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CENTRAL QUEENSLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY INCEPTION STUDY

BACKGROUND REPORT NO. 6: STUDY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP REPORT

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Project Manager: Liam Ryan, University of Central Queensland



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No
Executive Summary	iii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Consultative Mechanisms	1
3.0 The Consultative Committee One-Day Workshop	3
3.1 Overall Purpose	3
3.2 Objectives	3
3.3 Preparatory Checklist	4
3.4 Workshop Agenda	5
3.5 Study Progress Report (Liam Ryan, Project Manager)	6
3.6 The Workshop Context	9
3.7 Suggested Procedure	10
4.0 Sub-Regional Presentation Summaries	10
4.1 Gladstone Sub-Region - Ian Laurie	10
4.2 Rockhampton Area	13
4.2.1 CTDO Presentation - Colin Reynolds	13
4.2.2 RDPDA Presentation - Glenda Arthur	14
4.3 Central Highlands Area - Jean McRuvie	16
4.4 Mackay Area - Matthew Magin	19
4.5 Central West Region - Dr Tom Murphy	20
5.0 The Elements of an Overall CQ Regional Economic Development Strategy (Facilitator - Liam Ryan, Project Manager)	22

6.0	Plenary Session: Drafting Strategic Recommendations (Facilitator - Ken Dooley, Member of Management Committee)	23
7.0	Review Panel Observations	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Study's Consultative Committee Workshop was a very important part of the extensive consultative process that characterised this Study.

The overall purpose of the Workshop was to involve Consultative Committee members in the strategic planning process to ensure sub-regional commitment to and ownership of the overall strategy, while maintaining emphasis on sub-regional priorities.

Each of the sub-regional development officers/managers, following a structured format, gave presentations of outline regional economic development strategies, including status reports on projects being currently developed in their respective areas.

A Plenary Session at the end of the Workshop identified fourteen Region-wide issues that formed the basis of a set of policy recommendations (pp. 24-26).

A Review Panel conducted an evaluation of the outcomes of the Workshop and identified some omissions in terms of complete sub-regional economic development strategy coverage.

The Workshop provided the means of establishing better cooperation and more effective networking between participants, particularly in relation to generic issues that affect the Region as a whole.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In advising the University of Central Queensland (UCQ) of its successful submission to attract Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development (DBIRD) funding under the Regional Economic Development (RED) program to conduct this Study, the then Minister, the Hon. Geoff Smith MLA, advised that:

‘Reference must be made to interest groups across the Region to ensure the validity of the Study.’ (Final Report, p. 3)

In line with this condition, the predominant consideration influencing the Study’s design was to ensure that effective consultation with all communities and interested parties across the entire Central Queensland (CQ) Region was instigated and maintained throughout the duration of the Study.

2.0 CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS

The Study’s Consultative Committee, in compliance with the above condition, had to represent the interests of the broad CQ community. The Study’s Management Committee agreed that the Regional Development Officers (RDOs) (or managers) representing the five sub-regions that comprised the Study’s Target Area should comprise the Consultative Committee: the Study’s Project Manager should ensure that each member of the Committee was kept informed on the Study’s progress and was consulted on any critical issues that might arise.

It was deemed appropriate that the Study’s Project Manager, who was also an *ex-officio* member of the Management Committee, should chair this Consultative Committee when it met for a one-day Workshop towards the completion of the Study.

As the various regional development bodies represent, and are partially funded by, their constituent Local Government Authorities (LGAs), they were well placed to ensure that effective two-way communication was maintained as the Study progressed and elements of sub-regional strategies evolved.

Apart from their representation of LGAs, of which there were thirty-two in the Study’s Target Area, regional development bodies, through their management and clientele, were in a position to filter up and disseminate down critical information to ensure that the involvement in the planning process was actively maintained.

The five sub-regions and their representative organisations are:

- (i) Rockhampton Area (Sub-Region 1), consisting of Rockhampton City and the Shires of Banana, Fitzroy, Livingstone and Mount Morgan.

The DBIRD-approved regional development body for these five LGAs is the Capricorn Tourism and Development Organisation (CTDO) based at Rockhampton, while Rockhampton & District Promotion & Development Association Inc (RDPDA), also Rockhampton-based, shares responsibility for the development needs of Rockhampton City and the closely aligned Fitzroy and Mount Morgan Shires. Rockhampton Area is part of the Fitzroy Statistical Division.

- (ii) Gladstone Area (Sub-Region 2) comprises the City of Gladstone, Calliope Shire and Miriam Vale Shire.

The regional development interests of these three LGAs are the responsibility of the Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited (GAPD) which is based at Gladstone. The City of Gladstone and Calliope Shire are part of Fitzroy Statistical Division, whilst Miriam Vale Shire is part of the Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division.

- (iii) The Central Highlands Region (Sub-Region 3) consists of the five Shires of Bauhinia, Duaringa, Emerald, Jericho and Peak Downs, which have united under the recently formed Central Highlands Promotions and Development Organisation Inc (CHPDO), based at Emerald.

All five LGAs comprising the Central Highlands Region are part of the Fitzroy Statistical Division.

- (iv) The Mackay Area (Sub-Region 4), which coincides with the ABS Mackay Statistical Division, covers Mackay City and the Shires of Belyando, Broadsound, Mirani, Nebo, Pioneer, Sarina and Whitsunday; that is, eight LGAs in all.

Mackay Regional Development Bureau Inc (MRDB), based at Mackay, represents these eight LGAs.

- (v) The Central West Region (Sub-Region 5) is identical to the ABS Central West Statistical Division. It consists of the Shires of Aramac, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall, Boulia, Diamantina, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach, Tambo and Winton; that is, eleven LGAs in all.

The vast area covered by these eleven LGAs is represented by the recently formed Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPDB), based at Longreach.

Commencing with direct Study Team involvement as facilitators in four of the Future Search Workshops conducted in the Central West Region, regular feedback was provided to regional development bodies in the form of details of the Study's objectives, the timeframe and the Terms of Reference of the Study, the distribution of progressively updated Statistical Profiles on a sub-regional and LGA basis, summaries of Future Search Workshops (Central West and Central Highlands), and the main findings of the 'Needs and Opportunities' Survey, which was in fact part of the extended Study Brief.

3.0 THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

3.1 OVERALL PURPOSE

The overall purpose of this Workshop was:

To involve Consultative Committee members in the strategic planning process to ensure sub-regional commitment to and ownership of the overall strategy while maintaining emphasis on sub-regional priorities.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Workshop were:

- (i) To critically evaluate each of the five sub-regional strategies (ten year planning perspective) developed at the sub-regional level, and, where necessary, to 'tighten up' and 'fine tune' each.
- (ii) To establish linkage between the separate strategies on generic issues where mutually advantageous opportunities were identified.
- (iii) To canvass ways of establishing a CQ regional economic development entity that would be in a position to provide an authoritative voice on generic issues that concerned the CQ Region as a whole.
- (iv) To discuss and reach some agreement on the key elements of an overall CQ regional economic development strategy.

3.3 PREPARATORY CHECKLIST

This preparatory checklist was circulated to Consultative Committee members (excepting RDPDA) two months before the 6 October 1992 Workshop.

Each RDO/manager was requested to prepare the following:

1. An up-to-date status report on private sector development projects in the Area covered by their respective organisations and to provide a ranking of those projects that had a high probability of being activated soon. (It was desirable to distinguish between 'probables' and 'possibles' and to provide details of the magnitude of the project in terms of investment dollars, employment generation and estimated output. It was not necessary to go beyond a ten year planning horizon.)
2. A clear statement of infrastructure projects planned for their respective sub-regions, including a statement of their importance within the economic development context.
3. A statement with priority rankings of what their organisation regarded as the *three most important initiatives* necessary to promote the economic well-being of the region.
4. An outline of a strategic plan for the respective sub-regions (the relevant organisation's area of responsibility) to the year 2002 with as much supporting documentation as could be provided.
5. A map of the sub-region in question.
6. Any recent study reports relating to the particular sub-region in question.

It was suggested that:

- (a) Any plans or ideas brought to the Workshop should have the endorsement of the management of the relevant development organisation.
- (b) Each RDO should be prepared to give a short (half hour to an hour) presentation stressing what was necessary to meet the vision that the relevant community had for the future of the sub-region.
- (c) RDOs should attempt to identify advantageous links that could be established with adjacent sub-regions.

It was noted that this Workshop was one of the key avenues for providing the Study with direction from key players with a dominant concern with creating advantageous opportunities for the Region. It was important to distinguish between 'potential', as used in the loose sense, and planned action, where there is a commitment and concerted set of actions (a plan) to achieve a set of desired outcomes.

It was essential that the final strategic planning document was the result of a joint effort and was accepted as being representative of the plans/aspirations of stakeholders across the Region. This Workshop provided us with a great opportunity to set future development directions and to strengthen sub-regional strategies.

3.4 WORKSHOP AGENDA

9.00 am - 9.30 am	Study Progress Report - Liam Ryan (Project Manager)
9.30 am - 10.30 am	The Gladstone Area Strategy - Ian Laurie (GAPD) Presentation and discussion
10.30 am - 10.45 am	Coffee Break
10.45 am - 11.45 am	Rockhampton Region Strategy - Colin Reynolds (CTDO) Presentation and discussion
11.45 am - 12.45 pm	Rockhampton District's Strategy - Glenda Arthur (RDPDA) Presentation and discussion
12.45 pm - 1.45 pm	LUNCH. Address by Professor Geoff Wilson, Vice-Chancellor UCQ and Chairman, Study Management Committee
1.45 pm - 2.45 pm	Mackay Region Strategy - Matthew Magin (MRDB) Presentation and discussion
2.45 pm - 3.45 pm	Central Highlands Region Strategy - Jean McRuvie (CHPDO) Presentation and discussion
3.45 pm - 4.00 pm	Coffee Break

4.00 pm - 5.00 pm	Central West Region Strategy - Dr Tom Murphy (RAPDB) Presentation and discussion
5.00 pm - 6.00 pm	Key elements of an overall CQ regional development strategy - Interactive brainstorming session (Facilitator: Liam Ryan)
6.00 pm - 7.00 pm	Drafting strategic recommendations Identification of emerging consensus Facilitated thinktank session (Facilitator: Ken Dooley, UCQ - Member of Study Management Committee)
7.00 pm - 7.30 pm	Summing up

3.5 **STUDY PROGRESS REPORT** (Liam Ryan, Project Manager)

The Agenda for this meeting which was circulated two months ago indicated that the topic for this opening address was 'Strategic directions emerging from the Study to date'. I subsequently decided that to provide a summary of the Study's interim findings at this stage of the Workshop could detract from the individual presentations scheduled from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm; that topic will now be covered briefly at the start of the one hour interactive brainstorming session between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Instead of the interim findings of the Study, then, I will provide an outline of the extended Study Brief and explain the nature of the consultative process used in the course of the Study, of which this Consultative Committee Workshop is a very important part.

On 31 July 1992, on a recommendation from myself, the Study's Management Committee agreed to expand the scope of the Study considerably. This means that, in effect, it is now a regional economic development strategy study proper, not an inception study as such.

The proposed expansion of the Study Brief was discussed with DBIRD-Central to ascertain if additional DBIRD funding support of \$20,000 might be available under the RED program provided UCQ matched the additional funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The DBIRD response was encouraging, so we proceeded to prepare a Submission for funding of the extended Study Brief. This Submission was presented to DBIRD on 13 August 1992.

The reasons for the expansion of the original Study Brief was to conduct a fully-fledged regional economic development Strategy Study instead of an inception study that would really only provide direction for the design of such a Study.

The main elements of the Expanded Study Brief were:

(a) Increased Consultation

The Consultative Committee for the Study consists of the development organisations looking after each of the five sub-regions that comprise the broad CQ Region, viz Gladstone Area, Rockhampton Area, Mackay/Whitsunday Area, Emerald Area and the Central West (Longreach) Area. Additional costs associated with this bottom-up consultative process are estimated at \$3,500.00 (wages, travel and accommodation, postage, fax, telephone). (See Consultation Agenda, Attachment 1.)

To enable each sub-regional body to more effectively represent the interests of the cities and shires that comprise these sub-regions, it was agreed to procure the following additional source data.

(b) CQ-Wide Attitudinal Survey of Key Stakeholders

An Attitudinal Survey was conducted to determine what key players perceived as the strengths and drawbacks of the various sub-regions and to provide the broad parameters of the emerging strategic economic development direction for the Region. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed. The additional cost of this survey is estimated at \$2,000.00. (See Questionnaire, Attachment 2.)

(c) Cross-Regional Private Sector Stakeholder Survey

A questionnaire was designed to elicit strategic information and direction from leading private sector organisations for the development of the broad CQ Region.

This questionnaire is being administered, after consultation with development boards, to selected key players by experienced interviewers hired as 'in-house' consultants. (See Questionnaire, Attachment 3.)

(d) Cross-Regional Public Sector Stakeholder Survey

A modification of the above questionnaire will be administered by experienced interviewers to all regional departmental/agency Chief Executive Officers. Supporting planning and other study resource material will be assembled in the course of the structured interview process. (See Questionnaire, Attachment 4.) This will lay the basis for an integrated public sector approach to planning and policy formulation and more effective implementation.

The additional input costs of the fieldwork associated with 3.3 and 3.4 above (salaries, consultancy fees, travel and accommodation are estimated at \$20,000.00).

(e) Additional Data Processing

Associated with the additional prime source data collected detailed in 3.3 and 3.4 above is the additional data processing cost estimated at \$5,000.00 (mainly wages for coding data inputting and data analysis).

(f) Presenting Results on Development Area Basis

Producing the Study's key economic performance statistics on a development area basis as distinct from a Statistical Division basis, will render the findings more useful from a sub-regional standpoint and will provide a sound basis for performance comparisons between sub-regions. This additional data analysis activity is estimated to cost an additional \$3,500.00.

(g) Obtaining Global Commodity/Industry Projections

It was decided to go beyond industry representative bodies at the national level and obtain projections from leading specialist agencies for the coal, mineral, grain, sugar, cattle and tourism industries. Additional costs of obtaining these projections are \$2,000.00 approximately.

(h) Analysis, Collation and Interpretation of Commodity/Industry Projections

This task will be carried out by in-house consultants, the costs, mainly consultancy fees, are estimated at \$4,000.00.

Clearly, there was a major expansion of the Consultative Agenda and three more comprehensive data sets would be generated which had to be coded, analysed, interpreted and written up as part of the Study's findings.

In addition, providing global commodity/industry projections was a resource demanding undertaking but a very valuable one.

To accommodate these additional tasks, in-house consultants will be employed.

The Study completion date was extended to February 1993.

As you are aware, we have used preliminary 1991 Census data in our Statistical Profiles.

By January 1993, further 1991 Census details should be available as well as 1991-92 value of commodity production data. This will provide us with a more up-to-date database.

On 24 September 1993, Professor Geoff Wilson, Vice-Chancellor, UCQ, was advised by DBIRD-Central that 'under the Regional Economic Development (RED) Program, there is no mechanism available to increase the financial contribution for projects after their approval by the Department of Business Industry and Regional Development (DBIRD)', but were advised that the additional tasks could form the basis of a new submission for RED funding in the round closing on 23 October 1993.

However, as work on the additional tasks was in progress, difficulties arose with the preparation of that Submission.

The position now is that we have proceeded with the extended Study Brief in anticipation of additional DBIRD funding support, but have been confronted with some 'technical' problems. We are hoping that these problems can be satisfactorily resolved.

3.6 THE WORKSHOP CONTEXT

This was designed as a Workshop for the RDOs/managers only. No DBIRD staff were invited to attend in case their presence inhibited open discussion.

Many of the RDOs/managers, two of whom were fairly recent appointees, had not previously met.

At this stage, the Study was well advanced, having commenced in late March 1992, and participants were aware of some of the emerging strategic directions and had been provided with a comprehensive Statistical Profile that presented key demographic and economic data on a Region-wide basis, a sub-regional basis and an LGA basis.

Participants were given an assurance that there would be no press coverage of any specific outcomes of the Workshop and that any viewpoints advanced in confidence would not be recorded or communicated outside the meeting.

3.7 SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

1. It was proposed that the Agenda should be followed closely.
2. There should be no questions during presentations.
3. The idea was to cooperate in strengthening the strategies of each sub-region, not to be critical - in other words, to operate as a team.
4. It would be valuable to separate generic issues that had a relevance to the whole Region from those that were strictly sub-regional or local.
5. Identifying common problems, even where they involved a funding body, was considered to be constructive, as attention could be directed towards finding appropriate solutions to these problems.
6. Participants were requested to jot down reminders of issues that could be more effectively handled on a Region-wide basis throughout the day; that is, elements of an overall regional economic development strategy. These would form the basis of the plenary session discussion when an attempt would be made to reach consensus on some of them.

4.0 SUB-REGIONAL PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

4.1 GLADSTONE SUB-REGION - Ian Laurie

Ian Laurie stated that it was his first year in the job and he was just beginning to understand what the job entails, what is expected of him and what the crucial issues are.

Most crucial of all was the uncertain funding situation which would determine whether he had a job or not.

Gladstone's history was one of fighting every inch of the way and not relying on government to provide the initiative.

Ian observed that Gladstone first developed without either a strategic economic plan or a regional development policy and without any government financial support.

Gladstone received bad press due to the severe pressure on social amenities during the rapid expansion phase of the late 1960s.

Gladstone's prime asset is its deep water harbour, which was instrumental in attracting Comalco to set up an aluminium refinery in the first place.

It was this initiative and the associated Power Station construction that changed Gladstone from a relatively insignificant fishing town with a small scale meat abattoir to an industrial growth centre which, apart from one major hiccup following the early 1970s boom, has continued to grow steadily and to diversify its base.

Ian referred anyone interested in the struggle that Gladstone had to mount in order to become a major industrial centre to Dr Michael Wilson's CEDA funded research report titled, 'The Importance of Regional Development in Australia: The Gladstone Experience', September 1990.

The fact that most industrial developers in the Gladstone Area had to deal with two LGAs, the Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council, caused some problems, although generally relations between the two LGAs were excellent.

Gladstone's development has not been supported by government in financial terms. In recent years, the State Government actively promoted Gladstone as an industrial growth centre.

Ian referred to the Gladstone Area's 'Regional Economic Development Strategy' prepared for the Bureau by Consultants Cameron McNamara in 1988.

There was a belief in Gladstone that there was a philosophy that if you pay good money for a regional development plan you should implement it.

The above Study concluded that Gladstone's major development opportunities were in the heavy industry sector.

The location of ICI and Minproc in the Gladstone Area since that Report was released is evidence of the Strategy being followed.

Other strengths that the Gladstone Area has are:

- . a stable economic base
- . large reserves of resources in close proximity
- . natural gas on tap
- . a magnificent deep water harbour
- . proximity to coalfields and an excellent electrified rail feeder network
- . a skilled workforce
- . a community attitude that was in favour of industrial development
- . a diverse range of tourism attractions in adjacent Shires
- . easy access to the Great Barrier Reef
- . good corporate citizens
- . good community spirit

There were some weaknesses, including:

- . A feeling in a section of the community that they are powerless when it comes to exerting any influence on the course of economic development.
- . Great difficulty in accessing strategic information held by some government departments (of the examples given, one was federal and one State).
- . There was some concern about the protracted nature of the discussions surrounding the sale of the Power Station which caused investment delays and loss of export earnings for some major operators.
- . There appeared to be a lot of duplication and waste of money associated with the manner in which Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) are conducted. There should be a base EIS for an industrial estate and the specifics could be investigated for a particular project. Why start from scratch each time?
- . It was difficult to access investment funds.

In terms of the future development of the Gladstone Area, the directions provided in the 1988 Cameron McNamara Study Report were still relevant, viz:

- . further expansion of mineral processing
- . increased downstream manufacturing
- . further development of chemical industries and new petrochemical industries.

In terms of tourism, Gladstone had made the most of the 'Reef Adventureland' theme and had actively promoted tourism. The Bureau was now investigating developing a new approach in the belief that it is necessary to be innovative in order to remain competitive.

TABLED

- . Excerpts from the above cited Cameron McNamara Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- . A copy of 'The Shopping List to Develop an Industrial Centre'.
- . Reef Adventureland Promotional Material.
- . The Bureau's most recent Annual Report.

- . The most recent 'Project Status Report' (which is updated monthly)
- . A copy of the GAPD 1992 Business Plan.

4.2 **ROCKHAMPTON AREA**

4.2.1 **CTDO Presentation - Colin Reynolds**

Colin noted that he, too, was new to the Region, having taken up his appointment earlier this year.

He noted that the Capricorn Tourism and Development Organisation (CTDO) had been set up in the mid-1950s and had been influential in the provision of a lot of infrastructure in the Region, including the bitumen road from Rockhampton to Emerald.

Colin then presented a document titled 'Business Plan and Development Strategy 1992-93' for an entity called the Central Queensland Economic Development Centre (CQEDC), described as 'performing the development functions of the Capricorn Tourism and Development Organisation'.

He identified the following 'three most strategically important projects' in the sub-region as:

- . The Australian Cattle Industry Park at Gracemere near Rockhampton in Fitzroy Shire.
- . The Pineapple Puree Factory currently under investigation, at Yeppoon in Livingstone Shire.
- . The Advance Australia Fair Tourist attraction presently being developed at Biloela in Banana Shire.

Objectives of CTDO's Development Strategy were:

- . to improve the economic base of the Region
- . employment generation
- . a unified approach to economic development.

Colin mentioned several recent partially government funded projects in which his organisation had been involved, including:

- . the Australian Cattle Industry Park Feasibility Study
- . the Yarraboldy Briquette Project, which was now at the stage of developing a marketing plan
- . the Rosslyn Bay Marina Project
- . the 'Cutting through the Bull' suite of promotional literature
- . a Profile of Livingstone Shire
- . an employment study.

Colin expressed the hope that the Central Queensland Regional Economic Development Strategy Inception Study would identify market gaps and value-adding opportunities that would attract new business to the Region.

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- . CQEDC's Business Plan and Development Strategy 1992-95
- . A CQEDC Project Status Report.
- . A CTDO document titled 'Development: Member Benefits and Services Guide'.
- . A copy of a CQEDC document titled, 'Development: Members Update'.
- . A copy of the CQEDC document 'Profiles'.
- . A CTDO colour brochure titled 'Central Queensland's Capricorn Region', which also covered the Central Highlands.
- . A folio of promotional material on Livingstone Shire.

4.2.2 RDPDA Presentation - Glenda Arthur

Glenda noted that the organisation that she represented was comparatively new, having been set up earlier this year.

As the name implies, RDPDA was not solely concerned with development and promotional issues affecting the City of Rockhampton, but also had responsibilities

to its members in the adjacent Shires of Fitzroy and Mt Morgan, including Fitzroy and Mt Morgan Shire Councils.

Glenda saw her role as manager of RDPDA as primarily one of facilitation and networking and establishing strategic alliances with other organisations/agencies to more effectively promote the area and attract new businesses to the area.

In particular, UCQ had a very important role in this Region. Education was a growth industry that was labour-intensive. It brought people to the area - both staff and students.

UCQ had been particularly helpful in providing strategic data for firms considering relocating to the Rockhampton Area.

Through the International Business Exchange - Central Queensland (IBECQ), the University was assisting in developing an international or global outlook for Central Queensland. The benefits from this approach would be significant. UCQ was seen as a neutral player that can adopt an objective stance on issues where rival groups may find it difficult to make progress.

RDPDA had commissioned UCQ's Library (Infoserve) to prepare and provide regular updates of an economic profile for the Rockhampton Area.

This was a very professional publication which provided up-to-date key statistics that would assist decision-makers.

RDPDA has a Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. Its funding comes from private members and the Rockhampton City Council. The Rockhampton City Council was a sponsor of RDPDA, which was an autonomous organisation with its own board of management.

RDPDA has a hard-working Industry and Development Committee which combines local expertise in attracting new business to the area. There is a lot of goodwill and voluntary commitment involved.

The primary objective of RDPDA is to enhance the Rockhampton Area as a commercial centre and to service its clientele in a professional and friendly manner.

In the promotional field, tourism also features. There is always scope for improvement - for doing things better.

RDPDA is not competing with other regional development agencies. It is providing networking, facilitation and promotional services that are needed.

To date, the organisation has been kept busy. It has been fortunate in having a pool of expertise to call upon as different needs arise. It refers clients on to other

agencies for services and information, but does not regard itself merely a referral agency. RDPDA provides information networking and facilitation services for its clients.

The RDPDA was invited to attend this meeting at short notice. The Business Plan for the Organisation is now completed. The new economic profile would be ready for distribution shortly.

Opening the Information Centre on the river bank in Quay Street was one of RDPDA's initiatives.

4.3 CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AREA - Jean McRuvie

Jean advised that she was BARA officer (nothing to do with the fish species of the same name) for the recently formed Central Highlands Promotion and Development Organisation (CHPDO).

Previous to this she had been Economic Development Officer (EDO) for the Emerald Shire.

The CHPDO represented the Central Highlands Shires of Emerald, Duaringa, Bauhinia, Jericho and Peak Downs. Belyando had been invited to join, but saw an alignment with the Mackay Area as being more advantageous.

Following the DBIRD-funded Future Search Workshops in the Central West Shires of Tambo, Blackall, Barcaldine, Longreach and Winton, Jean had organised Future Search Workshops for the five Shires that come under the banner of the CHPDO.

Jean had used local facilitators who were trained by her in the use of the Future Search technique. As a consequence, these five Future Search Workshops had been conducted at a fraction of the cost of those conducted by DBIRD in the Central West, which involved travel and accommodation costs for DBIRD facilitators drawn mainly from Brisbane, but with some local input. An additional advantage of using local facilitators was that there was more local involvement and a better understanding of the issues considered important to Central Highlanders.

Emerald Shire was experiencing a high population growth rate - mainly associated with increased coal mining activity in the area. There was considerable pressure on housing and available industrial land. However, Emerald or the CHPDO were not complaining as more people means increased activity and more money circulating in the regional economy.

After coal, the beef industry was the Central Highland's second biggest export income earner. There had been a recent setback with the establishment of an abattoir in the area. The operation was subject to commercial sensitivity

constraints which barred any detailed discussion of the problems that had arisen, but they were associated with fears that the establishment of a government supported competitor in the Central Highlands or the Central West, would, to some extent, undermine the commercial viability of the proposed operation.

Clearly, the Central Highlands wanted to be involved in downstream processing of beef (or mutton should the location be chosen), particularly because of the jobs that would be created.

The possibility of establishing dairying operations in the Fairbairn Dam Irrigation Area was currently being investigated. That project, too, was subject to confidentiality restrictions at present.

Cotton production was an important activity in the Emerald Area, with two cotton gins providing local value-adding. Water availability was critical to the expansion of this industry.

The Fairbairn Dam Irrigation Area was used for growing citrus and vegetables, and there was a lot of interest in grape growing in the area.

Tourism was viewed as a growth industry. The Central Highlands had more to offer than the gemfields and the Blackdown Tablelands and the Fairbairn Dam. The mines themselves had attractions for a certain type of tourist, as did the rural lifestyle that characterised the bush.

The Central Highlands was interested in providing more education facilities locally and arresting the early population drift to the coast.

The primary emphasis was to provide more jobs in the area. Emerald was enjoying an increasing role as a service centre.

Jean referred to the five-point Mission Statement of the CHPDO:

- . A strong, diverse economic base for the region.
- . A community climate conducive to economic expansion.
- . Greater awareness by people outside the Central Highlands of the potential of the region.
- . A responsive attitude towards the needs of the businesses and people in the region.
- . A body which could lobby government on the needs of the region.

There were several opportunities that had been identified through the Future Search Workshops, including:

- . edible oil extraction
- . lot feeding
- . grain processing
- . stock food production
- . freight brokerage/forwarding
- . natural herbicide production
- . goods and services to coal industry
- . integrated educational system
- . essential oils
- . food processing
- . dairying

There were also infrastructure needs, particularly roads:

. **Major Roadworks**

Stage 1 - upgrading Carnarvon Development Road	\$2 million
Upgrading Gogango Range to Dawson River	\$3.5 million
Continued upgrading narrow sections West of Duaringa	\$2.5 million

. **Proposed**

Sealing to Disney on Charters Towers Road by late 1993, which is an additional 20 kilometre seal	\$4 million
Seven kilometre seal on Dingo/Mt Flora Road	\$4 million
Continued upgrading Capella/Clermont Road	\$2 million

. **Possibles**

- Completion of seal on Charters Towers Road
- Sealing of all Carnarvon Developmental Road
- Replacement bridge on Isaacs River

The CHPDO was willing to form strategic alliances with other promotion and development organisations on issues that would benefit the Central Highlands as well as the CQ Region as a whole.

Funding was a major problem. There was enough work for three full-time staff and only enough money to pay one.

TABLED

- . Five Future Search Workshop Reports.
- . Central Highlands News, Volumes 1-3.
- . CHPDO Business Plan.
- . Statistical Profile of Central Highlands.
- . Project Status Report.

4.4 MACKAY AREA - Matthew Magin

Matthew indicated that he was new to the job and had spent some time pondering what was the role of an RDO/manager. It was not an easy task to serve the interests of a Board of Management and those of eight LGAs.

In the early days, the Development Board was accused of being too focussed on Mackay and had lost the support of outlying Shires who did not consider that they were getting value for money. This has been rectified.

The three major projects presently either being developed or at an advanced planning stage are:

- . the Laguna Quays Resort (\$800 m)
- . the establishment of a Sugar Refinery at Mackay
- . the establishment of a beef abattoir at Clermont in Belyando Shire (adjacent to a feedlot)

These were projects with a capacity to create jobs in the region, while two were associated with value-adding to local product.

The Whitsundays was becoming the prime focus of tourism development within the State. Whilst Whitsunday Shire had its own tourism promotion body, there was a close working relationship between it and the MRDB.

Tourism had potential other than the Whitsundays. Ecotourism was relatively undeveloped. The outlying Shires had a lot to offer in terms of traditional outback lifestyle, clean air and wholesome food. As yet, tourism was not effectively

packaged. There was a mindset that tourism means the Whitsundays, but there is a lot more to offer, good as the Whitsundays are.

There is a strong thrust for expansion in the field of tertiary education. The local community is very proud of the UCQ's new Mackay campus. TAFE and James Cook University are also involved in tertiary education delivery in the area.

Mackay has its own harbour and bulk coal handling facilities at Hay Point are world class.

In 1985 the Mackay Regional Development Bureau commissioned Consultants Ullman and Nolan Pty Ltd to develop a five year Strategic Plan which was submitted in January 1986.

Tourism was singled out as the industry that offered the greatest growth potential.

This has turned out to be correct, but not without considerable difficulties due to the pilots' strike in 1989 and the economic recession.

TABLED

- . Report Precis - Mackay Region Economic Development Strategic Research Plan.
- . Project Status Report.
- . Mackay Regional Development Bureau Inc. Annual Report 1991-92.

4.5 CENTRAL WEST REGION - Dr Tom Murphy

Dr Murphy advised that his organisation was still not incorporated, but now confident that it had the necessary seed funding to set up and commence operations and employ a development officer who would have some challenging tasks to address.

He was not in a position to report on projects that had been recently investigated in the Central West, but had actively supported the Future Search exercise which had brought people together to think through where they stood and what they had to do to preserve the lifestyles of remote areas and find new ways of creating jobs and keeping the region alive.

Population loss over the past twenty years had been so severe that there was hardly enough people left in the Central West to provide basic day-to-day services.

The Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPDB) arose from a conference held at Longreach which had the theme, 'Bush Problems - Bush Solutions'.

The conference resolved that it was necessary for the community to be actively involved in planning for the future and should not have to accept solutions thought up in Brisbane. The most effective way to gain a say in future planning was to set up a formally organised body, representative of the interests of all the Central West's eleven Shires, to work with government agencies to solve the problems threatening the Central West.

This was the reason for the formation of the RAPDB.

It was convenient to divide the Central West into three sectors: the eastern sector, consisting of the Shires of Tambo, Blackall, Barcaldine and Aramac; the central sector, comprised of Longreach, Isisford and Ilfracombe; and the western sector, which contains the Shires of Winton, Boulia, Barcoo and Diamantina.

It was his belief that the rich resources of the Central West can be better used to the advantage of the State and nation with strong community participation in planning the future and developing solutions to problems that tend to end up in the 'too hard' basket if left to planners in distant capitals.

The Central West Region has shown what can be done by building the Hall of Fame. There is a tremendous history associated with the birth of QANTAS, now a major international carrier.

This is the area where the real outback cultural heritage is to be found.

The Plenty Highway should be upgraded as a major tourist route. At present, if a tourist wants to branch off at Longreach and visit the Alice Springs-Ayers Rock area, the tourist is forced to go north via Mt Isa and Tennant Creek and south again to Alice Springs, as no viable link exists from Boulia to Tobermorney to permit a direct approach to Alice Springs via the Plenty Highway. The journey through Mt Isa and Tennant Creek adds an extra 450 km to the trip.

For Longreach to be an effective tourist hub, it needs this crucial Plenty Highway link.

The government has been very supportive of the RAPDB concept. The State Government has provided \$325,000 to assist in the establishment and funding of the first two years of its operation.

Thereafter it will have to become self financing. There is a big job to be done and there is a will to do it, but RAPDB needs all the help that it can get.

TABLED

- . Six Future Search Workshop Reports.
- . RAPDB Business Plan.
- . Paper titled 'Rationale for Upgrading the Plenty Highway as a Major Tourist Route'.

5.0 THE ELEMENTS OF AN OVERALL CQ REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (Facilitator - Liam Ryan, Project Manager)

The prime objective of this session was to draw out and discuss key issues that were viewed as having relevance for the Region as a whole.

To set the scene, it was suggested that participants might consider the two following propositions, both of which had considerable support across the Region:

- (i) the CQ Region should be defined to include all of Fitzroy, Mackay and the Central West ABS Statistical Divisions, as well as the northern segment of the Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division (the Bundaberg Area); and
- (ii) there is a need for a regional economic development body that represents the broad interests of the CQ Region and which will be capable of presenting a CQ viewpoint on important issues.

Re (i) above:

It was agreed that recognition of a broad CQ identity as defined would be a big help in promoting the Region for tourism and industrial development purposes. There was a need to change the 'gap in the map' perception, particularly at the State political level. The Super-Region concept was already accepted in tourism circles.

Re (ii) above:

- . The issue of past conflicts and rivalries between regional development bodies was raised. For a body to represent the Region as a whole, it could not be seen to be Rockhampton dominated, otherwise other sub-regions would withdraw their support. The Chair of such a body would have to rotate, as would meeting venues.

- . Coastal dwellers had no idea of the severity of the problems facing remote areas. Whilst it was evident from Workshop discussions that all areas had problems, it was a matter of degree. The creation of twenty new jobs in Gladstone may not get too many people excited in the Gladstone Area. The creation of twenty new jobs in Blackall, Barcaldine or Longreach would be a significant achievement and would be seen as such.
- . Better communication and exchange of ideas between the six bodies who made up the Study's Consultative Committee would benefit all parties.
- . It was clear that there was a common funding problem. Some regional development organisations were more adept with dealing with the bureaucracy than others.
- . There were issues such as water shortages and high transport costs that were common to all areas across Central Queensland. It was highly likely that taking up these generic issues on a Region-wide basis would be more effective than if each sub-region made representations on its own behalf.
- . A voluntary association of RDOs initially may pave the way for setting up a cross-regional representative body with the emphasis clearly on *representative*.

6.0 PLENARY SESSION: DRAFTING STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS (Facilitator - Ken Dooley, Member of Study Management Committee)

Ken Dooley was requested to facilitate this session without having been a party to the discussions that had taken place throughout the day.

This session was a continuation of the 'brainstorming' session reported in Section 5 above.

Ken suggested that what the group was expected to do was to go through a Future Search Workshop routine in one hour. He advised that after issues were raised, he would question their proponents in a manner that may not seem to be 'too friendly'. He intended to put them 'on the line' to defend their views. What he wanted was real issues, not 'wishy washy' statements that may generate a warm inner glow but create no jobs or no new business initiatives. The motto was, 'Think before you speak and, when you do speak, be prepared to defend your statements.

At the end of the hour, he wanted a coherent set of policy recommendations that would provide guidelines for the economic development of the Region.

Participants were requested to concentrate on the big issues that were relevant to the development of the Region as a whole initially, then to identify sub-regional or locality-specific issues. These latter issues could be used in framing the five sub-regional CQ RED Strategy Study outlines.

The Region-wide considerations raised were:

1. *In order to promote a unified regional thrust and image, it was critically important to develop a multi-purpose marketing/promotional strategy for the entire CQ Region.*

(It was thought that this should be a jointly funded initiative and should be of the highest professional standard.)

2. *From a business/industrial development standpoint, the initial concentration should be on CQ import replacement, rather than on trying to develop new products with which to 'crack' new export markets.*

(This would involve CQ operators supplying more of the food and other day-to-day needs of the mines, resorts, hotels and motels, as well as the local general consumer market. The view was expressed that there was a cargo cult mentality about the 'export or perish' approach.)

3. *The integration of modes and considerable improvement of the transport system is needed in order to provide a streamlined freight forwarding network.*

(This could well be a means of establishing a competitive advantage in some product lines. It would certainly enhance the attractiveness of Central Queensland from an investment standpoint.)

4. *Specialist export services were badly needed in Central Queensland if producers were to gain maximum benefit from the aggregation of cargoes necessary to avail of cheaper freight rates.*

(Whilst the coal, beef, grain and cotton industries use the services of export specialists, potential small exporters were put off by the complexity and the cost. What was needed was the formation of a consortium of small operators that could strike better deals with transport, freight forwarding, cargo handling, cargo storage and legal and insurance organisations specialising in international trade.)

5. *To encourage investment in Central Queensland, it is necessary to provide one-stop-shop facilities for government approvals and the acquisition of key commercial and regulatory information affecting location decisions.*

(If better resourced, Regional Development Organisations working closely with local government, DBIRD and other State Government departments, are well placed to provide this facility.)

6. *There is a need for a CQ regional forum comprised of present RDOs/managers who should meet once every six months to discuss Region-wide issues and develop strategies.*

(This body is necessary in order to give the CQ Region a more authoritative voice within the State regional economic development context.)

7. *There should be government recognition that the CQ Region must grow significantly in terms of population and job opportunities to match the value of commodity production and export performance of the Region.*

(The point was stressed that the CQ Region can support a higher population growth rate and, in so doing, can take pressure off the Southeast Queensland Region and prevent Brisbane and environs from developing over-population and pollution problems of the type currently being experienced by Sydney. There are Brisbane mindsets as well as Central Queensland mindsets that need to be discarded.)

8. *Whilst the CQ economy will be heavily reliant on the export of unprocessed bulk commodities for many years to come, there must be a very conscious effort to steadily increase primary stage value-adding and develop some high value-adding operations, particularly in the processed food export area.*

(Value-adding has to be phased in; it has to be planned. A Total Quality Management [TQM] approach to strengthening Central Queensland's processed food export performance is necessary. Attention has to be given to developing a generic CQ brand [CQ = Certified Quality] and earning the 'Clean and Green' label.)

9. *To support Central Queensland's drive to develop a keen export opportunity awareness, it is necessary to improve the quality of business/commercial performance, including managerial performance, across the Region. The CQ community should stand firmly behind IBECQ.*

(Attitudes must change to become more development conscious and to develop a global awareness. The media and tertiary education institutions and IBECQ can assist in breaking down parochial mindsets.)

10. *There is a need for residential development to match economic development if housing/accommodation shortages are not to act as a deterrent on economic development.*

(Housing shortage problems exist in the Central Highlands and rentals are increasing fairly rapidly in Rockhampton, Mackay and Gladstone.)

11. *Some attention should be directed towards ensuring that a range of adequate industrial development land is available and there should be compatibility between activities allocated adjacent to sites or sites in close proximity.*

(The point was made that industrial site allocation between different types of industrial activities [toxic versus non-toxic] was presently a bit haphazard. This area needs more attention. RDOs need to be fully informed on industrial land availability.)

12. *Natural gas supply and rail electrification should be extended to Mackay to make the area more attractive to investors to provide more efficient transport, to promote tourism and support closer integration of the CQ Region.*

(The provision of an electric rail link would assist in establishing greater commercial linkage between Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone.)

13. *Organisations such as CSIRO, QDPI, UCQ, DBIRD and other government departments should be in a position to provide a combined effort to promote the development of the CQ Region. A unified approach by these lead agencies would be a great boost to business and community confidence.*

(At present there was too much fragmentation; there was no unified vision; there were no broad development outlines to follow.)

14. *Local Government Authorities needed a broad planning framework within which to draw up their own plans and strategies.*

(There was a need to *educate* LGAs on the rudiments of strategic planning. Local Government Authorities were being provided with inadequate information on State Government plans and initiatives.)

Other points raised were:

- * Strategic decisions are needed.
- * Planning is essential (long range - five years plus).
- * Sub-regions must help themselves.

- * There needs to be cooperation/collaboration across the broad CQ Region.
- * Major opportunities/projects are beyond our control.
- * Small-scale opportunities do exist.
- * The Future Search Workshops gave locals a feeling of ownership in the planning process.
- * Economic development depends on local government:
 - (a) making development easier
 - (b) supporting development boards
 - (c) providing infrastructure.
- * The timing was never better (recession - government welcomes solutions).
- * There is a lack of finance for investment and a lack of assistance for small business.
- * There is a need for diversification away from dependence on large industry (multinationals).
- * There is a need to maximise linkages/advantages of existing industries/avoid leakages.
- * Labour force planning/development must match supply and demand.
- * Promotion of the CQ Region to financial institutions is important.
- * Economic Impact Studies need to be provided for larger areas/regions and applied globally.
- * Water resources planning and management is needed.
- * There is a need for international air passenger/cargo links with Central Queensland.
- * There is a need for equity and access to all education, especially tertiary.
- * It is important to strike better deals with transport, freight forwarding, cargo handling and storage organisations.

7.0 REVIEW PANEL OBSERVATIONS

A four person Review Panel conducted an evaluation of the outcomes of the Consultative Committee Workshop. Two members of the panel had no prior involvement in the Study. A Draft Report of the Workshop's proceedings and a summary of the conclusions reached was circulated prior to the Review Panel meeting.

The Review Panel's comments are offered in a constructive manner and are not meant as criticisms of RDOs' presentations at the Workshop.

The main points raised were:

- . The turnover of RDOs is too high. It takes a considerable time for an RDO to become conversant with the nature of an area, to get to know the key players, and to establish effective networks. In the case of the CTDO, for example, there have been four managers in the last six years. This is not conducive to maintaining continuity and reduces the effectiveness of the position. Perhaps making the position a professional one and offering a higher salary is the answer, but the 'funding problem' militates against this solution.
- . There is confusion between the concept of a Business Plan/Strategy for a development organisation and a Strategic Economic Plan for a sub-region. There is a need for a course in the principles and practice of regional economic development for RDOs, or Economic Development Officers (EDOs) as they are now being called.
- . State Government regional economic development policy emphasises working through the local government level - the tier of government closest to the people and most conversant with their needs. Where regional development bodies are in conflict with LGAs, which presumably they are supposed to represent, a very unsatisfactory situation arises. The Rockhampton Area, in particular, has been plagued with demarcation disputes and rivalries. This is a deterrent to businesses considering setting up operations in the area. Gladstone, on the other hand, presents a unified front.
- . Any sub-regional economic development strategy should consider all the Shires in the area. The Gladstone Area Strategy, as presented, was too much focussed on Gladstone City. There was no mention of Miriam Vale Shire, which has recently had an Economic Development Strategy Study carried out for the Shire. Likewise, Calliope Shire is mentioned only in the context of the dual approval problem, yet most of the major industrial developments over the last five years have been located in Calliope Shire.

- . Still in relation to the Gladstone Area, it is a bit unusual to propose an outline Strategic Plan for Gladstone City and Calliope and Miriam Vale Shires that does not incorporate the primary commodity base (in dollar value terms) for the area, which is made up of cattle (63%), dairying (12%) and fruit (8%).
- . Any economic development strategy for the Gladstone Area should be pivoted on the progressive development and modernisation of Gladstone's port facilities. In mid-1992, the Gladstone Port Authority released a Draft Fifty Year Strategic Plan. This should be a core document in the preparation of any regional economic development strategy.
- . To support its planned industrial development, the Gladstone Area has to plan the full range of infrastructure supply - not just industrial land and harbour facilities. Whilst Awoonga Dam may seem capable of satisfying future needs, a couple of major projects of the scale of Gladstone Special Steel could cause serious supply problems, given the current dam yield. Planning needs to be undertaken now to ensure the necessary standard of multi-modal transport facilities to accommodate the planned containerisation of the port. This is separate from port facilities, which are adequately covered in the Port Authority's Strategic Plan.
- . Reference should have been made to comparatively recent studies undertaken in the Rockhampton Area, including the Hurley and Morton Studies paid for by CTDO.
- . In relation to the Central Queensland Economic Development Centre, which is described as performing the development functions of the CTDO, the objectives that appear in the Business Plan and Development Strategy are confusing, in that they presume to cover an area beyond the CTDO's area of jurisdiction.
- . The Rockhampton Area Economic Development Strategy appears to be a bit lop-sided in that two of the three projects singled out as 'strategically most important' relate to the tourism industry, viz the Cattle Park project at Gracemere and the Advance Australia Fair project at Biloela.
- . Major players like QMAG, currently planning an expansion of operations, and the possibility of the related Enviromag project being located in the area may merit more emphasis.
- . Likewise, UCQ is a key player by any standard in terms of its capital works program and spending contribution to Rockhampton's economy.

- . Again, the Rockhampton Area Strategy does not reflect the commodity resource base of the sub-region dominated by coal (65.5%), with cattle (19.6%) and grain (4.8%), the other two major industries in terms of value of commodity production.
- . The Mackay Area Strategy is closely aligned to the resource base of the area and acknowledges the importance of tourism as a growth industry, principally in the Whitsundays, and education as a further means for growth and diversification in the City of Mackay.
- . The Central Highlands Strategy is realistically based and focussed on greater utilisation of the natural resource base of the sub-region. It correctly identifies several small-scale infrastructure initiatives that will assist the economic development process.
- . The Central West has made a good start with setting up and gaining seed funding for RAPDB. It has to confront a particularly difficult set of problems, some of which do not originate within the Region, but have been imposed by international commodity markets.
- . In the Central West, the problems of drought and the tyranny of distance are accentuated.

The Review Panel described the policy directions derived from the Workshop Plenary Session as very impressive and practical.

Overall, the Workshop had raised most of the strategic issues that a Study of this type should address.

The RDOs/managers prepared and presented their material well and demonstrated that they possess a good understanding of the regional economic development process.