

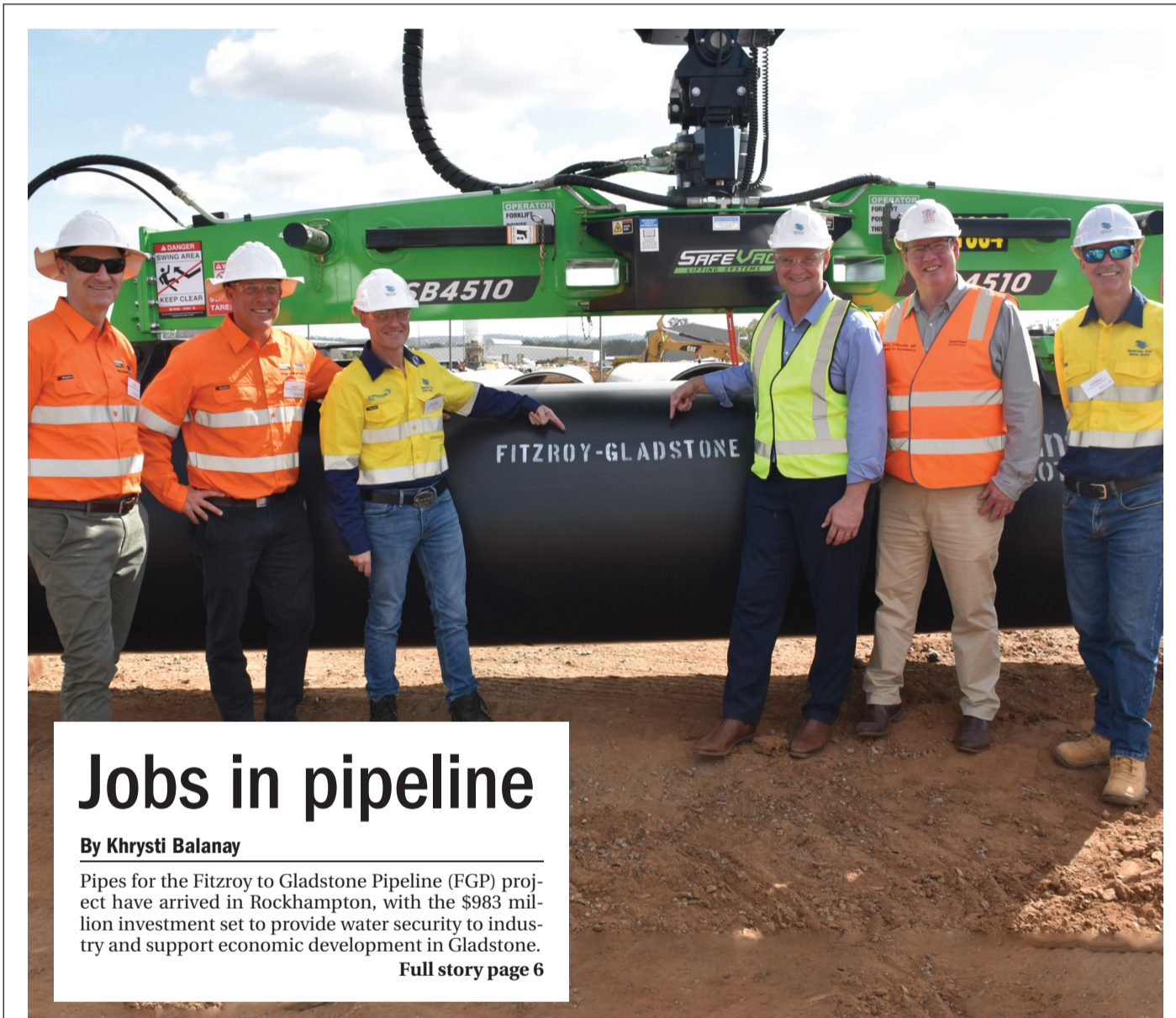
INDUSTRY *Today*



Students enjoy hands-on learning
PAGE 11



New future ahead
PAGE 21



Jobs in pipeline

By Khrysti Balanay

Pipes for the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline (FGP) project have arrived in Rockhampton, with the \$983 million investment set to provide water security to industry and support economic development in Gladstone.

Full story page 6

The Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline is set to create 400 jobs throughout the construction period.

Picture: KHRYSTI BALANAY

Green light for innovation

The Gladstone Region will be home to another exciting renewable energy project following the Wednesday, 12 July announcement that Rio Tinto and Sumitomo Corporation will build an innovative hydrogen pilot plant aimed at lowering emissions from the alumina refining process.

The Yarwun Hydrogen Calcination Pilot Demonstration Program received the green light after a A\$32.1 million co-funding boost from the federal government's Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

Full story page 5

QLD to go renewable

The Queensland government has earmarked a dozen regions to become "renewable energy zones" as part of a multibillion-dollar plan to strip fossil fuels from the electricity grid.

The zones will be used to deliver large-scale wind, solar, pumped hydro and green hydrogen projects.

A draft road map released on Tuesday, 11 July identified 12 potential renewable energy zones to be developed and connected to the Queensland grid in three phases by 2035.

Full story page 5

Net zero goal

A new Gladstone critical minerals processor is preparing for full-scale production at a \$300 million-plus plant.

Alpha HPA Limited is set to begin developing the second stage of its HPA First Project after receiving up to \$21.7 million in funding under the State Government's Industry Partnership Program.

Acting Premier Steven Miles and Gladstone MP Glenn Butcher announced the funding while inspecting stage one of the project in Gladstone on Wednesday, 12 July.

The project is commercialising the production of high-purity alumina (HPA) and related HPA precursor products in Gladstone using Alpha HPA's proprietary licenced solvent extraction and refining technology.

Building diverse and sustainable supply chains will be a key focus of the Queensland

Battery Industry Strategy, which will be released later this year.

Mr Miles said Alpha HPA ensures new industries have the materials to deliver safe, sustainable, high-performing products to market.

"In 2021, Alpha HPA chose Queensland as the home for this exciting project. Fast forward to today, and the company can now move ahead to Stage 2 and plan for full-scale production," he said.

Alpha HPA Managing Director Rimas Kairaitis said they were delighted to receive financial support for the HPA First Project.

"We welcome the State's recognition of opportunities in the production and processing of critical minerals for new-economy products," he said.

"Assistance through the government's Industry Partnership Program for the HPA First Project builds further momentum for the project and growth of local supply chains.

"In 2021, we signed the Central Queensland Statement of Cooperation with the Queensland Government. This commitment provided certainty for established and new industries in the Gladstone region to contribute to the goal of net zero emissions manufacturing."

Mr Butcher said the project provides the chance to grow the state's critical minerals processing capabilities to support downstream value-adding and export opportunities in new industries such as battery manufacturing.

Breaking down the barriers

An innovative initiative aimed at breaking down gender barriers and fostering diversity in the resources sector has seen three inspiring trade workshops delivered in Blackwater, Mackay and Dysart by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA).

BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) supported about 40 Year 10 female students from Central Queensland who explored exciting career opportunities in the resources and energy sector through hands-on trade activities like auto electrics, pneumatics, welding principles, engineering measurement, engineering drawing, and mechanical.

Full story page 8



Capella State High School students at QMEA's 'Mining for Code' workshop.

Pictures: SUPPLIED



MLA Managing Director Jason Strong said Carbon Neutral by 2030 was the winner of the ESG Enabler special award in the agriculture category. Picture: SUPPLIED

Red meat industry honoured

The Australian red meat industry's commitment to sustainability has been recognised at a prestigious national award on Friday, 30 June.

The award has been given to the Carbon Neutral by 2030 (CN30) initiative, which is a collective industry effort driven by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) to reach the goal of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The CN30 program was the winner of the ESG Enabler special award in the agriculture category within the Australian Financial Review Sustainability Leaders awards.

MLA Managing Director, Jason Strong, said that CN30 was already recognised globally for its leadership and vision setting for the Australian red meat and livestock sector, especially the way in which it strives for innovation that matches productivity outcomes with sustainability goals.

"CN30 builds on the existing sustainability credentials of the Australian red meat industry," Mr Strong said.

"It is highly ambitious with clear targets for the industry while also going hand-in-hand with the industry's goal of doubling the value of red meat sales by 2030."

He said investment in CN30 had been greater than \$140 million since 2017 when the industry led the way by embarking on the CN30 journey.

"The industry has already made significant inroads towards the goal," Mr Strong said.

"For example, up to the latest information, as of 2020, the Australian beef industry reduced its net carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 64.9 per cent since the 2005 baseline.

"The CN30 initiative recognises that the journey to carbon neutrality offers opportunities for red meat producers.

"On-farm changes that result in a reduction in net emissions often create co-benefits such as increased productivity and profitability, long-term business sustainability, improved biodiversity and other ecosystem service values. These co-benefits converge to build enduring prosperity for red meat industry stakeholders.

"This award is a strong acknowledgement of progress to date and another clear message that the Australian livestock sector is delivering positive environmental outcomes.

"There is more to do, and MLA is committed to working with everyone in the industry to continue the momentum."

Exciting prospects

Central Queensland students have unlocked a world of exciting career prospects through a series of innovative, high-tech learning experiences delivered by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA).

Thanks to support from Glencore Coal, about 95 students from Capella and Clermont state high schools participated in two workshops that showcased the intersection of science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) with real-world resources and energy sector applications.

Clermont State High School Principal, Mrs Leigh Dyer, said these hands-on workshops cleverly showcased the practical applications of STEM while helping students explore the array of rewarding career opportunities available.

"The integration of gamification in modern education has proven to be highly valuable as it fosters active participation, boosts engagement, and cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving skills," Mrs Dyer said.

"By incorporating gaming elements into educational activities, students are motivated to explore and learn in an interactive and immersive manner, enhancing their retention and application of knowledge."

QMEA Director, Ms Katrina-Lee Jones, said over two days, students worked under the guidance of experienced representatives from Glencore Coal as they completed engaging activities that explored programming, physics, and geology.

"During 'Mining for Code', about 60 Year 7 students dove into the fundamentals of software engineering as they programmed miniature computers called 'Arduinos' to display a series of flashing lights that replicate safety features on hard hats," Ms Jones said.

"In addition to bolstering their technology skills, this activity introduced the students to integrating IT innovation with everyday industry requirements like health and safety.

"It was a fantastic way for them to discover the many exciting career opportu-

nities in the resources and energy sector, especially in the digital space." Glencore Coal's Human Resources Manager, Mr Anthony Exelby, said building on the momentum of the first workshop, the QMEA's 'STEM Half Day' then immersed Clermont's Year 8 students in two geology-based challenges that further fuelled their passion for STEM studies.

"Using a gamification model, students followed clues and tests that identified the characteristics of various rock samples, allowing them to work in teams to determine which attributes matched the rocks they were being quizzed on," Mr Exelby said.

"They then moved on to an activity designed to help students understand a fundamental concept of geology, taking a real-time glimpse into the conditions under which igneous rocks form.

"To investigate how the rate of cooling affects igneous rock formation, students observed crystals growing beneath a microscope, noting and sketching the differences between crystal size and shape under differing cooling conditions."



A Clermont State High School student participating in the STEM Half Day event.

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The Queensland government has a \$62 billion plan to create 12 renewable energy zones. Picture: MICK TSIKAS/AAP

Push on for clean power

By Robyn Wuth, AAP

The Queensland government has earmarked a dozen regions to become “renewable energy zones” as part of a multibillion-dollar plan to strip fossil fuels from the electricity grid.

The zones will be used to deliver large-scale wind, solar, pumped hydro and green hydrogen projects.

A draft road map released on Tuesday, 11 July identified 12 potential renewable energy zones to be developed and connected to the Queensland grid in three phases by 2035.

The state government has pledged \$19 billion to roll out renewable sources, with a commitment to reach 70 per cent renewable energy by 2032.

It says that with private investment included, the amount being spent on renewable sources will reach \$62 billion.

There are 52 large-scale renewable energy projects under construction or financially committed to across the state, the government said.

At present, about one-quarter of electricity used in Queensland comes from renewable sources.

The proposed 12 zones are split into three regions, with five in southern Queensland, four in central Queensland and three in

the state’s north.

Energy Minister Mick de Brenni said the plan would deliver cheaper, cleaner and more secure energy.

“While rebates from retaining public ownership are the quickest and most effective way to take immediate action on cost-of-living relief, we know that renewables are the cheapest form of new energy generation,” he said.

“Only when renewables dominate the market will we see wholesale electricity prices come down permanently, so this road map is crucial to taking real action on easing the cost of living.”

Mr de Brenni said the government intended to introduce legislation to establish the renewable energy zones.

Queensland’s Local Government Association chief executive Alison Smith said communities must benefit from the plan.

“That means locking in social licence with up-front, detailed guarantees of improved liveability in these areas,” she said.

Queensland Conservation Council director Dave Copeman said the creation of the zones needed to quickly turn into plans to speed up construction of renewable energy sources.

The road map closes for public consultation on 22 September.

Strengthening rural ties

By Khrysti Balanay

Gladstone residents and stakeholders were able to hear from government representatives as the town hosted the Central Queensland Regional Community Forum on Monday, 10 July.

Co-chaired by the Assistant Minister for Health Brittany Lauga and Member for Rockhampton Barry O’Rourke, the forum discussed priorities for their communities, including jobs, training and skilling options and health and hospitals.

The Regional Community Forums were created in 2019, with the forum in Gladstone the first since the 2023-24 State Budget was announced in June.

As part of the State Budget announcement, investments include the \$89 billion four-year Big-Build, \$19 billion over four years towards the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and \$25.7 billion for the 10-year vision of healthcare (HEALTHQ32).

Further investment priorities for Central Queensland include \$548.5 million for the Fitzroy to Gladstone pipeline, \$500 million on renewable energy projects and 4000 construction jobs, \$26.2 million at Blackwater Multi-Purpose Health Service facility and \$3.1 million for Rockhampton Hospital Mental Well-being Safe Haven.

Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said it is important that the voices of regional Queenslanders are heard because they know what makes their region tick.

“The forum members continue to provide valuable knowledge of what matters most so that the State Government can continue to deliver for regional Queensland.”

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said the budget record surplus of \$12.3 billion was due to regional Queensland.

“That’s why we can deliver for all Queenslanders through the Big Build, our landmark Energy and Jobs Plan, better healthcare and hospitals, and improved training opportunities,” she said.

“I am committed to leading a government that listens to Queenslanders, and the regional community forums are another avenue to touch base with communities far and wide.”

Forum members were also able to visit the Curtis Island APLNG Plant (Australia Pacific Liquefied Natural Gas) for a tour of the natural gas operations, including wells, compression stations, and processing plant.

Central Queensland University also presented an update on the application of hydrogen as renewable energy.

The Central Queensland Regional Community Forum was one of seven to be held in regional centres across the state, with similar forums for Far North Queensland, North and North West Queensland, Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, Western Queensland, Wide Bay Burnett Fraser Coast, and Darling Downs South West Queensland.

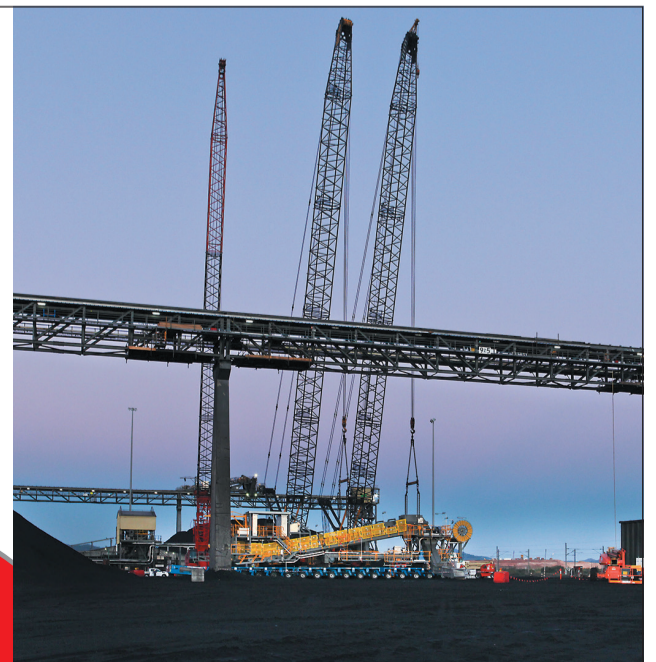


Gladstone Deputy Mayor Kahn Goodluck, MP Glenn Butcher, MP Brittany Lauga and MP Bart Mellish. Picture: SUPPLIED



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Coal on world stage

Bravus Mining and Resources has championed central and north Queensland and the role of its coal in the sustainable energy mix at the world's biggest mining conference.

The World Mining Congress, held in Brisbane this week, is the mining and resources sector's preeminent global forum, bringing together more than 2500 delegates from 50 countries for three days of all-things mining.

Bravus' Head of Community Kate Campbell said it was an opportunity the team wouldn't miss to showcase the role Queensland thermal coal will play in the global energy mix in the decades to come.

"It's great to see this event come to Brisbane, which is still Queensland's biggest mining town, and shine a spotlight on the enormous contribution mining makes to every Australian's way of life," Ms Campbell said.

"The resources sector supports Australian jobs, families, and communities, and the taxes we pay and the economic stimulus we provide helps our governments deliver services like better roads, more hospitals, nurses and police, as well as Medicare and the NDIS – and that's something to be proud of and celebrate.

"The World Mining Congress is also the chance to talk about the facts of coal's positive place in the future energy mix.

"It's a reality that global energy demand is increasing, not decreasing, as nations in Asia lift their people out of poverty by providing affordable, reliable energy to partner with renewables.

"India, for example, has more people than Europe, America and Oceania put together – all up around a sixth of the world's population – and this emerging middle class wants the sort of comfortable, modern lifestyle many of us take for granted, with fridges, consumer goods and televisions.

"What that means is the world will need thermal energy, particularly coal-fired energy, to provide an affordable, reliable baseload for decades to come as we bring more renewables online, and that's good news for regional Queensland and regional Queenslanders."

Ms Campbell said Bravus' open cut Carmichael mine in central Queensland was set up to meet this growing global energy demand and provide generational employment for regional Queenslanders in the process.

"Our Carmichael mine in central Queensland is operational and employing about 1000 men and women as production ramps up to in the order of 10 million tonnes per annum," she said.

"We have significant reserves and all of the environmental approvals in place to operate for the long-term, and we're determined to continue to give back our local communities through jobs, contracts, and other economic investment.



Matrix Data's Moti Tentzer, Sarah-Joy Pierce and Jodie Currie from the Bowen Basing Mining Club, and Jason Smith and Simon Zellman from Hastings Deering at the Bravus Mining and Resources' booth.

"If you live in regional Queensland, Carmichael is the opportunity of a secure job for you, your kids and your grandkids in any of the dozens of roles you find on a mine site, and it is the opportunity of more value for the local coffee shops, real estate agents, car

dealers and other businesses that indirectly benefit from mining."

The World Mining Congress at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre ended on Thursday, 29 June.



CS Energy CEO Darren Busine.
Picture: SUPPLIED

New CS Energy CEO appointed

CS Energy has announced that Darren Busine has been appointed the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on Wednesday, 28 June.

Mr Busine was most recently CS Energy's Executive General Manager Energy Markets, Technology and Commercial and has more than two decades of experience in the Queensland energy sector, including previous senior leadership roles at Ergon and Ergon Energy.

CS Energy Chair Adam Aspinall said Darren's appointment came at an important time for CS Energy as it focusses on the safe and timely return to service of the joint venture-owned Callide C Power Station in Central Queensland.

"Darren brings to the role a deep understanding of CS Energy's business and the dynamic energy market it operates in," Mr Aspinall said.

"He has played a key role in the business diversifying into renewable energy and delivering customer focussed retail energy solutions for some of Queensland's largest organisations.

"The CS Energy Board has appointed him following a rigorous, open market recruitment process.

"The Board is confident that Darren will lead CS Energy to deliver the reliable and affordable energy that Queenslanders expect and deserve.

"I'm particularly looking forward to working closely with Darren to safely return the Callide C units to service and to deliver improved reliable operation from the Callide B and Kogan Creek power stations.

"I would like to thank Interim CEO Andrew Varvari for his commitment and leadership in guiding the business through its recent challenges."

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Hydrogen green light

The Gladstone Region will be home to another exciting renewable energy project following the Wednesday, 12 July announcement that Rio Tinto and Sumitomo Corporation will build an innovative hydrogen pilot plant aimed at lowering emissions from the alumina refining process.

The Yarwun Hydrogen Calcination Pilot Demonstration Program received the green light after a A\$32.1 million co-funding boost from the federal government's Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

The program is aimed at demonstrating the viability of using hydrogen in the calcination process, where hydrated alumina is heated to temperatures of up to 1,000 degrees Celsius.

It involves construction of a hydrogen plant at the Yarwun refinery and the retrofit of refinery processing equipment.

If successful, the program could pave the way for the adoption of the technology at scale globally.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett, currently in Japan on a Trade Mission with the Queensland Premier's Delegation, welcomed the announcement from Rio Tinto and Sumitomo.

"This is another exciting step towards decarbonising the alumina production process and securing the future of Gladstone's existing industries with new innovative partnerships," Cr Burnett said.

"The Gladstone Region is set to become a renewable energy superpower, so to have Rio Tinto and Sumitomo invest in our region's future, with the backing of the Australian Government through ARENA, is exactly what our 10-year Economic Transition Roadmap sets out to achieve.

"Today's announcement also demonstrates how major industry, in particular Rio Tinto, is looking at ways to maintain Gladstone's proud industrial heritage into a new decarbonised future."

Gladstone Region Deputy Mayor Kahn Goodluck said, if successful, the Yarwun Hydrogen Calcination Pilot Demonstration Program could pave the way for adoption at a global scale.

"As advocates for the region, we are looking forward to seeing this project progress ahead of a projected opening in 2025," Cr Goodluck said.

The trial is expected to produce the equivalent of about 6,000 tonnes of alumina per year while reducing Yarwun's carbon dioxide emissions by about 3,000 tonnes per year.

Converting the entire plant to green hydrogen could reduce emissions by 500,000 tonnes per year, which is the equivalent of taking about 109,000 internal combustion engine cars off the road.

Construction will start in 2024 while the hydrogen plant and calciner are expected



Sumitomo Corporation Energy Innovation Initiative Director, Seiji Kitajima, Acting Mayor Kahn Goodluck, Rio Tinto Aluminium Pacific Operations Managing Director Armando Torres and ARENA's Darren Miller at Rio Tinto's Yarwun site. Picture: SUPPLIED

to be in operation by 2025.

Sumitomo Corporation will own and operate the electrolyser at the Yarwun site and supply the hydrogen to Rio Tinto directly.

The electrolyser will have a production capacity of more than 250 tonnes of hydrogen annually.

Rio Tinto Aluminium Pacific Operations Managing Director Armando Torres said the pilot plant is an important step in testing whether hydrogen can replace natural gas in Queensland alumina refineries.

"At Rio Tinto we have put the energy transition at the heart of our business strategy, and this is one of the ways we're working towards decarbonising our operations," Mr Torres said.

"We are proud to be developing this new technology here in Gladstone, in partnership with Sumitomo Corporation, and with

support from ARENA."

The project will consist of the construction of a 2.5MW on-site electrolyser to supply hydrogen to the Yarwun refinery and a retrofit of one of Yarwun's four calciners so it can operate at times with a hydrogen burner.

Sumitomo Corporation Energy Innovation Initiative Director, Seiji Kitajima said they are excited to be delivering this hydrogen project together with Rio Tinto as our long-term partner with the support of ARENA.

"Demonstrating real-world applications of hydrogen in industrial settings with motivated partners is essential to reducing carbon emissions and working toward our company's vision of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050," Mr Kitajima said.

The pilot plant follows the success of a A\$1.2 million feasibility study co-funded by

Rio Tinto and ARENA that was announced in 2021.

Queensland Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing, Minister for Water and Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said the state-of-the-art port facility and industry standing to make Gladstone a prime location for this plant.

"This is another important step as Gladstone leads renewable production in Queensland and has the potential to shape the future of heavy industry in Australia," Mr Butcher said.

"Reducing the carbon intensity of our alumina production will be key to meeting our 2030 and 2050 climate targets."

Rio Tinto said they are committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and has targets to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 from 2018 levels.

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New CEO announced for Manufacturing Skills QLD

Manufacturing Skills Queensland has appointed Rebecca Andrews as its Chief Executive Officer from July.

MSQ is an independent body supported by a \$16.5 million State Government investment over three years to drive the growth of the state's manufacturing industry.

Prior to MSQ, Ms Andrews served in key leadership roles including: Australian Industry Group Queensland State Head; Deputy Director-General, Small Business at the Department of Employment, Small Business, and Training; and various boards

and advisory groups, including the Ministerial Manufacturing Council.

MSQ CEO Rebecca Andrews said she was delighted to be appointed to her new position.

"Sharing my experience and vision for leading MSQ's strategic plans and programs, I will ensure we continue to attract, upskill, and reskill to grow a sustainable, inclusive and diverse workforce and business community that thrives today, and in the future," she said.

MSQ plays a key role in identifying the training and skills required by manufactur-

ers and employees, with special consideration for the Energy and Jobs plan, and Ms Andrew will lead the organisation in building skills and capability to support the future of manufacturing in Queensland.

Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing Glenn Butcher said the industry employs nearly 180,000 Queenslanders each year, supporting local communities.

Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice, Di Farmer, said manufacturing deliv-

ers \$20 billion a year to the Queensland economy.

"Strong leadership and collaboration to support the industry's future is critical," she said.

"That's why we allocated \$16.5M to the establishment of Manufacturing Skills Queensland as a centre of excellence for the delivery of skills and training.

"We will continue to work closely with MSQ to help the industry thrive by providing evidence-based advice and local insights on the broad range of manufacturing needs across Queensland."

Jobs flow along pipeline

By Khrysti Balanay

Pipes for the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline (FGP) project have arrived in Rockhampton, with the \$983 million investment set to provide water security to industry and support economic development in Gladstone. The 117km pipeline will run from the Lower Fitzroy River in Rockhampton and connect to Gladstone Area Water Board's existing water network at Yarwun, with construction to start in August this year.

Gladstone Area Water Board CEO Darren Barlow said the FGP would transport about 30 gigalitres of water annually once fully operational.

"The first pipe delivery is a significant milestone and is a great opportunity to ensure that this project is on Central Queensland's radars," Mr Barlow said.

"We're absolutely delighted that the Queensland Government has chosen us to be the construction authority and then the owner and operator of the FGP upon completion.

"McConnell Dowell BMD Joint Venture team has received the main contract for this project and has spent the last three months negotiating with landholders and procuring equipment and materials.

"The steel mains that have been delivered are manufactured in Victoria by Steel Mains Australia and transported up.

"We have tried to maximise the local content within Rockhampton and Gladstone. If that is not possible, we have used Queensland manufacturers.

"Here locally in Rockhampton, we're ensuring that additional HV machinery and HV materials are being developed."

Water Minister and Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said this project was part of the Queensland Government's Big Build funding, with \$584 million allocated over the next financial year.

"This funding will see the pipes into the ground, accommodation camps ready, and work ready to start later this year," Mr Butcher said.



Member for Rockhampton Barry O'Rourke and member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher.

"This project will create 400 jobs on the ground from almost every trade you can think of, such as civil, electrical, fitters and turners.

"With the renewables coming forward, such as the hydrogen industry, we must get water security, and the FGP does just that."

Member for Rockhampton Barry O'Rourke said 40 per cent of construction costs were expected to be spent locally.

"It is a fantastic opportunity and an economic boost for Rockhampton," he said.

The FGP is expected to be completed in late 2026, weather and construction conditions permitting. Addressing the status of the Rookwood Weir project, Mr Butcher said it is continuing and looks to be finished by the end of the year.

"There are two extremely large infrastructure projects happening here in Central Queensland."



The pipes will transfer about 30 gigalitres of water annually.

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From apprentice to mentor

For Chris Wasiak, becoming a trades teacher at CQUniversity was “the best decision” he’s ever made because every day, he gets to pass on his knowledge to the diesel fitters of the future.

Having been an apprentice himself back in the day, learning the trade, Chris knows just how important his role is.

“I finished school in Year 10 because I was looking for a more hands-on experience,” he said.

“I started my road to diesel fitting through a Pre-Vocational Course at the then Central Queensland Institute of TAFE in 1990. This was a nine-month course which exposed me to various trade areas, and I excelled in the Automotive section.”

After completing that course, Chris applied for various positions in Brisbane and was lucky to gain an apprenticeship through a host employer at TNT Fleet Management’s Salisbury Workshop.

With 15 years of professional experience as a diesel fitter, Chris decided to move into teaching.

He’s been a teacher for 18 years – 11 of those with CQU TAFE.

He’s now the Head of Course for the Automotive Mechanical program.

“Following a work injury, I was unable to return to the Heavy Diesel Fitting Trade and sourced other work until I completed a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. I ultimately commenced my teaching career with TAFE Queensland, stationed in the remote town of Normanton, in the Gulf of Carpentaria,” he said.

One fond memory of his time teaching in The Gulf of Carpentaria was with a group of First Nations students.

“I was involved in delivering Pre-Apprenticeships, first- and second-year Diesel Fitting blocks onsite. I also taught the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to the young Indigenous employees from all over the Gulf Communities,” he said.

“The biggest highlight was teaching a second-year group as we rebuilt a 1HZ Engine. After replacing it in the vehicle and, hearing it wind over, then start was priceless. The look of sheer joy and accomplishment for the young Indigenous class was amazing. I was so grateful to be part of that.”

He said these moments were what made being a trades teacher rewarding.

“To me, teaching is a very enjoyable career. I can pass on my knowledge and learn new technology through both the students and industry,” he said.

“My role as Head of Course for the Automotive team has been quite the challenge. Teaching various ages and personalities can be quite interesting but nothing is too difficult to overcome with the support mechanisms we have in place. And you can always fall back on your own experiences in the



Dee Favre, lecturer Chris Wasiak and Max Secker.

trade. Students like hearing relative information.”

As Head of Course, Chris’ role is a busy one, managing his teaching role and his team of professionals across campuses in Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay, and Rockhampton.

“Every team and campus are very welcoming. The teaching teams work very well together. We are always travelling to cover classes at different campuses, so you get to see most of the teams yearly.

“Speaking from my own experience, it was the best decision I made. Teaching various ages and personalities is very rewarding. Passing on your years of knowledge to a new emerging generation is a great feeling, but also learning from their experiences is an essential part of being a teacher of today.

“I would recommend teaching as a career to anyone.”



CQUniversity’s Head of Course for the Automotive Mechanical program Chris Wasiak.

Picture: SUPPLIED

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An innovative initiative aimed at breaking down gender barriers and fostering diversity in the resources sector has seen three inspiring trade workshops delivered in Blackwater, Mackay and Dysart by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA).

BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) supported about 40 Year 10 female students from Central Queensland who explored exciting career opportunities in the resources and energy sector through hands-on trade activities like auto electrics, pneumatics, welding principles, engineering measurement, engineering drawing, and mechanical.

Blackwater Mine General Manager Dan Illiffe said the workshops were one of many initiatives to empower future female leaders to join the mining industry and pursue a rewarding career at BMA.

"Women now represent more than a third of BHP's workforce, and for the third year in a row, women have outnumbered men in BMA's apprentice intake," he said.

"We are determined to achieve gender balance that better reflects the broader community, and programs like this help encourage more women into the resources sector."

Blackwater State High School Principal, Mrs Rebecca Vitale, said the workshops cleverly showcased the many possibilities that await young women interested in pursuing trade careers in mining.

"The resources sector plays a critical role in our local community, and this learning experience helped highlight the equal opportunities available to females considering a vocational pathway after school," Mrs Vitale said.

"Diversity and inclusion are critical to the future success of all industries – especially resources and energy. By inspiring and empowering young women, the QMEA and



Dysart State High School students were able to explore career opportunities with hands-on activities by QMEA and BHP Mitsubishi Alliance.

Picture: SUPPLIED

BMA are taking a significant step towards achieving a more balanced workforce."

QMEA Director, Ms Katrina-Lee Jones, said the 'All Female Tradies for a Day' events provided invaluable insights into the local mining industry while demonstrating how the sector fosters diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

"These workshops brought together a diverse group of talented young women from Sarina, Mackay Northern Beaches, Pioneer, Moranbah, Dysart, Blackwater and Emerald state high schools who were eager to gain practical knowledge and explore potential career paths in what has traditionally been a male-dominated industry," Ms Jones said.

"Students got the opportunity to try out various trade roles in the safety of their classroom environment and work alongside experienced tradespeople and apprentices from BMA who shared their valuable expertise and personal stories of success in the resources sector."

Youth perspectives on future of agricultural sector

AgriFutures Australia is proud to announce the release of its latest report: "Listen up: Young people's perspective on the future of Australian agriculture and rural industries" – a compilation of thought-provoking perspectives and provocations from the future leaders of the agriculture sector.

With extensive global challenges facing agricultural and rural industries today, including climate change, economic uncertainty, technological disruption, and evolving consumer preferences, industry leaders must engage the next generation of agricultural frontrunners.

The report highlights the crucial role that young people play in shaping the future of Australian agriculture and emphasises the need for industry and govern-

ment to invest in, listen to and collaborate with this vital demographic.

The report was compiled as a comprehensive summary of the conversations and collaborative efforts that emerged from the 2022 AgriFutures Horizon Scholarship Workshop in Albury, as part of the AgriFutures Stakeholder Summit.

Over forty Horizon Scholars attended the workshop and created a set of priorities outlined in the report to help industry navigate these challenges and create a sustainable and prosperous future for the industry.

Horizon Scholar, Jenna Wright contributed to the report and said the Horizon Scholars are committed to Australia's food and fibre future.

"We all care about strengthening the industry, driving change, and including more unique voices. We care about ensuring the success of all industry areas, because we all have a passion for Australian agriculture as a whole," Jenna said.

According to Abbey O'Callaghan, Manager, Workforce Delivery at AgriFutures Australia, young people have the power to shape the future of rural industries.

"By harnessing the Horizon Scholars' innovative thinking and fresh perspectives, we can transform the narrative surrounding agriculture and secure a thriving and sustainable future for generations to come," she said.

"In order to achieve this vision, the report calls on industry and decision makers

to embrace innovation and diversity, understand that profit and purpose go hand in hand, and find inspiration outside of agriculture, and Australia."

AgriFutures Australia also recognises the importance of consulting with Horizon Scholars, the key group who contributed to building the report, when designing programs that impact young people and the future workforce of agriculture.

Their unique experiences, aspirations, and knowledge position them as invaluable contributors to policy development and program design.

The report "Listen up: Young people's perspective on the future of Australian agriculture and rural industries" is now available on AgriFutures Australia's website.

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Caitlyn Barnes.



Abby-Rose Bowman.

CQU-trained trio win big

CQUniversity's training has been held in high regard after three students won three categories at the Central Queensland Regional Finals of the Queensland Training Awards on 1 July.

Of the 20 Central Queenslanders nominated in the final, CQU had 8 nominees – seven students and one teacher across four categories.

Ultimately, CQU-trained students Caitlyn Barnes, Stacey Mason and Abby-Rose Bowman took out top honours in three of those categories at the event, which was held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre.

Diploma of Nursing student Stacey Mason, who is now an Enrolled Nurse at Rockhampton Hospital was unable to accept her Vocational Student of the Year award in person, as she was recovering from a kidney transplant.

In her nomination, Stacey spoke of how she was diagnosed with severe kidney and heart failure a few days after the birth of her son.

"I have been on dialysis now for nearly three years and have an understanding of the importance of nursing care and advocacy for patients," she said.

"I decided I wanted to become a nurse that patients know have their best interests at heart, and in July 2021, I decided to enrol in the Diploma of Nursing with CQUniversity."

She said her goal is to complete a Bachelor of Nursing to become a Registered Nurse in the future now that she has received her new kidney.

Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician student Caitlyn Barnes won the Harry Hauenschild Apprentice of the Year category.



Stacey Mason.

Pictures: SUPPLIED

Caitlyn finished her apprenticeship with BHP Coal at its Goonyella Riverside Mine in December last year and is now working at the mine full-time.

"It was very exciting and overwhelming to win, but it was a good feeling to see everything I've worked towards pay off," she said.

Having grown up in Moranbah Caitlyn said she was always interested in doing a trade and working in the mines.

"I love the diversity of being an electrician – working as a domestic electrician is very different to working in the mines. The

mining industry is more of a challenge," she said.

"The training I received at CQU's Mackay Ooralea campus was fantastic. It really helped me exceed in my role and the teachers were all amazing."

She encouraged any young women considering a trade to "definitely do it".

"Sometimes it might be difficult, but in the end, it will be so rewarding," she said.

Holy Spirit College Year 12 student Abby-Rose Bowman won the School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year Category.

Abby-Rose said deciding to pursue a trade was a natural choice having grown up on her parents' farm.

"I've always wanted to get into a trade, and I tried them all through work experience at school," she said.

Automotive Electrical was the one she was drawn to, and she ended up with an apprenticeship with local company NQ Auto-sparks where she's been apprenticing for the past 18 months.

While only just starting her Certificate III in Automotive Electrical Technology training at CQU as part of her apprenticeship, she felt it would complement her job.

"I think it will work side-by-side with my work and help me understand my job more," she said.

"I'm very excited about the win and very grateful. Everyone's really proud of me."

Deputy Vice-President for VET and Business Development Peter Heilbuth congratulated the winners and all the other finalists on their achievements.

"They should all feel very proud because CQUniversity is very proud of them," he said.

"CQU's vocational training main aim is to give people the skills and knowledge to succeed and these winners and finalists are proof that we are not only changing lives, but also supporting the region's future workforce."

Other finalists included Rachael Legros (VET Teacher or Trainer of the Year), Gemma RILEY and Mikaly Smith (Harry Hauenschild Apprentice of the Year), and Lochie Fuller and Michael Hepburn (Vocational Student of the Year).

The winners will now represent their region at the state final on 9 September 2023 in Brisbane.

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The first sale of Australian raw sugar sold into the UK under the new A-UKFTA has been made by industry-owned sugar marketer Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) to Tate & Lyle Sugars. Picture: SUPPLIED

Milestone sugar shipment

Australia's first raw sugar shipment to the United Kingdom under the new Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (A-UKFTA) was loaded in Townsville on Monday, 10 July, opening an important new market for the Queensland sugar industry.

Under the new agreement, which came into place on 31 May 2023, tariff-free raw sugar exports to the UK have resumed for the first time in 50 years, gradually increasing from an initial allocation of 80,000 tonnes this year (pro rata) until tariffs are completely eliminated on 1 January 2031.

The first Australian raw sugar sale under the new agreement was made by industry-owned sugar marketer Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL), who will send a shipment of raw sugar produced in the Burdekin to Tate and Lyle Sugars' refinery on the Thames in London.

QSL Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Greg Beashel said the sale was underpinned by a united industry approach, with other Australian quota holders to the UK making their new UK quota allocation available to QSL for the milestone shipment which reinvigorates a market effectively lost when the UK joined the European Economic Community (EEC) common

market back in 1973.

"Up until that point nearly a third of Australia's sugar exports had gone to Britain, but this came to an end when the European Union (EU) restricted our market access through relatively high tariffs, and we pivoted towards alternative markets in Asia and North America," Mr Beashel said.

"We're optimistic that this sale is the first step towards reopening what is essentially a whole new market for Australian sugar producers, with Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) data showing the first full tariff-free quota year in 2024 could see the value of Australian raw sugar exports to the UK reach \$74 million, up from effectively nothing during the past five years."

CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens said it was very pleasing to see the years of hard work by Australian trade negotiators and the industry had come to fruition with the first commercial shipment of Australian sugar destined for the UK in almost half a century.

"The inclusion of sugar in this free trade agreement is the culmination of a lot of hard work undertaken by CANEGROWERS and other sugar industry stakeholders, who have

worked closely with the Australian Government to get this agreement in place," Mr Menkens said.

"This market is opening up for Australian exports because growers have taken steps to adopt the industry-led on-farm environmental management program, Smartcane BMP. UK sugar refiners Tate and Lyle have made it clear from the very beginning that the reason they want to source raw sugar from Australia is because of our world-class sustainability credentials.

"Forty per cent of sugarcane grown in Queensland is Smartcane BMP accredited and growers across the state continue to invest in sustainability while trying to maintain on-farm profitability. I hope sugarcane growers across Queensland stand proud of their efforts in supporting the re-opening of this valuable market for the Australian industry."

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt said it was great to see the A-UKFTA already paying off for Australian producers.

"It's fantastic to see Queenslanders already benefiting from this Free Trade Agreement, which we hope will begin a new era for Australian sugar growers and exporters,"

Minister Watt said.

"This FTA is a win for the people of the UK who will receive extremely high-quality Australian produce, and a huge win for Australian producers and exporters who can now access new, highly lucrative markets in the UK."

Tate & Lyle Sugars' Senior Vice President Gerald Mason said the company was delighted that the shipment from Queensland to London marked the beginning of a renewed relationship between Tate & Lyle Sugars and the Australian sugar industry.

Tate & Lyle Sugars, as part of ASR Group, the largest cane sugar refiner in the world, recently reaffirmed its mission to be the most sustainable cane refiner in the world; working towards sustainably sourcing 100 per cent of their raw cane sugar, and committed to reducing carbon emissions from its own operations and wider supply chain.

"Consistent with this commitment, we're pleased that all of the raw sugar we purchase from Australia has been sourced from cane farms that are certified against respected sustainability standards, including the Smartcane BMP program," Mr Mason said.

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Students got hands on during the training.



The wool industry was a major part of the training.



Mentors were on hand to assist.



Learning the ins and outs on shearing.

Longreach LEADAg skills

By Trish Bowman

The second instalment of the 2023 agricultural training program LEADAg kicked off in Longreach on the 26 June with students delving into the action to further extend their knowledge and experience in the agriculture sector.

Twelve students were chosen from 136 applicants to participate in this year's program, which is designed to deliver hands-on, practical training to prepare them for the workforce.

LEADAg has been developed by CHRRUP, a community-owned, central Queensland based profit-for-purpose organisation dedicated to thriving, connected rural communities.

It is the second year the program has been run and this was the first time it was delivered outside central Queensland.

Mentor Mike Pratt said the challenges and opportunities in western Queensland were very different to those in CQ.

"The students are coming out west to learn many things including sheep and goat husbandry, handling and welfare and there is nowhere better than out here, a region famously known as being 'built on a sheep's back,'" he said.

"We had an exciting schedule lined up that included delving into wool harvesting with Australian Wool Innovation and goat and sheep management.

"We also tackled some of the top issues faced by modern producers including workforce communication, biosecurity and agri-tech.

"We wrapped up the week with an important session run by the Royal Flying Doctors Service around mental and physical wellbeing in rural areas."

Project lead Meg McCosker said the program was designed in partnership with mentors like Mr Pratt and organisations in western Queensland to make sure the course met the needs of local producers.



Twelve students were selected to participate in the training held at Longreach.

"We have been overwhelmed with the support of the regions producers and businesses," she said.

"It has meant we have been able to create an authentic experience for the students

and, in turn, we hope that means they become valuable future employees and community members."

LEADAg is funded by the Local Buying Foundation, SQNNSW Innovation Hub

funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, and Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) funded by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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Macfarlane to step down

After seven years at the helm of the Queensland Resources Council (QRC), Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane announced he will retire at the end of the year.

Mr Macfarlane said the QRC was in very good shape, supported by a strong policy team and Board, and its ongoing efforts to increase awareness about the critical importance of the resources sector to the Queensland economy continues to gain momentum.

He said the industry's fight against the State Government's sudden decision last year to dramatically increase coal royalty taxes will continue because Queensland jobs and future investment is at significant risk under the current royalty regime.

Queensland's coal royalty taxes are now the highest in the world and five times the rate of NSW, directly impacting the industry's ability to compete for investment in future resources projects.

Mr Macfarlane said it had been a privilege to lead Queensland's resources sector during an incredibly challenging and dynamic time in the industry's history.

"The resources sector is more important to Queensland than ever before," he said.

"It is the basis of Queensland's economic prosperity, ongoing jobs and our future success, and it's worth standing up for.

"Over the past three years, our sector proved its importance to Queensland when resources companies quickly adapted to the challenges of Covid and were able to continue to operate and support the state economy. This kept hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders in jobs and business at a time other industries such as tourism were forced to shut down."

Mr Macfarlane said the resources sector



QRC Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane is retiring after seven years in his role. Picture: SUPPLIED

was undergoing a period of great transformation, as companies moved to decarbonise their operations as fast as the technology would allow.

"Our industry's ability to continually innovate will see the mining and energy sector underpin jobs and the state economy well into the next century," he said.

"Our determination to reduce our industry's environmental impact will continue under new leadership at the QRC, along with an ongoing commitment to make our workplaces safer and more diverse and inclusive for all employees."

QRC President Brent Gunther paid tribute to Mr Macfarlane, saying the board and QRC members offer their sincere thanks to him for his strong advocacy on behalf of Queensland's resources sector.

"For the past seven years, Ian has been a strong advocate for not only Queensland and Australia's resource sector but also for

mining communities, mining suppliers and the tens of thousands of Queenslanders who work in mining operations around the state," Mr Gunther said.

"During his time as Chief Executive, the resource sector added more than \$509 billion to Queensland's economy, supported more than 2,343,000 jobs and paid more than \$31.5 billion in royalties.

"Ian has also successfully led the industry through the incredible challenges posed by the Covid pandemic and has overseen industry improvements in safety, training, inclusion, and diversity.

"When the resources sector is strong, Queensland is strong, and Ian has been a tireless advocate for the sector, always working to keep the industry strong for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

"Ian and the QRC team have ensured that mining's role in supporting the Queensland economy is recognised and celebrated.

"We are extremely grateful for his contribution, and he goes with our best wishes for the future."

Mr Gunther said the QRC Board will commence an immediate global process to recruit a new Chief Executive, and thanked Mr Macfarlane for agreeing to continue in his role until a successor is found to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership of the QRC.

While retiring from his QRC position and also recently as Chair of the Innovative Manufacturing Co-operative Research Centre, Ian will continue to serve on the board of Woodside Energy, CSIRO, SoMAC, the fibre composites CRC, Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise and as a member of UQ's Rural Clinical School Toowoomba Community Advisory Committee.

Ian has also just accepted expanded roles on the board of CSIRO and TSBE and taken on a new role assisting St Vincent de Paul in a social housing project in Toowoomba and the Western Downs.

Ian was elected to Federal Parliament in 1998 and retired in 2016.

He is Australia's longest-serving Federal Resources and Energy Minister and the Coalition's longest-serving Federal Industry, Science and Innovation Minister.

Prior to political life, Ian farmed peanuts, sorghum and wheat and ran cattle in Queensland's Burnett region.

He is a former President of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, President of the Grains Council of Australia and held executive positions on the Queensland and National Farmers' Federations.

Ian and wife Karen live in Toowoomba and have two adult daughters and two grandchildren.

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OPINION

Glenn Butcher
 Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing
 and Minister for Water, Member for Gladstone



Women in high demand

Major industry in Gladstone is supported by its thriving and world-class manufacturing, engineering and construction sectors.

As a fitter and turner by trade, I know how important our manufacturers are to keep industry steam rolling ahead, creating everything from the big parts or reverse engineering the small parts during a breakdown.

Of the 180,000 people employed in Queensland's manufacturing sector, about 30 per cent of the workforce are women.

However, when we look at those numbers, it shows that women make up only 11 per cent of workers in workshop occupations, and they are heavily overrepresented in clerical roles.

Research tells us that Queensland will need an extra 280,000 manufacturing workers over the next four years.

So we know there is a huge opportunity for women to forge exciting careers in this key sector.

This month we announced a new mentoring program to encourage female school students to take on a rewarding career in manufacturing, build networks and help them reach their development goals.

We're looking for female students who are currently in Grade 10 or above and are interested in a career in manufacturing.

You may already be a school-based ap-



Glenn Butcher MP was joined by Alyssa Pease (from Toolooa State High School), Rommiel Malig (from Gladstone State High School) and Joory Abulhagag (from Chanel College) to hear from Queensland women in manufacturing jobs and what the future looks like for the workforce.

prentice or just interested in what a manufacturing career might look like.

You will meet with your mentor monthly,

face-to-face or online. Whatever is more convenient.

We're also on the lookout for mentors - an



Mentors are being sought to encourage female school students to take on a rewarding career in manufacturing.

established professional in manufacturing and are wanting to give back to the industry and support others.

This opportunity can help develop leadership and communication skills, build a diverse professional network and create a lasting impact.

This is a great initiative to better connect young women into the industry's trades and technical jobs and boost women's participation in manufacturing through building relationships and confidence.

You can find out more about the Women in Manufacturing Mentoring Program at <https://www.aigroup.com.au/sectors-and-advocacy/manufacturing/queensland-women-in-manufacturing-mentoring-program/>.

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OPINION

Why are we paying more?



WITH WARREN ACUTT

Each year it costs about 30 per cent more for Nu-Tank, a Central Queensland polyethylene manufacturing business, to use natural gas as an energy source than a similar-sized operation in Brisbane.

Record-breaking government spending towards cleaner, renewable energy sources might be well and good, but if businesses in the southeast corner maintain a significant cost of production advantage, how does that help with decentralising and diversifying what is made in the state? Especially if the coal and cattle industries become smaller in size, to decrease their greenhouse emissions.

I think you would find the majority of CQ's manufacturing businesses are, understandably, heavily dependent, directly or indirectly, on the two major local industries, coal and cattle.

As government policies appear to want to decrease the size of each of these, and tech-



CQ's manufacturing businesses are, understandably, heavily dependent, directly or indirectly, on the two major local industries, coal and cattle. Picture: SUPPLIED

nology helps enables this, the spin-off is arguably a negative effect on how local manufacturing businesses currently operate.

Sure, they can diversify, perhaps even into cleaner and renewable energy sources,

or cater to the desirable minerals extraction industry, but if their operational costs are substantially higher than those in the southeast corner, can a good business case be made for each existing manufacturer to

justify the investment necessary to pivot. As opposed to relocating. Or, deem the risk of competing against businesses in the southeast corner with lower energy costs (and other advantages, like a larger labour pool) too big of a hurdle.

I realise there are plenty of promises on major infrastructure projects for regional Queensland and with them, plenty of jobs. Which all sounds great. But if these projects are continuously contracted to companies from outside the region, and the workforce is cannibalised from existing CQ businesses, where does that leave local businesses after the projects are completed?

Will it be a case of more big sugar hits are needed, which arguably only make the big bigger and the small smaller?

Would a lower tax rate for not just businesses who have their headquarters located in CQ but also for CQ residents to level the playing field, so to speak, encourage further decentralisation of the state and more innovation in the region, slowing the talent drain from it?

It's worth investigating, isn't it? And if it has already, which you assume any government seriously wanting to sustainably populate and develop regional Australia/Queensland would have, what were the findings or alternative strategies the experts proposed?



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OPINION

CQ shows its resilience



This review aims to provide an overview of some key sectors in the Central Queensland region's employment market.

Central Queensland's diverse economy plays a vital role in the region's employment landscape.

Throughout the last month and so far this year, Central Queensland's job market has shown signs of resilience during a challenging economic period due to rising interest rates and inflation.

Mining and Resources

The mining and resources sector remains a prominent driver of Central Queensland's economy.

Demand for coal and other minerals continues to bolster employment in the region.

Major mining projects and expansions have created new job opportunities in areas such as coal mining, resource extraction, and associated industries.

However, environmental concerns and transitioning to sustainable energy sources pose long-term challenges to the sector's stability.

Agriculture

Central Queensland's agricultural sector, known for its cattle and crops, continues to play a significant role in the region's economy.

June marked the peak of the dry season, with farmers engaging in activities like mustering, harvesting, and preparing for the upcoming wet season.

This period provides temporary employment opportunities in areas such as farm labour, transport, and logistics.

Services

The services sector, including retail, healthcare, and education, continues to be a vital component of Central Queensland's job market.

Retail trade has continued to be consistent which is somewhat surprising due to rising interest rates and consumer prices.

The healthcare sector is the largest sector of employment in the region and has



Central Queensland's job market and economy have shown resilience with sectors such as mining, agriculture, services and construction having contributed to employment growth in the region. Picture: SUPPLIED

experienced steady growth, generating employment opportunities for healthcare professionals, support staff, and allied health workers.

The education sector has adapted to the post-pandemic environment, with a mix of in-person and remote learning models, requiring teachers, administrators, and technical support staff.

Construction and Infrastructure

The construction and infrastructure sector have witnessed a surge in activity, driven by public and private investment in major projects. Infrastructure development, such as road upgrades, renewable energy installations, and house construction has created job opportunities in various trades and professions.

The demand for skilled workers, including engineers, project managers, architects, and construction workers, has seen an upturn, leading to increased employment prospects.

Economic Indicators

Central Queensland's economy is influenced by various indicators that reflect its

overall health and performance.

In June 2023, key indicators displayed positive trends, suggesting a gradual recovery:

Unemployment

The national unemployment rate was 3.5 per cent as per the last published figures for May and the employment rate in Central Queensland was 3.7 per cent, so slightly higher than the national figure.

There has been significant improvement in employment numbers since one year ago where the unemployment rate was 5.2 per cent.

Also the participation rate has jumped up from 67.2 per cent to 71.3 per cent in the past year.

The participation rate is the number the number of persons who are employed and unemployed but looking for a job, divided by the total working-age population.

The strong number of job opportunities across multiple sectors in the CQ has contributed to this positive trend.

Wages Growth

Overall wage growth in the region has been

moderate, with some sectors experiencing slight increases.

However, wage growth remains a key area of focus to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of the workforce.

Many CQ workers will receive a pay rise of 5.75 per cent after the Fair Work Commission announced its decision for those on minimum and award wages.

This means that from 1 July, the minimum wage increases to \$882.80 per week or \$23.23 per hour.

For those workers on the national minimum award, the rise will be 8.6 per cent.

The increase is about midway between the 3.8 per cent some business groups such as AiGroup called for, and the 7 per cent sought by the ACTU.

Business Confidence

The Queensland Business Chamber's "Pulse Survey" is currently open and this measures business confidence.

The last results released in March indicated that general business conditions and total sales and revenue had remained satisfactory, however both indices had fallen since the December quarter.

Business confidence, measured by outlook for the performance of the National and Queensland economies over the next twelve months, remains at weak levels.

Overall business confidence levels in Central Queensland appear to have remained steady.

With a more positive outlook than the national and overall state picture, businesses locally, appear more willing to invest, expand, and hire new employees.

Conclusion

Central Queensland's job market and economy have shown resilience with sectors such as mining, agriculture, services and construction having contributed to employment growth in the region.

While challenges persist, particularly in transitioning to sustainable practices and addressing wage growth, the overall outlook is still optimistic for the CQ region.

Continued support for key industries and strategic investments in infrastructure and skills development will further enhance Central Queensland's employment market in the future.

For more information and insights about local job opportunities and recruitment support visit JobsinCentralQueensland.au



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Industry leader digs deep

RACQ CapRescue is excited to welcome industry leader Hastings Deering as a returning Lift Off Partner of the life-saving service.

The renewed three-year partnership between the local Rockhampton branch and RACQ CapRescue will ensure the continuation of the world-class aeromedical Rescue300 helicopter in the Central Queensland region.

With a relationship that spans almost ten years, it is evident that both companies value long-term relationships with customers and key stakeholders.

“We strive to understand the needs of those we work with so that through collaboration, we can achieve the best outcomes for everyone,” said Hastings Deering Area Manager – Rockhampton Peter Martin.

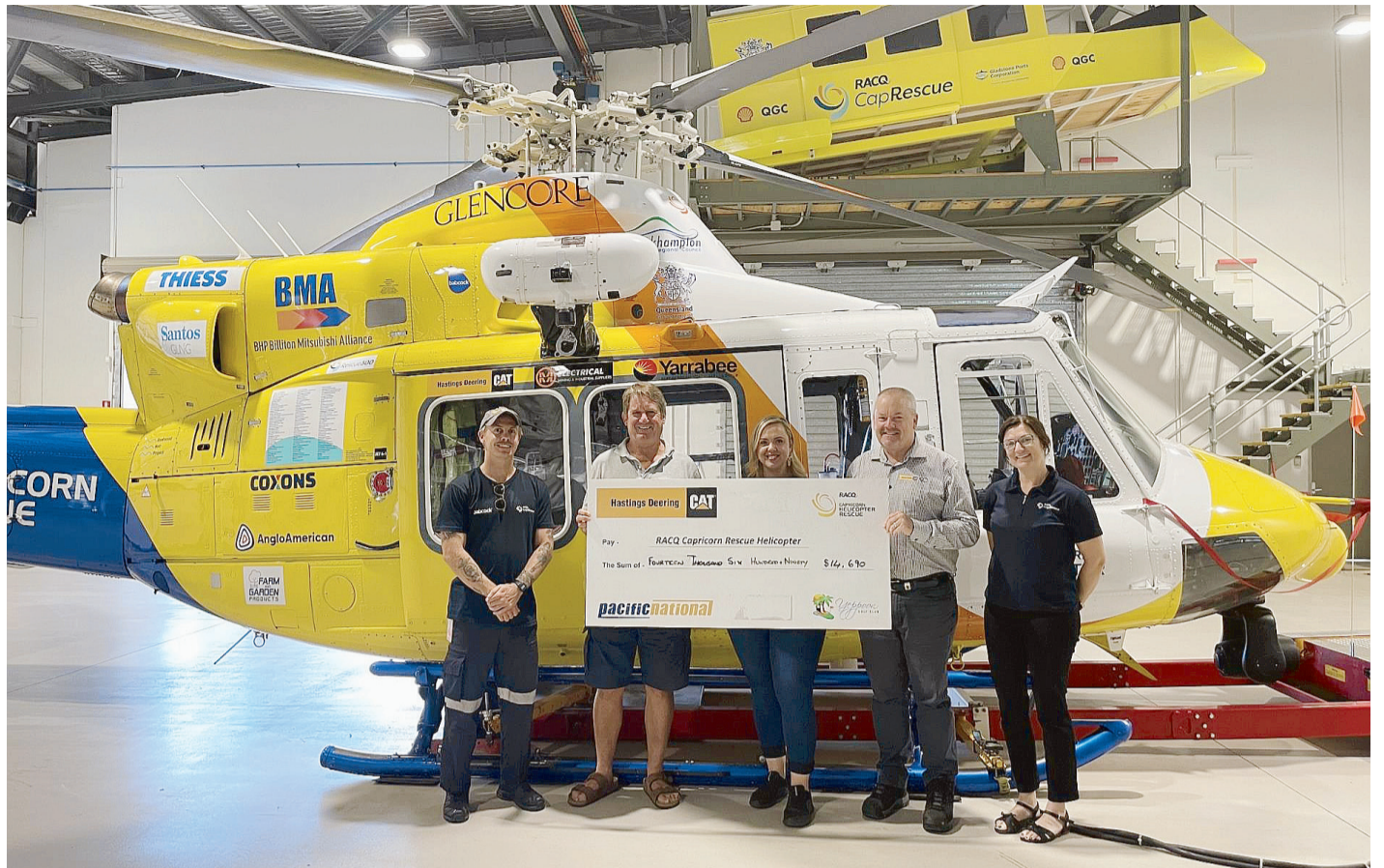
RACQ CapRescue’s Operations Manager Kirsty Wooler said the values held by Hastings Deering align perfectly with the CapRescue cause.

“Their dedication to being accountable to deliver on promises and commitments is helping our service do the same for the people in our region,” she said.

“As demand for the service increases, corporate partnerships such as this ensure that we can continue providing our vital lifesaving service to the people of Central Queensland.”

With almost 600 employees that are part of the over 300,000 people in the CapRescue region, Hastings Deering staff and management all recognise the importance of the service and show their support in many ways.

“In addition to the three-year partnership, our staff contribute through our Workplace Giving Program, assist with fundraising activities, and we sponsor the annual Resources



Hastings Deering supplying RACQ CapRescue with a cheque to support the life-saving service.

Picture: SUPPLIED

Charity Golf Day for which RACQ CapRescue is the beneficiary,” said Mr Martin.

“We are very proud to be once again associated with RACQ CapRescue. It is one of those organisations you hope you will never

need, but it is reassuring knowing it is there.”

Currently, the RACQ CapRescue team averages 1.3 daily tasks, comprising primary attendance at accident scenes and workplaces, as well as search and rescue activities.

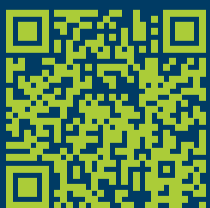
They also attend to the retrieval of critical patients from outlying hospitals.

The vital service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, at no cost to the patient.

Register Now! Port to Park FunD Run

Run, jog, skip or walk your way around GPC’s magnificent parklands to raise funds for Gladstone schools and our community beneficiary.

Sunday, 20 August 2023



Scan the QR code or visit gpcl.com.au to register now!



Powerlink launches new recruiting drive

Some of Australia's most in demand apprenticeships are now up for grabs with the launch of Powerlink's 2024 recruitment campaign.

In a first for Powerlink, these roles are being offered regionally with placements available in Gladstone, as well as Brisbane, to provide support and development opportunities where the work is actually happening.

Across three work streams – Linesperson, Electrical Apprentice and Communication and Control Apprentice – Powerlink

has 21 new roles on offer.

Powerlink Chief Operating Officer, Gary Edwards, who started his energy industry career as an apprentice more than 40 years ago, said he was thrilled at the prospect of welcoming the next generation.

"With transmission a key foundation of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP), finding diverse and enthusiastic people to be part of its delivery is essential," Mr Edwards said.

"It's also really important for us to work with local communities to ensure real job

and development opportunities can be shared as we roll out this critical and transformational work for Queensland's energy future."

The campaign kicked off in mid-June and will run for four weeks with applications from female, First Nations and mature aged candidates highly encouraged.

Gary said the new intake of apprentices will begin their energy careers in January 2024.

For more information or to apply visit the Powerlink website.



Powerlink Chief Operating Officer Gary Edwards said he was thrilled at the prospect of welcoming the next generation. Picture: SUPPLIED

Tech edge to tackling dry

New behavioural science research from the Decide and Thrive drought preparedness project has revealed differences between the types of information and support required by livestock producers in the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

The Decide and Thrive project is being delivered by the University of New England (UNE), CQUniversity (CQU) and CSIRO through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

It aims to develop innovative and regionally-relevant livestock ranking strategies that secure farm businesses into, during and out of drought and improve natural capital in agricultural landscapes.

An early investigation into producer needs by CQU has revealed that the types of objective stock ranking tools, and the motivations to use them, vary between States, stock types (sheep versus cattle), and the age and debt levels of producers.

"Too often, new tools and technologies are developed with brilliant science and amazing capabilities, but they are not what farmers first want to make a difference in their business," Decide and Thrive project leader Professor Lewis Kahn of UNE said.

"This is why this project commenced with an investigation into the decision-making processes and management strategies of livestock producers, so that we can develop breeding stock selection systems that meet their needs and make a difference to their farm business and environment."

CQU researcher Dr Cathy O'Mullan said the insights gained from 30 in-depth interviews with producers and advisors from the NT, QLD, NSW and VIC, would not only assist technology developers, but also farm consultants in approaching how they offer support and provide information designed to improve drought management strategies.

"It appears clear that most producers are receptive to the message to 'decide early' and 'not look back', but it will be important for advisers to show how stock ranking tools



Decide and Thrive project leader Professor Lewis Kahn of UNE.

Picture: SUPPLIED

can help make this decision easier as to which animals to keep or cull," Dr O'Mullan said.

"The messaging also needs to tap into both objective and subjective information processing by producers – nearly all producers still rely on some level of local knowledge

and experience to inform decision making.

"This local knowledge needs to be respected, especially given there is an inherent mistrust of advice from scientists if they are not familiar with the local environments. Gut feeling, intuition and history are important and must be part of a balanced message

that a rankings tool/system is just part of a suite of information sources that producers should consider when decision making."

There were significant differences in attitudes between the states, with little interest in the NT for selection tools operating at the individual animal level because the size of the herds and the scale of the properties dictate a mob-based approach.

"In QLD, mob-based decision making also dominates, but there is a stronger focus on profit as opposed to the family and lifestyle factors that strongly influence decision making in the NT," Dr O'Mullan said.

"Prolonged drought in some areas of QLD has already shifted behaviours, with culling firstly based on reproductive performance and a strong lesson learned to cull early. There was also a difference in attitude between younger, debt-heavy producers, and those of older and more financially comfortable producers, with the former more willing to embrace objective tools and new practices."

In NSW and VIC, there was strong support from producers and mixed support from advisors to the concept of an individual animal level rankings tool for keep or cull decisions.

"A tool that adds economic value to specific genetic traits was perceived to have relevance, especially in wool businesses as producers with smaller properties were focussed on working smarter and with more precision," Dr O'Mullan said.

The insights are now informing ongoing research by the Decide and Thrive team into herd / flock measurement technologies and culling decisions of breeding stock, with a key message to developers to keep stock selection tools simple and to provide users with support during the adoption phase.

The Decide and Thrive team is also developing communications and training tools for extension providers, farm consultants and the Commonwealth-funded Drought Resilience, Adoption and Innovation Hubs to assist them in driving adoption of objective stock selection tools.



CQG is a passionate advocate for local businesses

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Tickets for conference

Held in Gladstone over two action-packed days on Wednesday, 27 and Thursday, 28 September, at the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre (GECC), the Gladstone Engineering Alliance (GEA) is pleased to announce the launch of this prominent Queensland event.

GEA is proud to announce local company Aestec Services as the Principal Partner for this premier industry event.

Conference Delegates will be provided with the opportunity to gain insight and hear from influential guest speakers about where industry, energy and manufacturing are progressing and the available opportunities held within the Central Queensland (CQ) Region throughout the renewables transition.

Aestec Services managing director and founder Doug Deakin said this conference provides an invaluable platform for sharing knowledge, collaborations, and exploring new opportunities.

"By bringing together professionals from diverse sectors, it enables us to engage in insightful exchanges, deliberate on emerging trends and tackle challenges head-on," Mr Deakin said.

"Aestec Services takes immense pride in reaffirming its commitment as the Principal Partner of the GEA Major Industry, Energy & Manufacturing Conference.

"We are thrilled to continue our association with this prestigious event, which serves as a catalyst for industry advancement and knowledge exchange. Through our continued partnership, we aim to support and empower the conference in its mission to drive innovation, foster collaboration, and shape the future of the industry."

Day one will focus on current and future major industry projects in CQ, while day two will focus on the energy and manufacturing

opportunities available to the local supply chain businesses through the hydrogen, renewables, and energy sector.

GEA General Manager Peter Masters said this event would shed light on the transformative forces shaping our industry, energy, and manufacturing sectors.

"It's an exciting time with renewable energy and other advancements taking centre stage," Mr Masters said.

"Whether you're a newcomer or a long-standing player in the industry, this conference promises to deliver insights and connections that will shape your organisation's future success.

"As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the GEA, this year's Major Industry, Energy, and Manufacturing conference will recognise the importance of helping prepare our members for the upcoming opportunities in the supply chain.

"This year's conference will serve as a valuable platform to equip our members with the knowledge and insights needed to navigate the evolving landscape.

"It would also be a remarkable opportunity for new and existing industries to come together and explore the latest advancements.

"The region's potential is bright, and the conference will provide valuable insights into where our future is headed and how we can prepare as a region for success."

The GEA Gala Dinner and Industry Awards night will occur on the first evening of the conference at the Gladstone Entertainment and Convention Centre.

Tickets to attend both the GEA Major Industry, Energy and Manufacturing Conference and the GEA Gala Dinner and Industry Awards night are now available and can be purchased by calling GEA on 49729060 or through the GEA website at www.gea.asn.au



GEA general manager Peter Masters and GEA Gladstone area manager Cameron Hausler. Picture: KHRYSYTI BALANAY

AGSA grain science conference to be held in Rocky

The AGSA Conference will be unlike any of the 72 previous events, with this year's conference to be held in northern Australia for the first time at CQUniversity's Rockhampton campus.

Although more famous as Australia's beef capital, the Central Queensland region is also home to broadacre production of wheat, chickpea, mung beans, cotton, sugar cane and sorghum.

CQUniversity is also a focal point for research into new and high-value crops, such as sesame, and adapted production systems to fit within northern Australian farming systems, such as dual-purpose peanuts.

As a result, the theme of this year's AGSA conference captures both the diversity of northern Australia and the wide range of roles grain crops can play: 'Grain crops and sustainable food systems'.

AGSA President Dr Sushil Dhital urged people with an interest in the science behind grain production and quality to register their attendance.

"The organising committee has put together a world-class line up of speakers, who will be tackling topics including the role of dietary fibre in metabolic health; bioactives for improved human nutrition; plant-based proteins; climate and grain production; sensors and novel technologies; grain waste valorisation; grain and graze production systems; and, new and emerging grain crops," Dr Dhital said.

Conference Chair and CQUniversity Senior Lecturer and biochemical scientist, Dr Mani Naiker, said more than 100 delegates



The 73rd Australasian Grain Science Conference will be held in Rockhampton.

Picture: SUPPLIED

were expected to attend the event, from postgraduate student researchers to internationally recognised scientists, as well as leaders of the local grains and cropping industries.

"The program includes a special pre-conference training workshop for postgraduate researchers, which will feature a demonstration of grain analytical equipment, advice on effectively communicating scientific research, and a tour to a local farm to learn about northern production systems," Dr Naiker said.

AGSA began as a cereal chemists'

learned society in 1951 and met under the umbrella of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI) until 2009. Its aim is to provide a forum for students, scientists and professionals to network and exchange information about sustainable agronomy, grain processing, value adding and nutritional functionality.

The 73rd Australasian Grain Science Conference will be held in Rockhampton, Queensland from 26 to 29 September 2023.

Among the keynote speakers secured for the conference are leading international researchers Dr Ian Biggs, from the

CRC for Developing Northern Australia; Prof. Yong-Cheng Shi, of Kansas State University, USA; Prof. Bin Zhang, of the South China University of Technology; Dr Amy Lin, of the Singapore Institute of Food and Biotechnology; Prof. Glen Fox, of the University of California, Davis, USA; and, Prof Flavio Augusto Santos, of the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Please visit the conference site for more details on registration, program, speakers, travel and accommodation at www.ausgrainscience.org.au/conference/.

Next generation smarts

Two tech-driven workshops delivered by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA) revealed the 'source code' students can use to pursue rewarding careers in the resources end energy sector.

Thanks to support from Glencore Coal, about 60 students from Clermont and Capella state high schools programmed their professional pathway to a future in an industry at the forefront of technological innovation.

Capella State High School principal Gerowyn Lacaze said today, about 30 Year 9 students put their STEM skills to the test as they completed a series of hands-on activities that explore modern science from a resources industry context.

"Our students were tasked with using teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving to make a machine that simulates sorting unwanted material from conveyor belts, using nothing more than paddle-pop sticks, rubber bands and a few other basic materials," Ms Lacaze said.

"Knowledgeable staff from Glencore Coal were on-hand to give them feedback on their prototypes and explain how the same physics concept is applied for coal sorting machines.

"This was a fantastic way for them to connect the dots between their science curriculum and real-world technology, further demonstrating how their STEM studies are preparing them for life after school."

Human Resources Manager at Glencore Coal, Anthony Exelby said integration of

advanced technologies in the resources and energy sector means there is an abundance of exciting career opportunities on offer for tech-savvy young men and women.

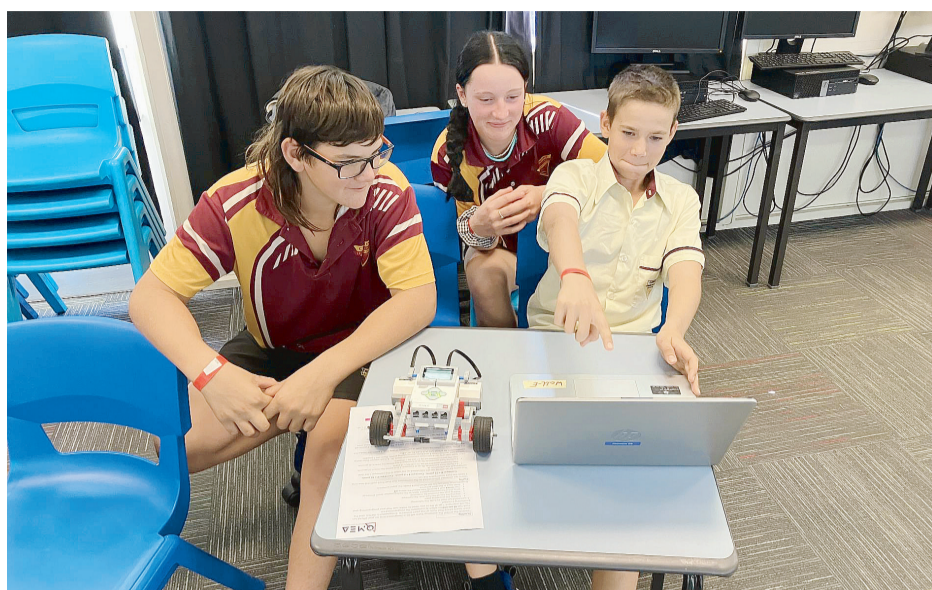
"From data scientists and software engineers to drone pilots and remote operators, our industry employs some of the most skilled and highly paid STEM professionals," Mr Exelby said.

"By demonstrating how their classroom learning can be applied to solve everyday challenges in a sector operating in their own backyard, we hope these workshops inspire these students to consider a rewarding future in mining, and in particular at Glencore Coal."

QMEA Director, Ms Katrina-Lee Jones said the educational experiences focused on nurturing students' science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) skills, helping them unlock their potential as future leaders in mining and energy.

"On 17 May, about 30 Year 9 students from Clermont State High School cracked the code on how cutting-edge computers and resourceful robots make the resources sector safer, more efficient, and an exciting space to work in," Ms Jones said.

"Guided by experienced representatives from Glencore Coal, students got a glimpse of real-world automation applications when they programmed Lego EV3 robots to autonomously drive around a mini mine site, simulating the loading and unloading of coal onto conveyor belts."



Sheep production to lift as flock numbers hit a high

This year, Australia's sheep flock and its breeding ewe numbers reached their highest levels since 2007 at 78.75 million and 46.14 million head, respectively, according to the latest Sheep Projections update from Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

It comes following three consecutive years of above-average rainfall in Australia's sheep regions, which has driven an exceptional recovery post-drought and translating into the growth of the flock.

MLA's Senior Market Information Analyst, Ripley Atkinson, says that the outcomes of this strong improvement in sheep numbers will deliver strong volumes of finished-weight stock to market.

"With improved genetics and on-farm management driving historically elevated carcase weights, we will see record lamb production and export volumes, as well as high mutton production," Mr Atkinson said.

"This will ensure that Australia can continue to meet its domestic and ever-increasing global demand for high quality sheepmeat."

Carcase weights in 2023 will remain 7 per cent above the 10-year average.

Lamb carcase weights are projected to ease to 24.7kg in 2023 and continue to decline to 24.2kg in 2025, while sheep carcase weights are expected to ease to 25.2kg in 2023, 3 per cent higher than the 10-year average.

With carcase weights forecast to remain stable over the next three years, this will support high lamb and mutton production forecasts out to 2025. A move towards meat breeds and improvements in management and genetics are also behind the long-term trend of higher carcase weights.

Lamb production is expected to reach 540,000 tonnes in 2023, still beating 2022's record production of 534,500 tonnes.

Production will continue to increase in 2024 to 548,000 tonnes and then ease in 2025 to 537,000 tonnes after successive years of high mutton slaughter reducing lamb supply.

Mr Atkinson said that the supply of lambs entering the market will continue to



The nation's sheep flock will reach its highest level since 2007 at 78.75 million head.

Picture: SUPPLIED

flow through the system with another good lamb drop expected this season.

"This will allow for continued high slaughter numbers, flowing through to increased production in 2023 and 2024," he said.

Mutton production has been revised upwards on MLA's February projections to 197,000 tonnes in 2023. This follows strong weekly kill numbers in the first half of 2023 as processors prioritise mutton slaughter over lamb slaughter.

In a further expansion of price forecasts by six industry analysts, MLA has included a three-month price forecast to 30 September for both the National Trade Lamb Indicator and National Heavy Lamb Indicator in its latest Sheep projections.

Based on current prices, analysts are forecasting an improvement in prices for both indicators between now and the end of September.

For the National Trade Lamb Indicator, analysts are forecasting the price to lift by 4.5% or 24¢ to reach 553¢/ kg carcase weight (cwt) by 30 September (based on the current price of 529¢).

For the National Heavy Lamb Indicator, analysts are forecasting a price of 569¢ by 30 September. This would be an improvement of 7.4 per cent or 39¢/kg cwt on its current price at 530¢.

Increased production and slaughter volumes within Australia, coupled with changing dynamics in key rival markets, will cement Australia's place as the number one exporter of the world's sheepmeat.

Lamb and mutton from Australia and New Zealand represented over 70 per cent of internationally traded sheepmeat in 2022.

However, according to Mr Atkinson, while the Australian outlook is positive, exports from New Zealand are likely to de-

cline in the medium-to-long term.

"This is due to a number of factors, but key among them are the changes in land use patterns within New Zealand, which are having a detrimental impact on the New Zealand flock size and have subsequently affected production," Mr Atkinson said.

"Lower sheep production results in declining exports from New Zealand. This means Australia has a prime opportunity to further increase our grasp as the world's largest sheepmeat exporter.

"Strong volumes are expected to continue and interest in Australian lamb across domestic and international markets remain extremely solid.

"Ultimately, the latest industry projections promote a positive outlook for the sheepmeat industry over the next few years."



CapRescue: Soaring to New Heights in 2023

For RACQ CapRescue, the start of 2023 has been like no other.

The increased need for the service has been unmistakable, with many residents throughout the region commenting about the familiar sound of the Rescue300 helicopter overhead.

Operations Manager Kirsty Wooler confirmed that with approximately 40 more rescues than this time in 2022, the daily average had increased to 1.4 rescues per day.

“It appears that Rescue300 heading to the skies 50 times in January at an operational cost of \$1.1 million, set the scene for what the year would bring,” Ms Wooler said.

In 2023 alone, the aeromedical helicopter has completed a staggering 150 inter-hospital transfers.

Whilst the crew’s most common mission is transporting patients from facilities, the more remote and challenging rescues reaffirm the importance of our life-saving service.

CapRescue has attended multiple rural property accidents involving livestock and equipment. Motor Vehicle accidents

remain a confronting portion of the crew’s responsibilities as well as marine and bush rescues.

Air Crew Officer David Paterson confirmed that some jobs did present a more significant risk, but the team are extensively trained to handle it, and they feel privileged to hold the positions they do.

“The more challenging parts can include winching from inside gorges, off moving boats, situations where people are in real danger, and the rescue is more dynamic,” said Mr Paterson.

“I consider myself extremely lucky to come to work each day and help people at the same time. The RACQ CapRescue Service plays a vital role in looking after the community. It’s a big area, 350,000km², and to get into those areas and bring people back to the care they require is a good thing.”

Recently the community were called upon to donate to the Annual Appeal, and the service is more than grateful that the target of \$150,000 was reached. With over 250 rescues in 2023 already, RACQ CapRescue will continue to need the support of Central Queensland to ensure this lifesaving service can continue.

Richglen Maintenance Services Works Together

With the End of Financial Year behind us, thinking about tax now seems unlikely. However, it is the perfect time to consider organising a regular payroll donation to maximise your return and your impact on supporting our life-saving service.

Companies like Richglen Maintenance Services have initiated workplace giving programs with RACQ CapRescue as a chosen beneficiary.

“We hoped to build on our company values and culture while supporting a vital service within our local community,” said Richglen Maintenance Services Managing Director Matt Borg.

“In order to show the commitment to our teams’ efforts and lead by example, we decided we would match employee contributions, dollar for dollar, resulting in an outstanding \$4,600 being donated to CapRescue.”

RACQ CapRescue Operations Manager Kirsty Wooler said that the management of Richglen Maintenance Services was clearly dedicated to their principles and working with their staff to create a strong sense of community.

“When the ideals behind two companies align, it makes it very easy to work together towards a common goal, in this case keeping Rescue300 in the air and Richglen’s staff and their families safe,” said Ms Wooler.

“We are very grateful for their generosity and for making RACQ CapRescue the recipient of the payroll program.”

For more information about how you or your company can be involved in Workplace giving, visit the website:

www.caprescue.org.au/support/workplace-giving/

Gladstone Open Day

Sunday 30th July 9:30am
GPC Marina Parklands



presented by



Rescue Report

JUNE



Total Cost
\$1M

Rescues
44

13



PRIMARY

4



MOTOR VEHICLE

24



TRANSFER

3



SEARCH



JOIN OUR TEAM

We are looking for a:
Fundraising & Events Officer

About the role

Based in Rockhampton, the role offers the opportunity to be a part of a fantastic, diverse and dynamic team making a positive impact on the local community. This role involves the running of community events and programs that generate vital revenue and promote the CapRescue brand.

TO APPLY SCAN



A big region needs a fast response.

Spring Picnic

Sunday 27th August at
2pm, St Aubins Village
Rockhampton

presented by



Scan for tickets & more information





Ian Ramm and Ian Kayes.



Staff of the the Hydraulic Shop.

Fond farewell for owner

The Hydraulic Shop recognised previous owner Paul Thompson and wished him well for the future as he embarked on his new journey into retirement.

New owner Kelly Manns looks forward to the future of the business and servicing the Central Queensland region.

See the photos from Paul's farewell party here.



Kelly Manns and Paul Thompson.



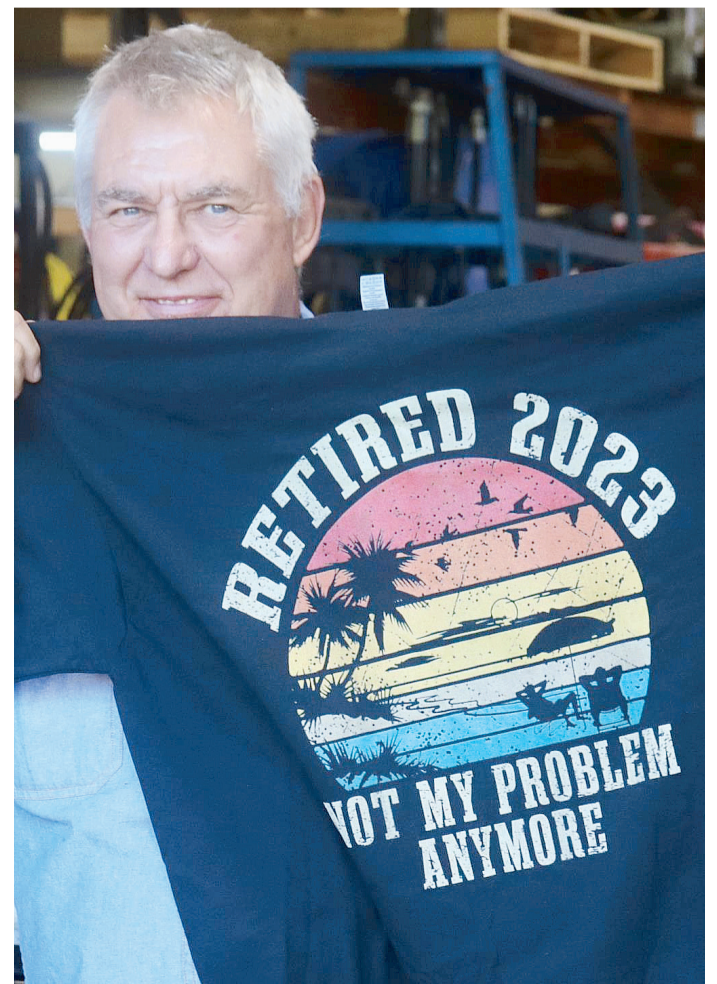
Paul was presented with parting gifts.



John Moore, Vic Kostusik and Wayne Sinclair.



New owner Kelly Manns and Office manager Dallas Bell.



What collaborations mean

By CQIC representative Phil Henry

Recent local developments in how businesses can work together are proving successful in progressing impediments to growth and a more cohesive community.

The latest example is the Shelter Collective, which addresses short- and long-term homelessness in the immediate region.

The Shelter Collective identified several projects that could be delivered to help alleviate the housing crisis.

The ARC 20 Project was one of these projects.

It focused on renovating a block of 10 run-down cottages due for demolition to make way for a retirement village.

Dave Grenfell OAM met with Apollo-care and discussed the reuse of these cottages for over 50 affordable housing.

Prescare / Apollocare agreed to donate the cottages so that The Shelter Collective could renovate the cottages for women over 50 needing affordable accommodation, so the project began in earnest.

The Shelter Collective was formed in August 2022 and will complete the 10 cottages as part of the ARC20 project by November 2023.

This could not have been achieved without the community's support, and many businesses have been involved in providing monetary and kind donations.

One of those businesses, NRG, has been a champion for the Shelter Collective and the ARC20 project.

They donated their plant, equipment, labour, material and supervision to complete the first cottage.

Other businesses that have contrib-

uted have been Aussie River Turf, Bunings, Capricorn Sandstone Quarries, CQ pallets, Dulux, Designtek, Haymon Electrical, Holcim/ Humes, Multicultural Australia, Roth Plumbing, Reefell Pty Ltd, SMW, Stresscrete and many other individual volunteers.

The achievement to date is a testament to what can be achieved when true collaboration is initiated.

The Shelter Collective is a collaborative group of "experienced and highly motivated individuals from Central Queensland" representing housing providers, social enterprise groups, construction, and training industries, as well as people with expertise in project management, government policy and investment.

The key word is "collaborative" - a group working together for a common purpose, often without a formal structure underpinning it.

In the case of the Shelter Collective, a formal structure incorporating the organisation as a charity was needed to receive donations.

The Central Queensland Industry Collaborative (CQIC) is another example of businesses coming together for two common purposes:

1. Ensuring local suppliers get fair treatment from prime contractors when tendering for work on major projects
2. Helping to identify the future major projects needed to grow and diversify the local and regional economies.

This arrangement encourages more open dialogue and an environment where discussion - which can be prolonged on occasion - leads to shared outcomes.



A report shows the caravan industry remains strong in the face of growing challenges.

Picture: SUPPLIED

Still loving life on road

Caravan Industry Association of Australia's Business Conditions Report for January 2023 signals the strength of industry in the face of increasing challenges.

The six-monthly analysis of the performance, outlook, and sentiment of Australia's caravan industry demonstrates significant growth across the industry, with tinges of a slowdown on the horizon.

The Business Conditions Report dives into Australia's continued love affair with the RV and Caravan lifestyle, a love affair that picked up real momentum during the pandemic.

Current economic conditions are acting as protective factors for the industry, with tightening household spending limiting international travel, a trend that is expected to see domestic travel remain strong.

The strength in the industry is evident by the growth in the number of annual caravan and camping trips in Australia, overtaking the 2019 levels, with 15.1 million trips and 60.1 million visitor nights recorded at the end of 2022.

"This is a significant milestone for the industry, as it is the first time that the caravan and camping visitor economy has surpassed 15 million trips and 60 million nights," Caravan Industry Association of Australia CEO Stuart Lamont said.

"These impressive figures not only reflect Australians' enduring passion for caravan and camping but also demonstrate the industry's collaborative efforts in providing diverse and tailored products and services.

"The caravan and camping industry faced a challenging operating environment in 2022, like many industries around the country, the escalating cost of doing business due to inflationary pressures, labour shortages, and supply chain disruptions, resulting in an upsurge in material costs,

overhead expenses, wages, and overtime pay, prompting businesses to increase their average selling prices.

"Despite these challenges, the industry has continued to grow and push back against the tide.

"We are really pleased to see the industry continue to track along a positive trend, we know the market is hotting up with increased competition from short-haul international markets and cruising.

"Once again, the industry is up to the challenge with a competitive advantage in its unique ability to adapt its products, services, and experiences to suit varying economic conditions, which will help to sustain its fundamentals and appeal to diverse segments of the market.

"We expect the next twelve months to remain complex for the industry, with a tight labour market and an unemployment rate at just 3.4 per cent resulting in increased wages and robust consumption activity."

While striving for continued growth the industry stands ready for more uncertainty, the Australian government's strategic trade diversification, including exploring new markets in India and solidifying the Australia-Europe free trade agreement in the second half of 2023, presents new opportunities to diversify the industry's supply chains as well as open new international markets.

Businesses across the industry share the sentiment from the broader community with concerns regarding financial, industry, and consumer sentiment.

This is leading to Caravan Industry businesses expecting a slight weakening of the economy in the next six months.

However, with businesses adapting to the current situation, there are still opportunities for growth and success in the caravan and camping industry.

Industry *TODAY* partnering with



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Qld industry races ahead

Queensland's racing industry contributed a record \$2.2 billion towards the state's economy in 2021-22.

The latest independent economic data delivered by IER – a specialist in the tourism, events and entertainment industries – demonstrates an economic increase of more than \$300 million (16 per cent) in 2021-22 over the previous financial year.

During the same period, a further 2,012 full-time jobs (+15 per cent) were generated, with the Queensland racing industry now responsible for 15,593 full-time employees across the state – an increase of 63 per cent since 2015.

The numbers of participants in the industry also continues to grow, reaching 49,786.

Racing Minister Grace Grace said it was fantastic to see the economic value that racing in Queensland delivers has nearly doubled.

"This result is a clear example of our strong record of delivering important reforms around integrity, animal welfare, financial sustainability and building new infrastructure that has given the industry the confidence it needs to grow for future success," she said.

"With around 30 race meetings staged in Queensland every single week, and almost 50,000 participants, racing is absolutely thriving in the Sunshine State.

"But with a pipeline of major infrastructure projects underway and the recent commencement of our new sustainable funding model that now reinvests 80 per cent of Betting Tax revenue back into the industry, the best is still yet to come."

Racing Queensland Chairman Steve Wilson AM said the racing industry continues to soar, despite the challenges of recent years.

"Following the global pandemic and re-

cent floods, we have ensured our clubs and those at the coalface of the sport continue to shine, with full-time jobs and overall participant numbers reaching record levels in the past 12 months," he said.

"In addition to our incredibly strong employment growth, to be able to facilitate a continued rise in economic impact is something we as an industry should be incredibly proud of, with 52 per cent of that total directly benefiting regional economies.

"A key focus remains on delivering increased returns to participants, as well as investment across all sectors of our industry, with further enhancements having commenced in February thanks to the State Government's Betting Tax change.

"The IER data once again highlights how wide-ranging and impactful our size and scale is compared to other sporting industries, and with 85 towns across the Sunshine State celebrating racing as its largest or second largest community event, we are confident the growth will only continue to surge in the coming years."

Since 2015-16, economic growth has skyrocketed across all codes of racing including:

- Thoroughbreds – Rises from \$959 million to \$1.7 billion (+77 per cent);
- Greyhounds – Rises from \$113 million to \$301 million (+167 per cent)
- Harness – Rises from \$142 million to \$216 million (+52 per cent).

Central Queensland:

- **TOTAL:** \$61.9 million (+73 per cent)
- **Thoroughbreds:** \$52.2 million
- **Greyhounds:** \$8.6 million
- **Harness:** \$1.1 million
- **JOBS:** 501 (+70%)



Minister Grace Grace and RQ CEO Jason Scott.

Picture: SUPPLIED

Hydrogen consultation

Consultation has opened on the Australian Government's \$2 billion Hydrogen Headstart program.

On behalf of the Australian Government, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) have commenced consultation for the design of the flagship hydrogen program.

Announced in the 2023 federal budget, Hydrogen Headstart will deliver a step change in Australia's renewable hydrogen production by underwriting some of the largest electrolyser deployments in the world. The program is intended to bridge the commercial gap for early projects and put Australia on course for up to a gigawatt of electrolyser capacity by 2030.

ARENA and DCCEEW have published a consultation paper outlining indicative specifications for the program.

The consultation paper covers proposed objectives, eligibility criteria and funding mechanism, as well as other features of the program.

The consultation paper proposes to support projects with a hydrogen production credit delivered over ten years, bridging the gap between the cost of hydrogen produced and the sales price of hydrogen or its derivative products.

ARENA and DCCEEW will be accepting written submissions, hosting an information webinar and running in-person consultation forums in Sydney and Perth.

Since 2017, ARENA has been at the forefront of developing a renewable hydrogen industry in Australia.

To date, ARENA has invested more than \$255 million in 44 hydrogen projects spanning research and development, feasibility and engineering studies, electrolyser deployments, vehicle refuelling and more.

In June 2023, ARENA announced that



ARENA and DCCEEW have published a consultation paper outlining indicative specifications for the program.

Picture: SUPPLIED

the second of Australia's 10 MW electrolyser deployments, Australian Gas Infrastructure Group's Hydrogen Park Murray Valley reached financial close.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said the consultation would reveal the best pathway to a thriving renewable hydrogen industry.

"ARENA was pleased to see the Australian Government recognise our expertise in renewable hydrogen by calling on us to co-develop the Hydrogen Headstart program," Mr Miller said.

"The consultation paper we've launched today will kick off discussions about how Hydrogen Headstart can best deliver for the Australian public.

Australia has all the ingredients to be a global leader in renewable hydrogen.

"Together with DCCEEW, we'll be consulting widely with industry and other stakeholders to hear their views and inform what will be a transformative scale up of Australia's renewable hydrogen capacity."

The Hydrogen Headstart consultation paper and information on the consultation process can be found at <https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/hydrogen-headstart-program-consultation>

Following the consultation period, ARENA and DCCEEW will develop the final program design.

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Tourism's running hot

By Khrysti Balanay, Gladstone Today

Tourists love the Gladstone region, according to data from Tourism Research Australia, with the area recording the largest growth in visitor numbers across the entire Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR).

Tourism Research Australia released visitation data last week, ending March 2023, which showcased a 31.9 per cent increase in the SGBR region during the first three months of the year.

Gladstone topped the largest growth list, with visitor numbers growing 10.9 per cent to 568,000 and visitor nights by 26 per cent to over two million in the three months.

Visitor expenditure in Gladstone increased by 18 per cent to \$385 million increased by 18 per cent in three months and by 67 per cent since 2019.

Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd CEO Gus Stedman said tourism in Gladstone is a growing contributor to the regional economy.

"These figures show that it's an industry that will continue to see economic growth for our community in the future," Mr Stedman said.

"Before Covid, Gladstone was recording an average annual growth rate of 3.4 per cent in visitation, and [these] figures have already eclipsed the region's projections of \$348 million total overnight



The Gladstone region saw the largest growth in visitor numbers across the Southern Great Barrier Reef. Picture: GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

expenditure by 2025.

"We have set ambitious forward Overnight Visitor Expenditure growth rates

across the SGBR to reach our aspirational 2032 targets.

"These figures give us great confidence

that we are on track as a unified region, focused on growing industry, inspiring visitors and delivery social, environmental and economic benefits for the community."

Tourism Research Australia also released data showing 11.3 million Australians holidayed in Queensland, up 24 per cent, delivering an unprecedented 50.5 million holiday nights and a nation-leading \$16.7 billion, 29.8 per cent share of holiday Overnight Visitor Expenditure.

Interstate holidaymakers to Queensland jumped 17 per cent on pre-Covid data to a record 3.9 million, spending \$9.8 billion in the year to March 2023.

Overall, Queensland welcomed a record 26 million domestic and 1.3 million international visitors generating \$29.3 billion and \$3.6 billion, respectively, for a \$32.9 billion total visitor spend.

In the year to March 2023, New Zealand was Queensland's leading source of international visitors, followed by the UK, US, India and Japan.

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchcliffe said the results had confirmed [Queensland's] place as the nation's top holiday destination.

"This record-breaking data reflects the hard work and commitment of Queensland tourism operators to maximising the opportunities of the industry's Towards Tourism 2032 roadmap," he said.

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