1. The Outback South Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3), which covers a total land area of 625,222.9km2 square kilometres and includes the SA2 regions of Barcaldine–Blackall, Charleville, Far Central West, Far South West, and Longreach.
2. Within the Outback South SA3 region, the agriculture, forestry and fishing and the public administration and safety industries make up the majority of the region’s employment, employing 24.7 per cent, and 11.9 per cent of employed persons respectively (according to Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census data). Tourism is also identified as a key driver of industry and growth within Western Queensland.
3. The region’s reliance on agriculture means that it is especially vulnerable to external impacts, including climate conditions and pest issues. As of January 2021, almost all of the southern half of Queensland, including the Outback - South SA3 region, was drought declared. This year, large numbers of native grasshoppers in western Queensland have also destroyed grazing pastures, for the third consecutive year. Two emergency use permits for application of insecticides were granted by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority in March 2021. The Queensland Government has also invested $60.75 million for cluster fencing to control wild dogs and other feral pests in support of the sheep and goat industry in the region.
4. The Queensland Government is supporting jobs, driving sustainable economic growth and supporting drought and COVID affected businesses in the region by:
* investing $1 billion in critical road infrastructure projects across Western Queensland
* investing $348.2 million under the Building our Regions program for 271 infrastructure projects across 67 council areas statewide, including 11 council areas within the Outback South SA3 region supporting approximately 140 jobs
* providing $136.7 million in Works for Queensland (W4Q) funding to 22 Local Councils in Western Queensland supporting 3828 jobs since 2015
* committing $4.62 million to support the tourism, innovation, sports and events sectors in the Outback South SA3 region to recover from the impacts of COVID-19
* investing more than $7.2 million in Western Queensland across 20 Local Government Areas through the Back to Work program, supporting 314 employers and 749 jobs (at 20 April 2021)
* investing more than $6.8 million in Western Queensland across 22 LGAs through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, supporting 336 jobs (at 31 March 2021).
1. Cabinet noted an update on economic conditions and job-creating initiatives in Western Queensland.
2. Cabinet noted the following initiatives:
* funding of $1.2 million to repair the Isisford Weir;
* a new $2.7 million, nurse-assisted, two-chair dialysis unit at Longreach Hospital; and
* the $3.2 million redevelopment of the Longreach saleyards.
1. *Attachments*
* Nil.