

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Overview**

The Burdekin is centred on the rich Burdekin River Delta. Abundant water supplies, fertile soils and an average of 300 days of sunshine per year have resulted in the Burdekin becoming one of the strongest agricultural regions in Australia. The area also has strong horticultural, aquaculture and manufacturing industries as well as a diverse range of businesses in construction, education and training, health services, professional services, retail, hospitality and tourism. In recent times the Burdekin is also recognised as one of the leading solar energy producing regions in Australia with two solar farms located in the Shire.

Our region's most important asset is water. The Burdekin River, combined with a massive underground aquifer and the Burdekin Falls Dam, make the district drought resistant. The year-round supply of good quality water boosts the confidence of local farmers, business people, residents and investors.

Long known for the production of sugar, the Burdekin region is embracing innovative ideas, crops and products in its endeavours to grow the local economy.

Council is also expanding its support and focus in developing tourism opportunities to attract extra visitor stays, increase visitor expenditure and leverage off the drive market. Council sees the visitor economy as a key driver for job creation as part of the economic diversification of the Shire.

To further develop the Shire and take advantage of the emerging economic opportunities, Council is exploring new directions for our future and is committed to creating a thriving economy for the region.

Council has recently adopted *Outlook 2025: Burdekin Economic Development Strategy*. The strategy provides Council with a framework to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the Burdekin Shire Council area.

Informed by a well-developed understanding of the Burdekin's economic development structure, dynamics and potential, the strategy delivers a five-year plan of action, which builds on and strengthens partnerships and alliances between Burdekin Shire Council, Government, industry and the community.

Council, in collaboration with the Economic Focus Group (established for the consultancy) conducted extensive consultation with key local and regional stakeholders as well as public sessions in Ayr and Home Hill to develop the strategy. This ensured the strategy provided Council with a new vision and charter and highlighted the opportunities for Council and its partners in government, the non-government sector, industry and the community to work together to help facilitate change towards a prosperous future for the Burdekin. Council's vision is for the Burdekin to be a vibrant and connected community and a location of choice in which to live, work, play, visit and invest.

Within the strategy, it was recommended to Council that the Economic Focus Group be formalised as Council's Economic Advisory Group to enable business and industry to effectively engage and collaborate with Council on economic development matters which are relevant to the local government area.

### **Role of the Economic Advisory Group**

The Burdekin Shire Council Economic Advisory Group will be an important mechanism for consultation, collaboration, advice and feedback to Council on the Burdekin Economic Development Strategy and Burdekin Tourism Strategy including implementation by providing input on matters relevant to both strategies.

The group will also provide Council with the opportunity to engage more significantly with business and industry leaders via establishing a framework between Council and key industry sectors with the aim of developing partnerships that allow for the advancement of programs and initiatives to drive economic growth.

The role of the group will include, but not limited to:

- Provide ongoing advice and support to assist and guide Council in the implementation of the Burdekin Economic Development Strategy and Burdekin Tourism Strategy; and
- Facilitate and promote significant economic and tourism opportunities for the Burdekin Shire which lead to:
  - Increased employment opportunities
  - New industry development
  - Growth and retention of existing business
  - Attraction of new residents; and
  - Increased visitor activity in the shire

The group's focus will be on economic development interests whilst balancing the social and environmental impacts of economic development.

### **Group membership**

The group will consist of a maximum of 10 representatives from business/industry and the community.

The Council representatives on the group will be two Councillors supported by the Economic Development Coordinator and Tourism Officer.

Invited guests, including State and Federal Government representatives, specific constituent groups within various sectors, consultants, project proponents and Council officers may be invited to attend meetings on certain issues or to progress an agreed outcome.

If the group is to succeed in its endeavours, it is important that all members understand its role and commit to the following:

- Advisory in nature with the group having the ability to make recommendations for Council consideration
- Provide members with the opportunity to meet with Government and Industry representatives to represent community interests and support economic development partnership opportunities
- Facilitate the exchange of ideas, suggestions and information among members and other relevant stakeholders
- Work towards partnerships to deliver economic outcomes
- The need to maintain confidentiality in relation to all discussions and information obtained during or as a result of group meetings

### **Member Role and Responsibilities**

Members of the group will need to consider a range of business and industry interests rather than a single business or industry interest. Members of the group are expected to:

- Commit to working towards enhancing the economic base of the local government area
- Act honestly and in good faith
- Attend and actively participate in the meetings
- Work collaboratively with other members
- Provide well considered advice and recommendations to Council
- Facilitate and encourage business and industry engagement with Council

The following skills and experience will be considered in relation to the selection of members of the group

- Relevant industry experience
- Relevant professional knowledge and expertise
- Understanding of the drivers of economic or tourism development
- Understanding of the Burdekin Shire business community or industry sectors
- Personal qualities that encourage collaboration, information sharing, innovative thinking and commitment

**Meetings**

- Burdekin Shire Council's Economic Development Coordinator will support the activities of the group
- The group will elect a Chair and Burdekin Shire Council will provide secretariat services to the group
- The secretariat will take a record of the issues, actions and responsibilities arising from each meeting. The group will endorse this record through an agreed process to ensure timely consideration of issues by Council
- Meetings will be held every 2 months
- Agendas and papers to be forwarded to members prior to each meeting
- Representatives should declare any conflict of interest on issues at the start of the meeting

**Communication**

All media and marketing activities will be completed through Burdekin Shire Council's Media and Communications Officer. As an advisory group established by Burdekin Shire Council, any media releases or public comment will need to be endorsed by the Mayor as per Council's policy.

**Constraints**

All group members are required to comply with the following:

- Maintain confidentiality in relation to all discussions and information obtained during or as a result of group meetings
- All conflicts of interest are to be declared at the start of the meeting and recorded in the minutes and if necessary, the parties involved will be asked to leave the room while the matter is discussed
- Information obtained as a member of the group is not to be used for personal gain or benefit

**Conclusion**

Council recognises that 'economic development' refers to the sustained, concerted actions of communities and policymakers that improves the standard of living and economic health and prosperity of a specific locality. Economic development therefore cannot be conducted in isolation from the community and must engage at every level at every opportunity.

**Expression of Interest Submission**

Council invites interested persons wishing to nominate as a member of the Economic Advisory Group to submit an Expression of Interest to Council by returning a completed nomination form to

In person	Burdekin Shire Council, 145 Young Street, Ayr Q 4807
By mail	Burdekin Shire Council, PO Box 974, Ayr Q 4807
Email	burdekinsc@burdekin.qld.gov.au – Attn: Eliza Lovell

**Enquires**

All enquiries or requests for further information should be directed to Council's Economic Development Co-ordinator Eliza Lovell on 4783 9800 or email [eliza.lovell@burdekin.qld.gov.au](mailto:eliza.lovell@burdekin.qld.gov.au)