

Mayoral Launch of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund Study in the South Burnett



It is my great pleasure to announce that the long awaited \$2 million water feasibility study for the Burnett region has now commenced. South and North Burnett Regional Councils have together secured National Water Infrastructure Development Fund (NWIDF) funding to identify the long-term water needs of the region and assess options for meeting those needs.

The study aims to identify water supply options that have the potential to improve the reliability of existing supplies for towns, business and irrigated agriculture in the Burnett, to boost the economic dynamics in the region and to underpin future investment. The study will directly focus on identifying possible options to increase water availability for our region and also on key projects that may be able to improve the reliability of existing allocations.

Even if all our existing dams were full, we do not have enough water to maximise the potential growth of the region's economy and bring more jobs to our communities. Increasing the availability of water in the South Burnett, will also enhance the social wellbeing and liveability of our communities.

By mid-2020, this phase of the study – the strategic and preliminary business case – will generate a short list of the most promising water infrastructure and related options to meet the region's key water needs. From there, the preferred options for each council area will be progressed to future phases including more detailed design and cost estimates, expected to be complete by late 2020/early 2021.

This study will build on the water agenda led by Council in the past two to three years and follows on from our previous work with the community to engage in water futures. This study has the potential to change the economic dynamics of the South Burnett, to enhance water security for current users, create agricultural initiatives, build new industrial opportunity and encourage future urban growth. The study will identify the most promising water infrastructure solutions and increase our chances of a real project being funded and constructed in the region.

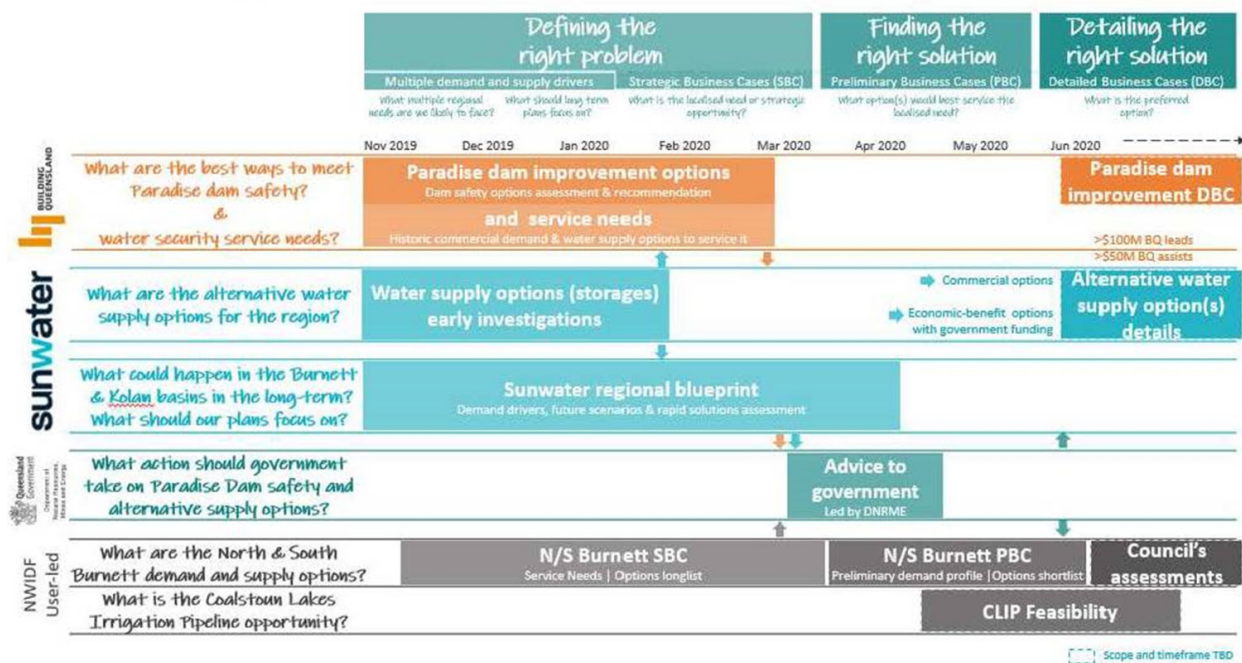
The feasibility study will be coordinated in partnership between South Burnett Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, and Sunwater. We were recently pleased to announce that Jacobs has been appointed as our lead consultant for the study and has extensive experience across this field.

We are excited that the water agenda has become prominent at all levels of government. This feasibility study is one of three critical and concurrent projects that will help to shape our future water strategies.

Two other studies are also progressing at present, exploring water options in the region. Sunwater is undertaking its Regional Blueprint on the opportunities and potential responses within the Burnett Basin over November 2019 to mid 2020, while Building Queensland is investigating long-term options related to Paradise Dam over the period to February/March 2020. As each of these studies will engage key stakeholders, coordination between the three project teams will be undertaken to ensure the exchange of learnings of mutual interest.

A graphical depiction of the various processes is shown below.

A collaborative approach to answer questions about future water solutions for the region



Community engagement and participation will be a pillar for the NWIDF study and Jacobs has been asked to engage with major water users who are seeking access to more reliable water. Jacobs will conduct a series of multi layered stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops consisting of one-on-one interviews and small group meetings with current high volume water users, as well as a series of public meetings and workshops within our region for all current and future water users. This detailed stakeholder engagement commenced in December and will continue into the first half of 2020.

The primary goal of these engagements is to understand how much water is needed considering potential costs of water, where it needs to be delivered, when and the enterprises it will strengthen.

To make this happen, I invite you to take the journey with us and register your interest by emailing your contact details to waterstudy@southburnett.qld.gov.au. Alternatively, please call South Burnett Regional Council on (07) 4189 9100 and register your interest with our Customer Service team.

Jacobs also welcomes any information that you may have in relation to possible projects and, in particular, any future drivers to create significant demand for bulk water. Jacobs will contact you to organise a face-to-face meeting to understand the volume of your demand, the enterprise/s it would support, the geographical location of that demand and your preferred timing.

I would like to thank everyone from our region for taking an interest in the Burnett Water Feasibility Study, I look forward to working with you for our water future.



MAYOR KEITH CAMPBELL