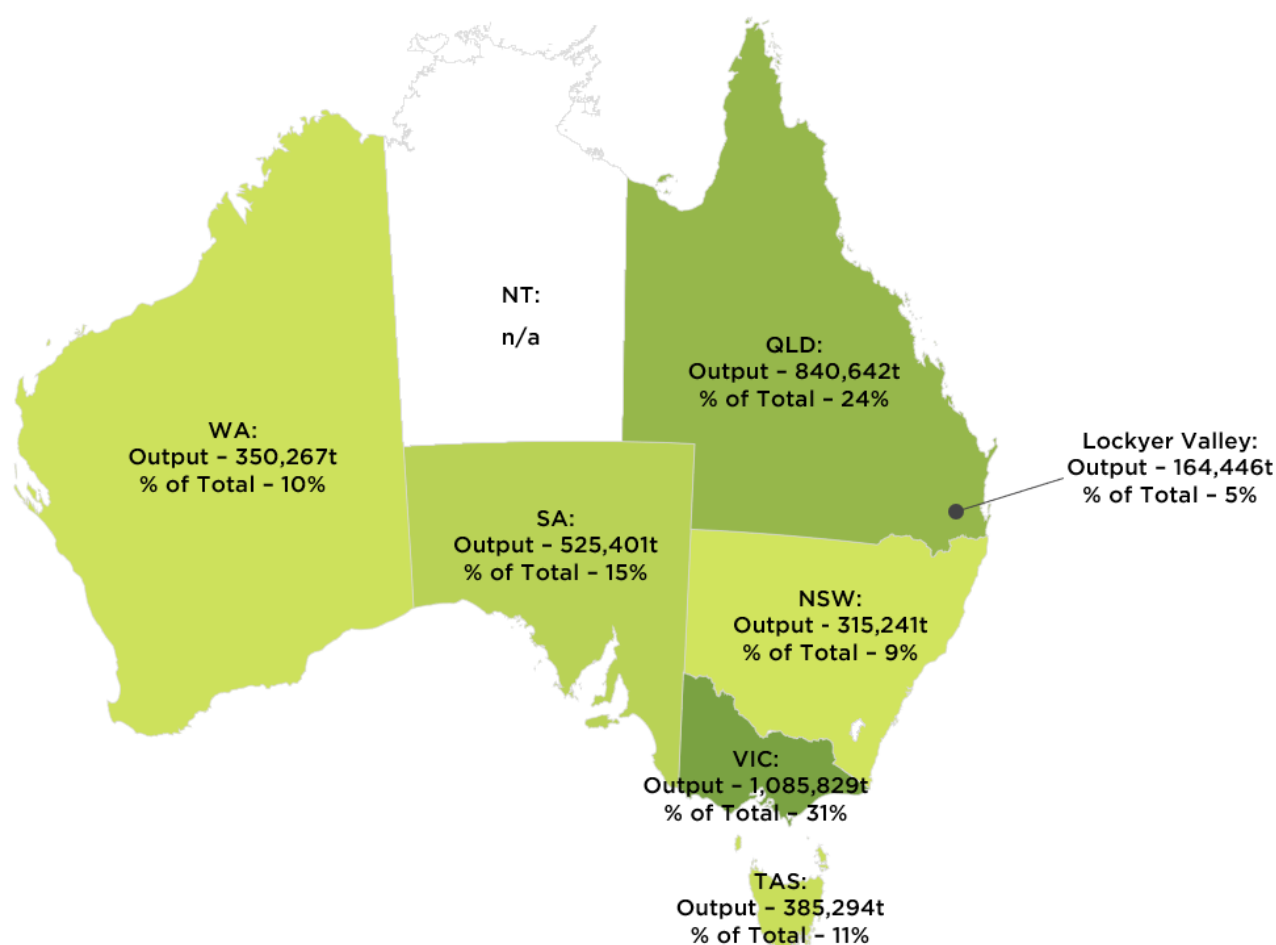
3.6. Agricultural Industry Profile

3.6.1.1. Production Output

As shown, below, Victoria (31%) comprises the largest share of vegetable production in Australia, followed by Queensland (24%) and South Australia (15%). The Lockyer Valley, by comparison, generates 5% of total national production, demonstrating a high-level of contribution to the industry (representing approximately 20% of total Queensland production).

Table 7 As shown, below, Victoria (31%) comprises the largest share of vegetable production in Australia, followed by Queensland (24%) and South Australia (15%). The Lockyer Valley, by comparison, generates 5% of total national production, demonstrating a high-level of contribution to the industry (representing approximately 20% of total Queensland production).

Table 7: Map of State/Territory Vegetable Production (Estimated Output)¹⁹

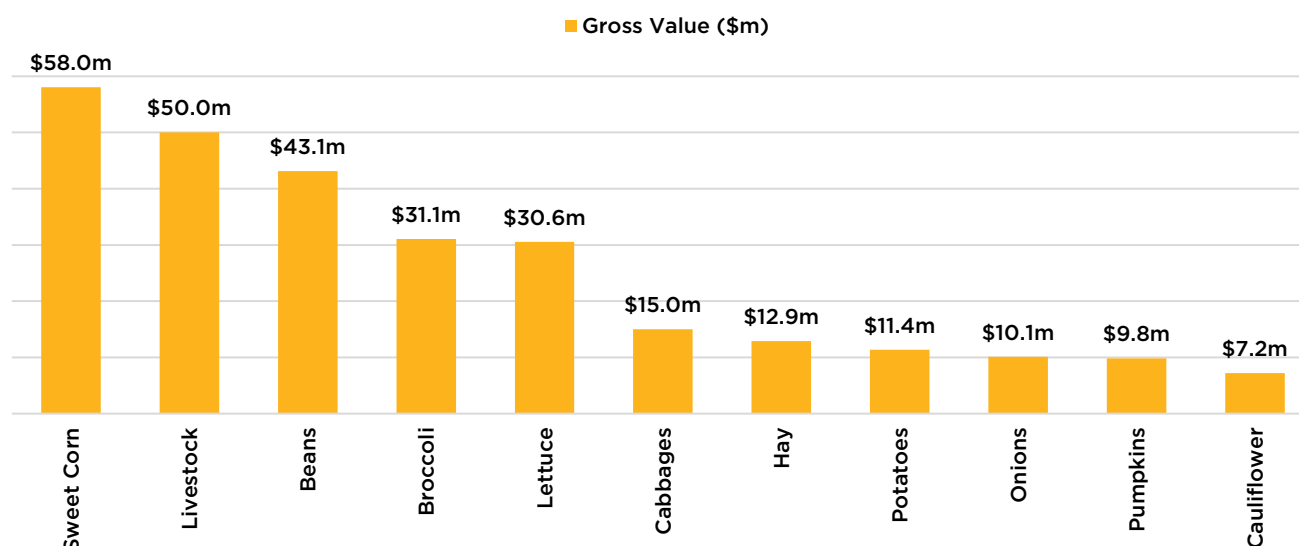


¹⁹ ABARES Australian vegetable-growing farms survey

3.6.1.2. Agricultural Value

In terms of the value of agricultural commodity outputs, however, Figure 10 shows where the greatest value lies for 2015-16. This is driven by sweet corn (\$58m), livestock – including cattle, pigs, poultry and sheep – (\$50m), beans (\$43.1m), broccoli (\$31.1m) and lettuce (\$30.6m). This demonstrates the value of the agricultural product mix. However, when identifying diversification of commodities (to future-proof the industry), consideration should be given to the value of each commodity relative to its output outlined above.

Figure 10: Value of Agricultural Commodity Outputs (2015-16)²⁰



Importantly, as detailed in the 2013 Plan, the agriculture industry undertakes an almost year-round planting and harvesting period, covering a range of different crops. This ensures a more consistent level of economic output and mitigates large seasonal variations, which is crucial for the economic development of the region. As such, economic development opportunities should consider the consistent demand for agricultural inputs and consistent supply of outputs.

3.6.2. Agricultural Land Use

The following table provides an overview of agricultural land use within the region. In the current area, vegetables (11,750 ha) and broadacre crops (3,098 ha) comprise the largest proportions of total hectares. The specific land use area for livestock has not been determined as this is excluded in ABS land use data, so total agricultural land use may not add up.

Table 8: Agricultural Land Use (2015-16)²¹

Commodity	Area (ha)
Total holdings	51,878
Vegetables	11,750
Broadacre crops	3,098
Hay and Silage	242
Fruit & Nuts	199
Nurseries	104

²⁰ ABS, Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia-2015-16

²¹ ABS, Agricultural Commodities, Australia-2015-16

3.7. SWOT Analysis

Table 9 synthesises the situation analysis and, combined with stakeholder feedback, provides a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for the region's economy.

Table 9: Lockyer Valley SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The farming and agricultural sector, particularly the level of food production and contribution to jobs and economic output The fertility of the soil The consistency of the growing and harvesting period year-round The proximity to major population centres across South-East Queensland, including Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba and Ipswich The accessibility to surrounding areas via the Warrego Highway The accessibility to major airports The ability to attract short-term farm workers from international markets The proximity to a major educational institution (University of Queensland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry diversification in order to reduce the reliance on the agricultural sector The need to increase the product mix in agricultural production Improvements and upgrades needed to accommodation facilities More evening/ night-time economy activities No central tourism hub Improvements needed to regenerate key towns and improve its attractiveness to visitors The need to invest in retail and entertainment product The Lockyer Valley brand can be further developed and promoted to better inform the average consumer of its value. The potential to attract and retain educated, highly-skilled professionals The potential to attract and retain young people and young families
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing the water supply for the region to benefit farmers especially Develop agri-tourism opportunities to leverage off the dominant agricultural sector Expand the equine industry through new partnerships Develop targeted, signature annual events with a broad regional focus Develop backpacker accommodation to increase overnight stays and visitor spend Develop a bio-processing facility to maximise economic output from agriculture Activate and revitalise town centres to stimulate growth and support local businesses Unlock partnership and collaboration opportunities between producers and transport/logistics companies to benefit the agricultural sector, as well as increased linkages with the University of Queensland Gatton Campus Infrastructure opportunities, such as the expansion of the Gatton prison and development of a regional hospital in Plainland The Gatton West Industrial Zone (GWIZ) could unlock additional supporting investment and infrastructure to generate economic growth The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, which bypasses central Toowoomba, could improve the efficiency of road transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental/weather-related disasters that impact the agricultural sector External economic events, such as a decrease in food prices, increase in food imports and an increase in competition, etc. Greater investment in existing and new accommodation stock is needed to stimulate overnight visitation and grow the business conference market Inability to create job opportunities for educated, high-skilled professionals Failure to create a Lockyer Valley brand or recognition of its contribution to Australian agriculture Inability to invest in or activate town centres, driving residents and visitors away from the Lockyer Valley and towards neighbouring population centres (Toowoomba, Ipswich, etc.) Local growers fail to understand the importance of continued and increased investment in the region Delays in any of the major regional State Government projects could create delays in economic growth Introduction of the inland rail project could negatively impact local businesses and residential properties that are proximate to the line



4. Context

4.1. Population

4.1.1. Population Size

Key for any regional area is maintaining a sufficient population base to ensure a critical mass of residents to support key civic services, supporting infrastructure and retail amenities (e.g. social services, health services, etc). As discussed in Section 3.3.1, the population base is projected to grow (ranging from 53k to 62k by 2036²²), helping to achieve this 'critical mass'.

However, we note the population is reasonably dispersed across the LGA, as noted in Table 3, which provides certain challenges for Council to deliver adequate services and amenities across the Lockyer Valley (and avoiding residents from commuting to surrounding metropolitan centres). The opportunity exists to expand the provision of civic services to help stimulate business activity across the region, whilst noting the need to focus on population growth hubs such as Plainland etc.

Expansion of new urban areas which reflect the demand for new housing to support growth not only in the Lockyer but also in surrounding areas including Toowoomba and as far as greater Brisbane, will also continue to put pressure on the supply of civic services. In addition, stronger population growth is occurring in the North East of the region (Plainland, Hattonvale, Regency Downs) which needs to be well supported.

4.1.2. Population Profile

The demographic mix of the population base, in terms of age and education, is also critical to facilitate economic growth and development, as they are key indicators of income and general expenditure levels.

The number of residents with educational qualifications is growing (Figure 6), resulting in closer alignment to the state average. As such, it is critical that additional partnership and collaborative opportunities with the University of Queensland Gatton Campus are realised to further improve the educational attainment of residents and to also attract additional students to the campus.

We also note that youth retention is a big issue (as it is in most regional areas), which contributes to the economy and has a flow-on effect on other services in the area. There is a need, therefore, to introduce social inclusion measures, including better career paths, job opportunities and improved liveability, to encourage young, educated people to remain in the Lockyer as well as encouraging more young people to move to and live in the region.

4.2. Industry Diversification

Although the region benefits from the strong agricultural sector, it is vulnerable to external economic or environmental impacts (e.g. flooding drought, etc) which can impact on the future growth of the sector. From an economic point of view, there are several risks that could also adversely impact the agricultural sector, including:

²² Based on the Queensland Government population projections. The range reflects the 'low', 'medium' and 'high' series growth scenario.

- locally run businesses being acquired by major corporations and the head office/operations relocate outside the region;
- a decrease in produce prices due to increased supply nationally;
- increasing competition from other agricultural regions who are looking to introduce technology enhancements to expand production and efficiencies; and
- increasing imports from low cost economies with low wage and associated low cost structures.

Council and industry need to explore the potential to diversify and develop other industry sectors to mitigate this risk. An increased focus on tourism and the visitor economy (see the Tourism Development Plan), horticultural downstream food processing and packaging, and the construction sector, should be considered.

4.3. Accommodation

As highlighted in the Tourism Development Plan, there has been a lack in of commercial accommodation in the region though a number of new facilities have been developed in 2018 and there are additional motel approvals apparently before council.

4.3.1. Supply of Accommodation

Recent investment in accommodation facilities has increased the supply of accommodation and stock of available beds. A recent Accommodation Study completed in 2016 (commissioned by Council) identified a number of opportunities which have since been activated including:

- New accommodation in Gatton, with the development of the Rooms Motel (33 beds);
- Porters Plainland Hotel with 26 rooms under construction;
- Development of a large backpacker/farm worker accommodation facility, which will include over 600 beds, with 260 already near completion in 2018. This will alleviate some of the challenges with farm/seasonal worker accommodation and is expected to grow this visitor market in the short and long-term. As such, it will help drive growth in the Lockyer Valley visitor economy.

It is important to note that the new backpacker facility has the potential to attract increasing visitors from the international backpacker market seeking seasonal farm work. In addition, if complementary retail and entertainment product is included, the potential may exist to position the Lockyer as an international backpacker 'hub'. This will assist increased length of stay and higher visitor spend.

However, the supply of accommodation could also be enhanced with the development of a higher quality branded destination holiday park in the region. As mentioned in the 2013 Tourism Destination Plan, these facilities offer a full holiday experience, including swimming pools and water features, outdoor and indoor recreation, retail, etc. As such, they could attract the high-yielding family and help promote the region as a family-friendly destination.

4.3.2. Quality of Accommodation

As identified in the 2013 Plan, aside from some better-quality B&Bs in the area, the quality of the existing accommodation stock is mixed with some in need of refurbishment.

To encourage a broader range of visitors and to continue to attract good -yielding overnight visitors additional types of commercial accommodation need to be planned for.

Overall, improvement in the supply and quality of accommodation will generate the following improvements to the economy:

- increases the volume of higher-yielding overnight visitors staying in the region;
- enhances the perception of the Lockyer Valley as a stronger visitor destination in its own right (rather than a 'drive-through' region);
- it will assist the region to host larger-scale events, festivals, conferences, etc, which could attract a number of new, niche visitor markets;
- it increases the level of visitor spend in the Lockyer;
- it will expand direct and indirect economic benefits; and
- it will generate full time, part time and contract employment opportunities for locals.

4.4. Development of a Tourism Precinct

A tourism precinct, providing the critical mass of activities and product (food and beverage, retail, accommodation, etc) will attract and support greater visitation if able to be accommodated. An existing already cluster exists with the Historical village, Queensland Transport Museum, Lockyer Valley Cultural Centre and recent motel development, along with the Lights on the Hill Memorial.

Stakeholders discussed the possibility of creating an additional tourism precinct at various major waterways with examples including Lake Apex or Lake Freeman though there were noted to be various site constraints.

Activation of an additional tourism precinct would require significant investment. Using the waterways as the focus and creating a unique point of difference that draws visitors (e.g. birdwatching, other nature-based activities etc.) should however, be investigated once reliable water levels are able to be secured.

4.5. Town Centre Activation

One of the key messages from stakeholders is the need to activate towns to improve their appeal and to generate greater levels of business activity. Suggestions include:

- improvements to streetscapes;
- reduction in the number of vacant/unoccupied shopfronts;
- longer trading hours (evenings and weekends); and
- improvements to the mix of retail stores.

Currently, many town centres hold some but limited appeal to residents and visitors, due to the need to increase the provision of local activities and services. Many residents, therefore, travel to surrounding metropolitan areas for goods and services, including Toowoomba, Ipswich and even Brisbane. If nothing substantial is done to revitalise Gatton and other townships, there is a risk that business activity may further diminish, particularly in smaller townships unless a specific niche focus can be found.

4.6. Indoor Recreational Activities

There is the potential to increase the provision of retail and entertainment facilities in the Lockyer Valley. This could include recreational activities or product that appeals to, and attracts, children and young families, including further cultural recreational amenities, shopping centres, or restaurant facilities.

Additional investment and increased community support into local restaurants and sports clubs would also help retain residents and ensure that leisure and recreation activities (and spend) occur within the region.

As a result, the Lockyer Valley would be able to better retain more young people, particularly young families and limit economic loss through expenditure leakages outside the region. Local businesses and Council need to work

together to revitalise villages and towns, improve existing product and attract new investment and development in the area of retail and entertainment facilities. To achieve such an outcome, may require the need for various incentives, including the supply of lease hold land where possible to reduce investor risks where ever possible.

More recent data shows there is an increase in young families moving into the Lockyer so the need to offer them additional facilities for entertainment and recreation is particularly important so they can “live, work and play”, within the Lockyer.

4.7. Workforce Growth

There are opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to lower its unemployment rate and provide job opportunities for young families especially. This is a crucial outcome as it helps retain residents and contributes to overall longer term economic growth.

This could be met through additional partnerships and linkages to value added food processing and manufacturing (noting the potential for a major cannery development etc.), the University of Queensland Gatton Campus, specifically the increasing uptake of courses and increases in student numbers and from growth associated with a number of government support services and commercial professional services as well. This would increase the marketability of the Lockyer to a wide range of skilled and semi-skilled workers in the job market.

We note that the growth in the Lockyer workforce could be extensive if a number of projects get activated in the short to medium term, including:

- The expansion of the corrections (prison) facilities as planned with both construction jobs and operational employment growth;
- The potential development of major food manufacturing plants such as a cannery;
- The inland rail project which may create a major workers camp in the Lockyer; and
- Other projects including the water pipeline project, gas fired power station etc. which will offer a wider range of construction jobs and operational jobs.

In addition, the development of the large backpacker accommodation facility will help attract and retain additional international and seasonal workers, which are in high demand to support farmers in the region.

All of the above opportunities for workforce growth will support greater liveability and act as a catalyst for tree changers, looking for quality of life as well as desirability for raising a family.

4.8. Certainty in Water Supply

Discussions with stakeholders, particularly farmers, revealed the need to guarantee water security. This is a key issue for farmers and is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the agricultural industry, as well as the visitor economy. The need for additional water supply is evidenced by:

- the opportunity to utilise some 35% of high quality agricultural land currently not in use;
- the potential to increase agricultural productivity and production for export;
- the need to future proof declining rainfall and other environmental effects;
- the potential to increase supply to match increases in global demand for food; and

- the need to provide additional sustainable and reliable water sources (existing schemes are currently unreliable).²³

A pre-feasibility study was recently completed to obtain grant funding. If successful (following approval to undertake a feasibility study), this could generate a number of economic benefits, including:

- an increase in agricultural production: improved access to water would increase the level of economic output;
- the ability for growers to undertake long-term planning and increase investment in the area; and
- more job opportunities to complement increases in output.

In addition, Council has also lodged an application to the MIPP, aiming to transfer water from Lake Wivenhoe and also supply the region with recycled water from the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme, as part of an initiative with Somerset and other neighbouring councils.

By providing certainty to the water supply of the region's natural waterways, there is the opportunity to develop more tourist-related product, including kayaking, water skiing along with other activities and related supporting infrastructure.

4.9. Marketing and Promotion

Utilising Lockyer Valley branding and promotion is important to position the region as one of the main producers of high quality Australian grown produce nationally. This will assist in getting the Lockyer recognised as:

- Australia's Leading high quality fresh produce supplier;
- Offering major investment opportunities to a wide range of investors across a broad economic base;
- A highly liveable and desirable place to bring up a family;
- Through its clean green focus which protects and sustainably uses its natural assets; and
- A region now attracting knowledge workers and higher salaried jobs.

The brand positioning of the Lockyer needs to build on these key liveability attributes, which reflect far more than just being a nationally significant producer of high quality fresh produce.

²³ Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Briefing Note, 2017



5. Opportunities

5.1. Overview

Many of the proposed opportunities and initiatives identified in the 2013 Plan and Strategy have been completed, fully or partially. Below, we focus on new or updated economic development opportunities which Council is looking to facilitate, or which we recommend for further consideration. This includes broader development initiatives, infrastructure projects, as well as other opportunities that will contribute to employment growth.

5.2. Major Economic Development Initiatives

Significant economic benefit and improved community liveability is expected in the short to medium term from a number of major infrastructure projects. These are expected to lead to numerous employment opportunities for businesses, communities and Council to leverage off.

5.2.1. Water Security and Sustainability

Securing additional new water supply and developing future distribution and storage is crucial to future proofing the region's agriculture industry and generating sustainable economic growth. As such, this is an extremely high priority for Council.

Council is working to try to secure and guarantee water supply for the region, and is working with neighbouring councils, along with State and Federal Governments to activate this. Council has completed a pre-feasibility report to secure water for agriculture productivity and sustainability. The report is designed to obtain funding to build and augment water infrastructure at a project cost of approximately \$300m. The options examined in the report include:

- a pipeline from Wivenhoe Dam;
- recycled water pipeline (via Wivenhoe); and
- delivery to the existing dams in the Central Lockyer Valley;

If successful, this could increase the water supply and generate a range of economic benefits, including:

- increases in production;
- increase in productivity and crop value;
- increases in the supply of jobs; and
- subsequent increases in spend and economic output, through additional activity in agriculture as well as the downstream supply-chain.
- approximately \$640 million in additional gross value of agricultural crops;
- approximately 1,409 additional jobs in the region; and
- an additional \$17 million in terms of annual wages.²⁴

²⁴ Lockyer Valley Preliminary Socio-Economic Study, Somerset Regional Council and Lockyer Valley Regional Council, September 2017

5.2.2. Major Enterprise and Industrial Area

The South East Queensland Regional Plan identifies the Gatton North Major Enterprise and Industrial Area as a key major industrial growth hub for south east Queensland. Part of this designated area is the Gatton West Industrial Zone (GWIZ) which on its own, involves the development of 600 acres of industrial land at Gatton West.

The GWIZ project requires the identification and securing of an anchor business (most likely a major light or heavy industrial company who will benefit from being on a major highway and within good proximity of Brisbane and the Gold Coast especially). The GWIZ zone is one of the few remaining areas within 2 hours of Brisbane which allows for various forms of heavy industry including processing plants etc.

The high cost of supporting road infrastructure to allow for easy access off the highway in both directions is a challenge but an underpass road option has been assessed at approximately \$11m, making access far more affordable than an overpass (\$100m previous cost estimate).

The importance of the GWIZ project, from an economic standpoint, can't be stressed highly enough; it would help attract new businesses and investment to the region, particularly those related to the agricultural and food processing industry and potentially downstream value-added processing and offer potential for extensive employment. It could also expand and integrate a number of established industries. It has the ability to create a major industrial and logistics hub within the region to also support the wider Darling Downs and Southern Queensland regions.

Consideration needs to be given to the best ways to activate the overall Gatton North Major Enterprise and Industrial Area, noting that a master plan for the entire area would allow for staging of development roll out, in line with the introduction of required infrastructure. For the GWIZ specific site, given its strategic location, would be to ensure accessibility from both sides of the highway (which could be achieved via improvement to transport infrastructure). Council is currently developing a GWIZ transport plan, with initial improvements in road infrastructure to allow truck access, estimated at around \$1.5m. Following the development of the GWIZ site, Council will advocate for an upgrade of Brooks/Philips Road (adjacent to the site) with an underpass option that links back to Gatton (estimated cost of around \$11m).

It is understood that a catalyst project (major cannery facility) is a potential use for part of the GWIZ site, which is designed to be a state-of-the-art large-scale vegetable processing facility. With a project value of over \$100m and employment projections of around 400 jobs when at full capacity, the facility would have the potential to drive sustainable and strong economic growth for Gatton (and the wider regional economy). The facility could also potentially add value to the agricultural industry by being able to transform agricultural 'waste' (i.e. leftover products) into an input commodity for re-use that generates growth and additional profits. The project is currently attracting investment to generate appropriate development funds, with Council viewing the project as an important economic priority.

5.2.3. Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

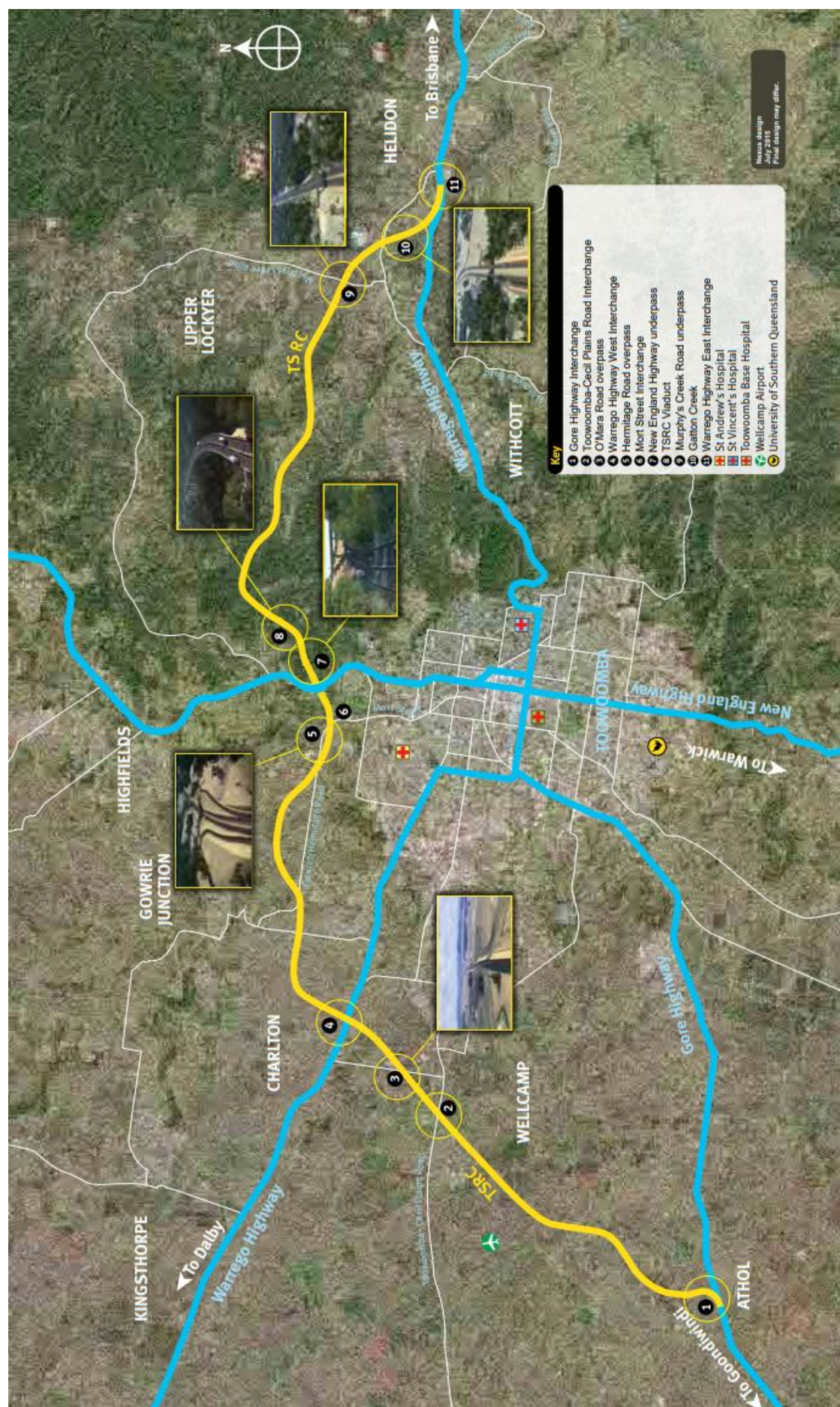
The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing (Figure 11) is a 41km-long bypass route that will run from the Warrego Highway at Helidon Spa to the Gore Highway at Athol. The purpose of the crossing is to improve freight efficiency by separating heavy truck movements from other vehicle movements between the Lockyer Valley and Toowoomba (and inland).

The \$1.6b project, to be completed in late-2018, is designed to improve the liveability of the region's residents and is expected to generate economic and productivity gains for the region.²⁵ Opportunities will be generated at the interchange and at Withcott once it is completed. Opportunities are also expected at Helidon.

Additional road traffic may be drawn to the region, including day visitors and overnight stops, as a result of the project. The development of areas close to the second crossing as major logistics and freight centres is something which Council has already been investigating.

²⁵ Queensland Government, Department of Transport and Main Roads

Figure 11: Toowoomba Second Range Crossing



5.2.4. Inland Rail Project

The Inland Rail Project, which will be operational by 2024-25, is a national freight network between Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The section of the network passing through the Lockyer Valley is illustrated in Figure 12 which offers 3 different maps.

The project is expected to use a wide rail corridor that was to follow the current rail alignment through the Lockyer Valley but more recent advice indicates new alignments are being considered. This is expected to generate heavy and frequent rail movements (minerals, etc) year-round.

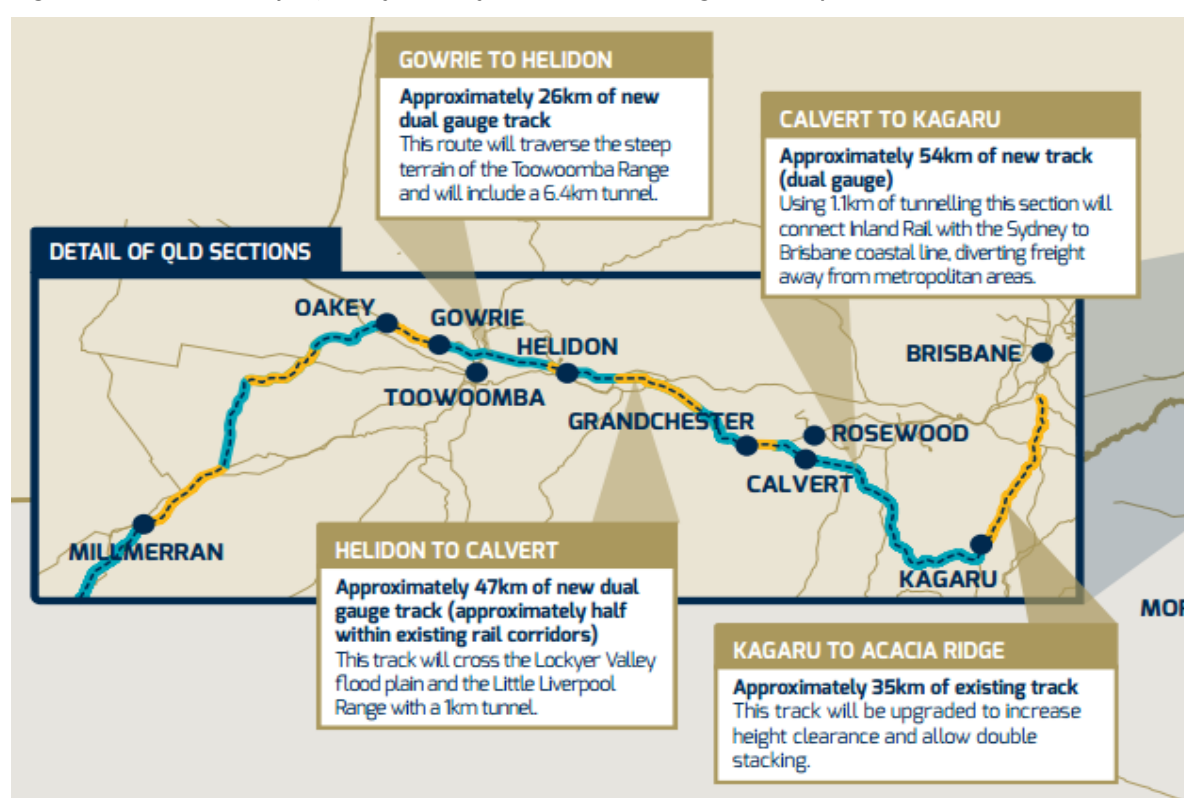
However, stakeholders raised a number of challenges, including:

- the negative impact on property values for businesses and residences within close proximity of the rail corridor due to 24-hour noise and disturbance;
- disruption to routes and travel times;
- the lack of a station in the Lockyer Valley, which would otherwise generate investment opportunities, additional spend, etc.; and
- the unknown level of infrastructure required to support the rail line.

To mitigate these challenges Council is investigating potential legacy projects including integrated road and rail bridges to achieve additional economic benefits. Such measures could include seeking compensation (through additional funding) from the Australian Rail Track Corporation to mitigate any negative impacts on the local economy. There is a need for a study to look at legacy projects and flood mitigation due to rail alignment options due to raised rail corridors for this inland freight only corridor.

A separate \$15m feasibility study is to be undertaken for passenger services only from Brisbane to Toowoomba with the potential to also stop in Gatton and other locations within the Lockyer.

Figure 12: Inland Rail Project, Lockyer Valley (various current alignment maps)





5.3. Infrastructure Opportunities

5.3.1. Short-Term Accommodation

A 600-bed backpacker facility is under construction in Grantham, to be completed in late 2018. The site is almost operational and has relevant services and supporting infrastructure connections (i.e. electricity, sewerage, etc).

The facility is designed to address the challenges with farm/seasonal worker accommodation and increase employment in the region by attracting and retaining farm workers, to help stimulate growth in the agricultural sector (as well as the visitor economy).

The facility is supported by an accommodation study which highlighted the need for backpacker style accommodation. The operator/developer will provide labour (vegetable pickers, etc.) to farms in the region to ensure labour supply meets demand.

As mentioned in the Tourism Destination Plan, the new backpacker facility has the potential to attract increasing visitors from the international backpacker market seeking seasonal farm work. In addition, if complementary retail and entertainment product is included close by, the potential exists to create the Lockyer as an international backpacker 'hub' that allows for an increased length of stay and also enables greater levels of visitor spend in the Lockyer Valley.

In addition, there is the potential for a branded destination holiday park to offer a different form of accommodation than the more traditional caravan and camping parks which already exist in the region. A destination holiday park would be able to offer water park features and attractions, onsite retail, cycleways and supporting recreational activities along with a mix of chalets and cabins, RV sites, camping sites etc.

5.3.2. Transition to Care Facility

Transition to care facilities are required to meet the needs of the local community. The growing and ageing population have demand for facilities so that older people can stay close to family (and avoids elderly residents moving out of the region). Options for facilities and transition care developments need to be pursued. There is also a need for a transition policy to help elderly residents transition from family farms into an appropriate facility (or gated community). This includes those between 60-80 looking to downsize.

5.3.3. Student Accommodation

In addition, student accommodation is required to meet the needs of tertiary institutions, specifically the University of Queensland Gatton Campus). The university is experiencing high growth with an associated need for student accommodation to match anticipated increases in demand.

Council, UQ and the chamber of commerce need to be looking at potential options for additional student accommodation off campus but in Gatton with cycle ways and walkways linking to the university. University towns work well when student support facilities are integrated into the wider town environment.

5.3.4. Extended Bikeways

An expanded and upgraded bike network throughout the Lockyer Valley would improve accessibility across the region and create economic growth opportunities through:

- development of supporting infrastructure, facilities and amenities (rest stops, etc);
- increasing the liveability of residents through improved accessibility and additional transport options; and

- attracting a greater volume of visitors to the area, particularly the nature-based tourism market, which will stimulate the visitor economy.

There is an existing bikeway strategy with stage 1 being from UQ to Gatton with a focus on offering a fit for purpose series of bike ways. Related to the growth in University of Queensland demand, options for an extended bikeway beyond Gatton town centre to the Gatton campus (which supports student movements) needs to be explored.

Council is actively seeking funding to extend the bikeway, which is required on top of existing commitments from Council, UQ and Queensland State Government. Council is looking to identify additional funding opportunities and options from third parties to contribute to the extension of the bikeway and improve student movements and connectivity to campus.

5.3.5. Passenger Rail transport connectivity

As previously mentioned, a separate feasibility is being undertaken to assess the development of passenger rail transport connectivity to the region, subject to an economic benefit assessment. With a desire (by the State Government) to create more residential suburbs and with the expectation that people will commute into greater Brisbane for work (or vice versa), offering effective public transport will be particularly important.

It is important to note this is differentiated from the Inland Rail Project (which is federally funded) and is likely to require different track configuration.

Better passenger rail services will support economic benefits by:

- growing the population base – more people could reside in the region and commute to metropolitan centres;
- creating job opportunities – residents of surrounding areas would have better access to the region for employment; and
- stimulating the visitor economy – as visitors would have an additional transport option to the region.

Council has advised that Toowoomba Regional Council is interested in collaborating on the development of this project.

5.3.6. Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct

The Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC), located 15km north of Gatton, was opened in 2011 at a cost of \$485m.²⁶ Currently operated by a privately-owned company, the Queensland Correctional Services is re-tendering the operations and management of the centre.

In addition, due to a growing prison population, the Queensland Government, in collaboration with Building Queensland (BQ), has announced the requirement for an expansion and upgrade of the SQCC, which would involve the construction of a further 1,004 (currently 300) cell prison at an estimated cost of \$700m for stage 1.²⁷ BQ has identified this project as a priority project in their Infrastructure Pipeline Report. A business case is being reviewed by the Queensland Government and has since been combined with the business case for Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre expansion (Ipswich).

The expansion of the SQCC will have flow-on economic effects to the Lockyer Valley, through increases in employment opportunities (through both construction and operation (400 new operational jobs for the facility) as

²⁶ <https://www.gattonstar.com.au/news/tender-open-privately-run-prison-lockyer-valley/3302171/>

²⁷ <https://infrastructurepipeline.org/project/south-queensland-correctional-precinct---gatton/>

well as additional economic output that would be generated through the provision of correctional services, including (but not limited to):

- expenditure on goods and services (e.g. food, health, education etc);
- increases in logistical and supply chain activities; and
- investment in infrastructure maintenance.

5.3.7. Regional Hospital

Health services will need to align to the West Moreton Health Plan for the wider region. The development of a regional hospital at Plainland has been identified as a priority for the region, though is likely to be a longer term initiative pending ongoing population growth etc. It is noted in response to population growth projections (Section 3.3.1.2), particularly as Plainland is identified as a regional growth hub that would see an increase in demand for health services. Although hospitals are already located in Gatton and Laidley, some health services are not currently available in the Lockyer Valley (e.g. maternity), resulting in transfers to hospitals in surrounding metropolitan centres.

Development of a new hospital in Plainland would support the supply of health services and help meet future demand, whilst also creating additional opportunities for residents to remain within the Lockyer Valley, rather than having to travel outside the region, for health-related services. This will also increase the attractiveness of the Lockyer Valley and help retain residents, particularly young families.

We recommend a position paper be developed to determine the feasibility of a new regional hospital in Plainland, including the economic and social impacts and its ideal timing. It is likely that this may need to be developed in stages with an initial 24 hour medical emergency centre which in time, could be extended to a full hospital facility. A position paper will allow for advocacy of the facility in stages to align with population growth.

5.4. Agri-Tourism Opportunities

These opportunities look at leveraging off the strength of the agricultural industry, particularly food production, the farming industry, as well as 'paddock to plate' initiatives. These agri-tourism opportunities are critical to stimulating growth in the visitor economy, particularly through international visitors by positioning the product to tour groups from the growing Asian (e.g. Chinese) market.

5.4.1. Product Development

There is an opportunity for product development and enhancement in this space, including the introduction of new product and consolidation/improvement of existing product.

Tourism operators have the opportunity to get involved with regional food trails across South East Queensland. Most food experiences in the region are based on interaction with growers and farmers' markets rather than farmgate experiences. By leveraging off regional produce and experiences, the Lockyer Valley can build its food trail product and attract visitors by offering:

- farm stays and guided tours (although there is a biosecurity issue which needs to be considered);
- the opportunity to view farm operations, particularly how the produce is grown, could appeal to school, tertiary education and specific interest groups (this could be packaged with the Edmund Park facility as an extra-curricular activity for schools);
- enhancing existing food trails to promote local produce. The region already has a number of roadside stalls (at Gatton, Upper Tenthill; Grantham and Forest Hill) that can be incorporated in the trails;

- the chance to purchase food directly from the farm (farmgate produce);
- cooking schools, to showcase the region's product ('paddock to plate'); and

In addition, a 'slow' food trail that provides a comprehensive experience of the region (which could generate longer stays and greater levels of visitor spend) could be developed. It could include visits to multiple farms and a range of experiences, including tours, meals, cooking classes etc. It could be packaged with accommodation options and other attractions to provide a rounded experience and support longer visitor stays.

There is also the opportunity to link many of these experiences with industry, such as growers and agricultural operators, as well as education (University of Queensland). This will strengthen agri-tourism products and broaden its visitor base to students, farmers, etc.

5.4.2. Signature Food Event

Council is keen to develop and promote a signature food event. There are already a number of existing events in the wider region, including:

- the Regional Flavours Festival (Brisbane);
- the Good Food and Wine Show (Brisbane);
- Eat Local Week (Scenic Rim);
- the Winter Harvest Festival (Aratula, Scenic Rim);
- the Royal Queensland Show – or Ekka (Brisbane);
- the Felton Food Festival (Felton); and
- the Hampton Food Festival (Hampton).

It is important that any food event in the region possesses a unique point of difference. As such, it may be preferable to look to leverage off one of the existing festivals to gain a higher profile for the region and to offer a more cost effective and faster activation.

There is also the potential to further promote the Lockyer Valley 'food' brand by exploring opportunities to become involved in regional and/or national trade shows that showcase its contribution to agriculture and food production.

5.4.3. National Food and Innovation Centre

The 2013 Food Strategy indicated there was potential to create a new facility and experience focused on the agricultural sector and including displays, potentially a cooking school and an incubator to allow food processing to occur. This could be a showcase for the region's produce and could attract investment and visitor markets (University of Queensland students, families, farmers, etc.). The concept was termed the national food and innovation centre and was to have a strong education and technology focus.

In addition, the facility could be linked to broader elements that contribute to the agricultural industry and the Lockyer Valley economy in general, including (but not limited to):

- the connection between water and bio security and food production;
- the value of being able to convert agricultural waste into an input commodity (i.e. reprocessing) that further increases production and profits; and
- research and development (R&D) opportunities with the university, including identification of innovative approaches to food production.

These and other elements need to be explored further as a potential opportunity to help showcase the uniqueness of the Lockyer.

5.4.4. Bio-Processing Facility

There is potential to develop a bio-processing facility, utilising new technology and waste from the agricultural sector, to maximise production output and harness potential bio-energy for the region. UQ is also assessing this project.

The objective is to minimise the levels of agricultural waste and maximising output while generating economic benefit. However, growers indicate that current levels of wastage are already low and many farms already reprocess waste and by-products themselves (through canning, repackaging, etc.).

A feasibility assessment is required, including identification of economic benefits as well as any potential risks.

Options for locating such a facility could collocate with a national food and innovation centre, at a site along the Warrego Highway so it is easily accessible. The challenge, however, is the likelihood that many major farming operations are likely to prefer to have a bio-energy plant either directly on their own property to enable direct benefit or very close by, so the cost of transporting waste product is minimised.

5.5. Town Revitalisation Opportunities

5.5.1. Town Activation and Revitalisation

Local towns within the Lockyer need to be revitalised to avoid economic loss and expenditure leakages as resident's travel outside the region (to Toowoomba and Ipswich especially) for goods and services, including medical services and retail and entertainment activities (e.g. cinemas, shopping centres, etc).

Enhancements are needed to the main street of Gatton (as well as other townships within the Lockyer Valley such as Laidley, Withcott and Plainland), to support and strengthen business and economic activity. Various forms of town centre activation are needed.

Council is currently working to improve and activate town centres. It recently implemented the *Laidley Futures Plan*, designed to both stimulate growth and beautify the town of Laidley. Due to its success, Council is currently undertaking a *Gatton Revitalisation Project*, designed to improve the economic and social vitality of the Gatton town centre. Elements of town centre revitalisation may include:

- improvements to streetscape through enhancing the façade of buildings;
- additional street furniture;
- upgrading of street lighting;
- landscaping including greater street planting, introducing water features;
- improved way finding and signage;
- improved car parking options;
- access to wifi in public zones; and
- changing the mix of retail and commercial developments by offering flexible zoning etc.

In addition to physical improvements, town activation and revitalisation can also be achieved through community engagement and community-driven initiatives aimed at improving the lifestyle of residents, including (for example):

- night markets to offer evening entertainment;

- the development of public infrastructure projects designed/coordinated by the community (e.g. public art sculptures and galleries); and
- creating improved public open spaces for community use and public gatherings.

Importantly, these projects should be implemented based on extensive community consultation to ensure the 'buy-in' of community members as these types of initiatives work best with strong community support.

5.5.2. Slow Uptake of NBN

The National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout, underway since 2017, has been slow to activate. In addition, there has been a low uptake of the NBN by small to medium enterprises in particular throughout the region. Council and industry advisors could play a role in helping to stimulate greater uptake of the NBN through promoting the benefits more strongly and if appropriate, finding possible ways to incentivise the uptake.

Maximising access to online resources will be critical to facilitating collaboration between industry bodies and fostering growth in the economy. The development and use of faster and more efficient digital services is an important component in achieving such an outcome with Council needing to advocate for better services to the region.

5.6. Industry Growth Opportunities

5.6.1. Sustaining and Growing the Agricultural Sector

In addition to the major regional economic initiatives designed to support the agricultural sector, it is also noted that major national corporations are looking at opportunities within the Lockyer Valley. The importance of offering a distribution chain which links growers and packing houses to high quality packaging and distribution is an important value-add for the Lockyer and its future national positioning as a major food bowl in Australia.

5.6.2. Partnerships and Collaboration

5.6.2.1. Freight and Logistics Operators

The size of some of the major agricultural sector companies, freight and logistics companies operating in the Lockyer Valley are significant. Council has worked closely with many major operators in the region (e.g. Nolan Transport, Rugby Farms etc.) over a number of years to grow the local economy. Continued collaboration is important to maximise the value chains which already exist.

The Lockyer is strategically very well located with three national and international airports within relatively close proximity including airports in Brisbane, the Gold Coast and in Toowoomba (Wellcamp Airport), which includes a significant freight terminal that can support the agricultural sector for export of higher value air freighted produce. The potential for expanding the export of fresh produce cannot be overstated, especially with the high quality of produce grown within the Lockyer.

In addition, the positioning of major arterial road systems within the Lockyer makes it a natural hub for trucked freight and logistic movements inland and coastal, and with the added advantage of easy access to rail freight terminuses as well, which allows access to various major markets, especially in eastern seaboard cities.

Changes to the rail and road network will create the need to strengthen the importance of the Lockyer's geographic location as a distribution hub and a major regional centre for the transshipment and repackaging of various agricultural and related produce.

5.6.2.2. University of Queensland (Gatton Campus)

There are opportunities highlighted throughout this report that focus on increasing collaboration with the University of Queensland Gatton Campus. Creating better linkages with the university is highly beneficial for the Lockyer, to help drive additional investment in the region, both in terms of infrastructure and R&D.

Infrastructure investment, such as extending the bikeways to Gatton township (Section 5.3.4) or developing additional student accommodation (Section 5.3.2), will generate flow on economic benefits associated with additional student activity and growth in student numbers. Increasing student numbers, resulting in greater levels of educational attainment, would also lead to improved job prospects for many students in the region.

In addition, investment into R&D opportunities, will add value to, and generate growth in, the agricultural sector. As such, this should stimulate additional economic growth and, ultimately, create more employment opportunities, ranging from University employment in R&D, to industry employment in agriculture along with those working in support services.

5.6.2.3. Developing and Expanding Equine Events

The Lockyer already has a well recognised equine industry with various equine events. Potential exists to grow these various equine events and expand equine activities overall. Some of the opportunities reflect new cluster partnerships through the involvement of Racing Queensland who are keen to grow the equine industry within the Lockyer. This in turn should lead to stronger visitation associated with horse racing events and associated activities to support racing weekends where other activities can also be included.

Other equine areas for potential partnerships include linking with the University of Queensland Vet School and opportunities for various equine events with the Lockyer Turf Club. As the ability to find locations around South East Queensland and major urban centres for pony club events, dressage and other equine activities reduces due to the pressure for land for urban development, the value and importance of the Lockyer for the equine industry will only grow further.

5.7. Environmental Opportunities

A number of projects and initiatives relating to environmental factors are also likely to impact on economic development in the region. These are detailed below.

- **Conservation Zones.** Council has identified conservation zones within the region which offer the potential for eco tourism activities as well as offering ways to protect the environment (parks, waterways, etc.) as well as wildlife. Maintaining these zones offers potential to develop nature-based tourism and recreation products and experiences to attract visitors and to help stimulate the visitor economy.
- **Lockyer Catchment Action Plan (2015-18).** This is a 30-year vision for South East Queensland to support a resilient, productive, liveable and growing region. With the action plan scheduled for an update in June 2018, it presents the opportunity to strengthen food production and support the region's agricultural sector, contributing to growth in the industry and overall economy.
- **Trails Network Strategy.** Council, in tandem with Toowoomba Regional Council, are working toward the Lockyer Valley being included within the Toowoomba Region Trails Network Strategy (2016). The Council is looking too leverage off this strategy to improve and expand the region's existing trails network, to the benefit of residents and visitors. As such, it is expected to attract additional visitors and stimulate further growth in the visitor economy.



6. Action Plan

6.1. Overview

An Action Plan has been developed to offer a road map for activating the desired outcomes and providing a timeframe for achievements. The Action Plan will support the facilitation of the Economic Development Plan (inclusive of regional food strategies), including identification of key result areas, strategies, tasks, responsible stakeholders, timeframes, budget and KPIs to track progress. This action plan contains steps required to realise future opportunities and achieve the recommendations included in this Plan, as well as supplementary actions that can be undertaken to further the success of this Plan through the Tourism Development Plan developed separately.

The purpose of this is to highlight priorities for Council and relevant stakeholders, and ultimately to lead to sustainable growth in the Lockyer Valley economy.

6.2. New Actions to Support the Update to the Economic Development Plan

The new actions purposefully overlap with previous actions in the 2013 report to strengthen and consolidate existing actions that are still relevant to the Lockyer, rather than trying to 'reinvent the wheel'. Where overlap occurs, Stafford's recommendation is for new actions to supersede previous ones.

The following defines the timeframes and indicative budget for each action.

Timeframe:

- Short-term: 1-2 years
- Medium-term: 3-5 years
- Long-term: 5+ years

Indicative budget:

- Low: \$0-\$50k
- Medium: \$51k-\$250k
- High: \$251k+

Where possible, indicative budgets have been provided as a guide to assist Council with individual initiatives. For some actions this is not possible, however.

Table 10: Actions to update to the Economic Development Plan

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
	Key Result Area 1: Stimulate the Local Economy					
Secure water supply	3.1 Lockyer Valley's natural assets are managed, maintained and protected.	Council is exploring options to fund a feasibility study to obtain grant funding or seeking investment to secure additional water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council 	Short - longer term	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study developed by early 2019 Funding application completed by mid-2019
Explore opportunities to activate the GWIZ site	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 4.2 Provision of fit-for-purpose infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the region	Continue to work with potential investment parties as part of the activation of the existing business case which covers the activation options for GWIZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Industry operators 	Medium term	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for improved transport infrastructure to ensure accessibility from both sides Generate sufficient investment by late-2019
Transition to care facilities and independent living	1.4 Council seek to understand community needs, resulting in partnerships that realise long-term benefits for the community in a timely manner.	Explore options for developing accommodation and a transition policy for the elderly to move from farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers Council 	Short to Medium term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare transition policy to assist elderly relocating from farms to transition care including downsizing for those in 60 to 80-year age bracket by late October 2019 Assist developers to deliver facilities which will meet Councils transition policy by late 2019/early 2020
Student accommodation	2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community. 2.5 Foster a flexible, supportive and inclusive business environment.	Implement the feasibility study already completed for student accommodation facilities at UQ Gatton Campus Investigate options for student accommodation external to the UQ Gatton campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers UQ 	Short to Medium term	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If viable, meet with potential developers to facilitate options by mid-2019 Explore options with Council for bike connectivity between accommodation and Gatton town centre by mid-2019 Investigate and determine potential sites in and around Gatton should external student accommodation be viewed as a viable option by mid-2020

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Regional Health Services	<p>4.2 Provision of fit-for-purpose infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the region.</p> <p>4.3 A development assessment process that delivers quality development that is consistent with legislation, best practice and community expectations.</p> <p>4.4 Regional collaboration and targeted advocacy that drives external funding, for timely delivery of key infrastructure and enhanced community outcomes.</p> <p>4.5 An integrated approach to the planning of all communities that strengthens local identity and lifestyle.</p>	Develop a position paper for a regional hospital in Plainland with a staged approach including an initial 24-hour emergency centre and a needs assessment to identify the trigger points for various services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council 	Short term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to complete position paper by early 2019 If viable, consult with State Government to explore funding options by late 2019
Diversification of industry and product mix	<p>2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes.</p> <p>2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy.</p>	Explore options to attract further investment and to broaden the product mix of agricultural output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Farmers Growers' Group 	Long term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with farmers etc. to determine mechanisms to increase the economic output by late-2019 Identify any policy or regulatory changes required to generate greater sectoral diversity by mid-2020
Equine Industry Development	<p>2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes.</p> <p>2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy</p>	Explore opportunities for partnerships to grow the equine industry and encourage more equine events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council, Racing Queensland, Lockyer Turf Club 	Medium - Long term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with key equine sector bodies to expand potential for sector growth, by mid 2020 If viable, introduce expanded or new equine events by June 2021 Assess potential for sustainable sector growth on an ongoing basis, annually, from 2022

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Key Result Area 2: Strengthen the Region's Agricultural Sector and Contribution to the Economy						
Bio-processing facility	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 3.2 Council's policies and plans support environmentally sustainable development. 3.5 Council and the community actively reduce waste, recycle and reuse more.	Determine partnership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Developers Industry operators 	Short term	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess producer interest in forming partnership opportunities by mid-2019 If viable, engage with farmers, developers and key government agencies to explore site options and next steps by early 2020
Industry partnerships and collaborations	4.4 Regional collaboration and targeted advocacy that drives external funding, for timely delivery of key infrastructure and enhanced community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle.	Explore regional collaboration options and partnerships between the agricultural sector, freight/logistics companies and government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Developers Industry operators Government agencies 	Short term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate engagement between different industry sectors, with preliminary discussions by mid-2019 Facilitate engagement with key government agencies and identify potential opportunities by early-2020
Innovation in food production	2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle.	Through R&D programs and collaboration with the university, explore innovative techniques to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council University of Queensland Growers' Group 	Short term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a position paper on potential opportunities by late-2019 Explore viable opportunities with industry and the university by mid-2020
Develop brand recognition and profile of the region	2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle.	Strengthen the brand for the Lockyer to raise its profile in agriculture to consumers, in commercial accommodation, education, technology, tourism and other growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council 	Short term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with all key stakeholders to strengthen brand awareness by late-2019 Increased promotion of Lockyer Valley on websites, social media, etc by mid-2020

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Promote the region as one of the worlds leading food bowls	2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle.	Promote the unique selling point of the Lockyer Valley by focusing on the high-levels of agricultural production, making it 'Australia's Salad Bowl' and one of the top 10 most fertile growing regions worldwide. Explore opportunities for Council to become involved in regional and/or national trade shows that showcase its contribution to agriculture and food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Industry operators 	Short term	\$30k for promotion online nationally and internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate use of regional branding on produce supplied to retail chains by early-2020 Increased promotion of Lockyer Valley on websites, social media, etc by mid-2020
Entertainment/Recreation strategy	1.2 Council optimises the use of its open spaces and facilities by improving access to and the quality of the facilities for individuals and groups for cultural, recreational and community activities. 1.3 Enhanced wellbeing and safety of the community. 1.4 Council seek to understand community needs, resulting in partnerships that realise long-term benefits for the community in a timely manner. 1.5 Events and activities that bring together and support greater connectivity in the community.	Develop a recreation/product strategy to improve the provision of entertainment facilities (e.g. indoor attractions, retail, restaurants, etc), designed to attract visitors and families to the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Industry operators Developers 	Medium term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop entertainment and recreation strategy by early 2020 Identify sites for development of new or expanded current facilities by late 2020

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Key Result Area 3: Improve Community and Visitor Experience of the Region						
Tourism precinct activation	<p>1.2 Council optimises the use of its open spaces and facilities by improving access to and the quality of the facilities for individuals and groups for cultural, recreational and community activities.</p> <p>1.3 Enhanced wellbeing and safety of the community.</p> <p>1.4 Council seek to understand community needs, resulting in partnerships that realise long-term benefits for the community in a timely manner.</p> <p>1.5 Events and activities that bring together and support greater connectivity in the community.</p>	Feasibility study to create a tourism precinct/hub at an attractive location in the Lockyer Valley (e.g. Lakes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Council ■ Local Tourism Association ■ Industry operators 	Medium-longer term	\$20k for feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feasibility study developed by late-2019 ■ Assessment of funding options for activating the precinct by late 2020

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Town centre activation	<p>1.2 Council optimises the use of its open spaces and facilities by improving access to and the quality of the facilities for individuals and groups for cultural, recreational and community activities.</p> <p>1.3 Enhanced wellbeing and safety of the community.</p> <p>1.4 Council seek to understand community needs, resulting in partnerships that realise long-term benefits for the community in a timely manner.</p> <p>1.5 Events and activities that bring together and support greater connectivity in the community.</p> <p>4.1 Growth and development in the region is sustainably managed through the adoption and implementation of the Lockyer Valley Planning Scheme.</p> <p>4.2 Provision of fit-for-purpose infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the region.</p> <p>4.3 A development assessment process that delivers quality development that is consistent with legislation, best practice and community expectations.</p>	<p>Build on the existing revitalisation program for Gattton and develop a broader masterplan that identifies measures to activate key town centres</p> <p>Develop shop local promotions</p> <p>Develop local business support options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Chamber of commerce 	Short to medium term	Medium-High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop masterplan by mid - 2019 Implement actions and strategies of masterplan from 2020 onwards Review town centre activation by 2021

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Food trails & food tours	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community. 2.5 Foster a flexible, supportive and inclusive business environment.	Work with industry and farms to develop a range of food trails and tours across the region. Leverage off the regional product, such as the Southeast Queensland Food Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Local Tourism Association Industry operators 	Short to Medium term	Low (marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop additional local trails/tours by late-2018 Engage in partnerships with regional tours from late-2019 onwards
Farmgate retail	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community. 2.5 Foster a flexible, supportive and inclusive business environment.	Development and promotion of high-quality retail establishment that provides unique produce, promoted as 'paddock to plate' offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Local Tourism Association Industry operators 	Short term	Medium (marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased promotion of retail on websites, social media, etc

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Food-based events & festivals	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community. 2.5 Foster a flexible, supportive and inclusive business environment.	Feasibility into the development of a single, signature food event for the Lockyer Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Local Tourism Association Industry operators 	Short - medium term	Low and look for grant options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position paper developed by early 2019 Create signature food event by late 2019 Implement signature food event by mid- 2020
Extended bikeway between UQ and Gatton town centre	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community	Explore third party funding options to extend the bikeway between UQ and Gatton to improve connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council UQ 	Medium term	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to identify third party funding options by late-2019 including grants Council to secure funding by mid- 2020 Extend bikeway project to commence by late- 2021
Attract and retain educated, high-skilled professionals	2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community	Explore options for career path development for young educated and skilled workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Industry operators UQ Gatton Campus 	Medium term	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop with key stakeholders career path options by late 2019 Obtain approval and endorsement from industry partners to expand employment opportunities by mid-2020 Implement career path program by late 2020, with at least 10 individuals joining a pilot program per annum, commencing in 2021

Strategies	Corporate Plan Link	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Indicative Budget	KPIs
Advocate for passenger rail connectivity	4.2 Provision of fit-for-purpose infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the region. 4.4 Regional collaboration and targeted advocacy that drives external funding, for timely delivery of key infrastructure and enhanced community outcomes.	Develop feasibility study into a passenger rail line between the Lockyer Valley and Brisbane (in collaboration with Toowoomba Regional Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Qld State Govt 	Short term	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop feasibility study by mid-2019 If viable, engage with developers (and Government agencies) to discuss funding options and next steps by late-2019
Advocate for prison expansion	4.4 Regional collaboration and targeted advocacy that drives external funding, for timely delivery of key infrastructure and enhanced community outcomes. 2.1 Encourage opportunities for the Lockyer Valley to drive economic and community outcomes. 2.2 Maximise opportunities through engagement and partnership with stakeholders to achieve a strong resilient economy. 2.3 Promote and market the Lockyer Valley as a destination for commerce, tourism and lifestyle. 2.4 Attract and support education and employment opportunities for the community. 2.5 Foster a flexible, supportive and inclusive business environment	Develop a program to advocate for timely expansion of prison - correctional facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Qld State Govt 	Short term	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an advocacy program to encourage timely expansion of prison facilities as planned, by early 2019 Continue to advocate for employment growth associated with the construction and operational phases and update employment number estimates where required by late 2019



7. Supporting Documentation

7.1. Supporting Documentation 1 – Update of 2013 Action Plan

The following table details Council's progress in adopting the actions listed in the 2013 Plan and Strategy including:

- What has already been achieved;
- What is ongoing; and
- What is still relevant and desired (but little to no progress to-date).

Table 11: Progress of actions listed in the 2013 Plan and Strategy

Key Result Area	Strategy	Tasks	Progress
Strengthen the region's position as a leading agricultural production area	Lockyer Valley Produce Ambassador	Create a series of Lockyer Valley produce ambassadors to raise awareness of the importance of the Lockyer Valley region	Relevant and desired
	Position the Lockyer Valley as an equine industry centre	Undertake feasibility and market demand analysis looking at the size of the equine industry as well as additional facilities required to cater for this market. This should look at quantifying the economic impacts and benefits that growing the equine industry would generate.	Relevant and desired
	National Food and Innovation Training Centre	Undertake refinement of cost benefit model provided in top line feasibility assessment of the National Food and Innovation Training Centre. Parties keen to pursue the initiative also need to be identified	Relevant and desired
	Encourage schools to undertake field trips to the Lockyer Valley	Integrate educational aids into the region's website that teachers can download to educate students	Achieved
	Local champions	Develop a series of local champions to showcase and profile the expertise of leading members of the business community as well as the broader community at large primarily to help drive major initiatives.	Achieved
	Direct consumer marketing	Identify possibilities for direct consumer marketing to encourage the involvement of medium and major growers. This should include looking at options such as vegetable growing starter packs aimed at those living in major cities and identifying possible opportunities for utilising vegetables for creating low strength alcoholic beverages (wines, liquors, vodka etc.).	Achieved
	Community Pride campaign	Develop a "Community Pride" campaign to highlight all the positive initiatives which occur in the Lockyer Valley and which may not be sufficiently well known and to start actively encouraging the community within the region to work more collaboratively together.	Achieved
Strengthen key town centres	Streetscaping northern end of Railway St in Gatton	Undertake urban design study for the cost of enhancements and pedestrianising (wider pathways to encourage outdoor dining, landscaping, boulevarding etc.) Railway St in Gatton in order to encourage greater use. This should also look at the ability of Council to attain a grant in order to undertake the required changes.	Achieved
	Encourage broader retail mix in Gatton	Actively encourage chambers of commerce and shop owners to provide their space for shops which will improve the quality and increase the variety of retail mix which is currently offered in Gatton. This could be undertaken by providing rates relief to those shop owners who are prepared to offer discounted rent and/or update their premises.	In progress
	Paint your building competition	Develop and promote paint your building competition at Laidley and potentially including Gatton, Forest Hill and Withcott, particularly focusing on the town centre. Look to extend the competition to the other Lockyer Valley towns and create an inter-town competition.	Relevant and desired
	Plainland and Withcott Gateway Signage	As part of the overall signage strategy, there needs to be a large attractive sign board on the western gateway (Withcott) as well as the eastern gateway (Plainland) into the Lockyer Valley which will help reinforce that visitors have just entered the Lockyer Valley	In progress
	Greater use of Cultural Centre	Promote the Cultural Centre more intensively as a venue for events, conferences and meetings by developing a promotional and events strategy. Once additional accommodation stock is developed in the region, consider packaging up accommodation with the venue for prospective event/conference holders.	In progress

Key Result Area	Strategy	Tasks	Progress
	Bike lane linking UQ campus with Gatton town centre	In tandem with the University, determine the optimum route. Seek grant funding to assist with development.	In progress
	Infrastructure upgrades for Withcott	Investigate feasibility for the cost of introducing a sewerage treatment facility to support the possibility for encouraging a higher level of urban development at Withcott.	Achieved
	GWIZ commercial environmental scan	Undertake a commercial environmental scan of the level of demand for the GWIZ site, investigating market demand levels from other industry sectors that may be able to be encouraged to use the site in a shorter timeframe than what the site was initially earmarked for.	Achieved
	Urban design assessment for Forest Hill	Complete urban design assessment to identify options for enhancing the streetscape and supporting existing businesses in Forest Hill	Achieved
	Pedestrian arts tunnel	Conduct a feasibility study to assess the development of an arts tunnel under the Warrego Highway	Achieved
	Encourage stronger connectivity with University	Engage in discussions to achieve greater connectivity between Gatton and UQ Gatton Campus. This could be through seeing if the University will hold events in town, the University potentially setting up an office in the town centre, holding regular University open days in Gatton or encouraging the University to locate a portion of student housing in Gatton town centre.	In progress
	Encourage retail operators to stay open for longer hours	Investigate the implementation of a rotational system and other possible options	Achieved
	Establish roster of retail businesses to collaborate on opening times	Facilitate the development of an online roster available for retail operators which includes opening hours.	In progress
Increase employment opportunities	Career path development	Council, in tandem with TAFE, to facilitate the introduction of career path opportunities which gain the support of relevant State and Federal government education and training department ministries. This could include utilising the Lockyer Valley as a pilot study area for the introduction of different forms of career pathway development programs.	In progress
	Diversification of market base	Undertake research and investigation into diversifying the market base (other produce, export markets etc.)	In progress
	High school trade training centre	Development of high school-based trade training centres which focus on agricultural production or alternative model if appropriate	Relevant and desired
Proactively facilitate investment	Stimulate investment in the Lockyer Valley	Create investment memorandum to stimulate investment by developers into the Lockyer Valley for specific tourism facilities and which indicates the types of development in tourism which Council will actively support.	In progress
	Motel accommodation and backpacker hostel	If current motel and backpacker proposals are going ahead, continue to work with developers to ensure a successful outcome. If current proposals are no longer going ahead, undertake Council feasibilities to assess whether separate motel and backpacker accommodation facilities would be viable, what size they need to be and who could potentially operate the facilities.	Relevant and desired
	New caravan/destination park	Conduct feasibility assessment including a cost-benefit analysis for the development of a new destination park.	In progress
Raise the profile of the Lockyer Valley	Develop a regional brand for the Lockyer Valley	Develop a "grown in the Lockyer Valley" brand to raise the provide and awareness of the scale of food production, packaging operators and related quality control	Relevant and desired
	Packaging of product	The packaging of experiences, dining, accommodation and transport. This will involve a wide range of stakeholders but Council will need to take leadership and play the facilitation role for this.	In progress
	Position the Lockyer as a bird watching region	Develop a promotional strategy to position the region as a prime bird watching region. This would need to cover marketing opportunities through online mediums, print (magazines) and bird watching events (such as conventions)	Achieved
	Food trails	Work with industry to develop and market a range of food trails throughout the region	In progress
	Pop-up restaurants/cafes	Develop prospectus which outlines the procedure for and benefits of establishing pop-up restaurants/cafes in the Lockyer region. This will need to be provided to possibly restaurateurs/café owners throughout the region and broader SEQ region.	Achieved
	Development of farm gate experiences	Develop and grow the number of farm gate experiences available in the Lockyer Valley, incorporating farm gate retail sales and experiences as well as food trails with these.	In progress
	Mega Market Day	Create a mega market day focused on the high-quality produce which is grown in the Lockyer Valley incorporating the Lockyer Valley brand, produce, cooking demonstrations, media stories etc.	Relevant and desired

Key Result Area	Strategy	Tasks	Progress
	Mega Event in Sydney or Melbourne	Hold a mega event in high profile locations such as Martin Place in Sydney or Federation Square in Melbourne to promote the region. This should focus on the “taste of the Lockyer Valley” and actively involve the distribution of fresh produce, the involvement of leading chefs, food writers and providers to demonstrate the quality of produce available in the region.	Achieved
	Paddock to Plate Consumption Strategy	Develop Strategy to link production and related output with consumption opportunities seen through existing and new restaurants and cafés.	Achieved
Increase knowledge and innovation and reduce the risk for growers and producers	Undertake study tour	Undertake a study tour to link potential international partners with expertise in downstream value adding food processing	Achieved
	Investigate boutique higher value grower potential	Assess the opportunity for a more diversified product base including a broader range of markets	Achieved
	Encourage innovation and new ideas	Facilitate and promote examples of clever innovation and the application of new ideas in the Lockyer Valley.	Achieved

