

# Red Earth Community Foundation Leadership Forum Report 2023



## The Foundation and The Forum

Established in 2013 by local community leaders, the Red Earth Community Foundation (Red Earth) aims to foster the thriving development of the Burnett Inland region. The founders recognized the region's challenges, particularly after the millennial drought in the early 2000s and the 2011 and 2013 floods, and sought a platform to harness the rapid changes in rural Australia. Originally focused on the South Burnett, Red Earth has expanded to include the North Burnett and Cherbourg Aboriginal Council local government areas, collectively forming the Burnett Inland.

Red Earth is dedicated to its people, concentrating on identifying and leveraging human, financial, and other resources to enhance the capacity of individuals and networks across the Burnett Inland. Georgie Somerset, the Chair of Red Earth Community Foundation, emphasized in her opening address the organization's commitment to facilitating the region's involvement in shaping its future over the next 20, 30, and 50 years.

Addressing common challenges such as the extended drought and recent floods, Georgie highlighted the region's adaptability and effective management of change in various industries. Red Earth's mission is to empower the people of the Burnett Inland to be catalysts and active participants in co-designing their future.

The theme for the 2023 Red Earth Leadership Forum was "Re-Design - the Burnett Inland Future", with a focus on Circularity. It provided a platform for local community leaders to come together and envision the region's future and look at the Burnett Inland region through a circularity lens, including circular design, circular economy and sustainable development.

Red Earth thanks sponsors and community for their ongoing support.

## Our Vision

"Growing an even better Burnett Inland."

## Our Mission

Red Earth Community Foundation exists to invest in people and act as a catalyst for the Burnett Inland\* region to thrive into the future.

*\*Burnett Inland means South Burnett, North Burnett and Cherbourg local government areas*

## Our Values

- We Care
- We have Courage
- We Collaborate
- We have Commitment

## How We Operate

- We are open and inclusive
- We have a legacy mindset
- We build capacity and capability for our region
- We are accountable



# Executive Summary

**“RE-Design - The Burnett Inland Future”, the theme of the annual Red Earth Leadership Forum framed the inspiring speakers and panellists and solution focussed small groups to have conversations and develop actions towards circularity an even better future for the Burnett Inland.**

## The Event:

The Forum was held on Tuesday, 31st October 2023, with around 80 community leaders from across the Burnett Inland gathered to contemplate the future of the Burnett Inland through a circularity lens.

## The Agenda Highlights:

Aunty Florence Bell, Wakka Wakka Traditional Owner, opened the Forum with a Welcome to Country followed by Nanango electorate MP, Deb Frecklington welcoming and encouraging attendees to make the most of their time together by building on the many strengths and envisioning an even stronger Burnett Inland. Red Earth Community Foundation Chair, Georgie Somerset laid out her vision for the Forum and challenged attendees to leave with an action plan for the future. The Forum featured keynote speakers and two facilitated panel sessions.

Local community members Ross Duncan, Jamie Ferguson, Anton Thorburn and Sean Nicholson, along with Stephanie McMahon, took part in a Leadership Lounge panel session, facilitated by Andrew Bryant. Each shared their experiences and the actions that they are taking to strengthen circularity within their communities and/or workplaces.

A second Leadership Lounge panel session was facilitated by Andrew Zerner, with local community members Robbie Clapperton, Scott Kapernick, Josh Gadischke and Linchon Hawks sharing their thoughts around circularity.

Dr Chad Renando, Rural Economies Centre of Excellence, shared a global perspective on circularity and how it can and is being applied in the Burnett Inland. Stephanie McMahon General Manager Strategy and Sustainability at Stanwell shared her learnings from a recent study tour in Western Australia, the UK, Europe and Canada.

Keynote speaker, Professor Veena Sahajwalla, spoke to the insights gained in her role as Founding Director of UNSW Sustainable Materials Research and Technology (SMaRT) Centre.

The forum attendees broke into eight groups and workshopped how circularity could be integrated into the role of food systems, tourism, industrial development, innovation and entrepreneurship, liveable communities, workforce capability, natural resources, and connectivity. The attendees were challenged to put forward ‘Big ideas for a Better Burnett Inland for all’ through a circularity lens.

At the end of the ‘Big Ideas’ sessions the outcomes were presented to the forum and attendees were invited to develop take away action plans to strive towards, including taking steps to form a working group, undertake research or find funding for a particular identified initiative.

The event concluded with a panel of national thought leaders Georgie Somerset, Josh Gadischke, John Carey, Dr Ian Mackie and Dr Chad Renando sharing reflections from what they had heard throughout the forum and encouraged attendees to take action around “what could come next for the Burnett Inland”.



## The Outcomes:

Focus areas and potential initiatives that emerged from the forum include:

### Food Systems

- Reduce bureaucracy for waste recycling locally
- Summit of relevant agencies regarding waste
- Check if food rescue is happening effectively locally

### Tourism

- Minimising silos by bringing together a working group or community of leaders for the whole region to prioritise needs
  - Investigate possibility of a Wide Bay Burnett / Burnett Inland regional tourism organisation for the creation of regional calendar of event
  - Promotion of local events to locals
- Growing local business by hosting business-specific themed Hub in a Pub events so that business owners can meet and network with others in the space

### Industrial Development

- Research project to identify Burnett Inland circular economy strengths and inputs

### Liveable Communities

- Youth Summit / Forum
- Investigate functionality of committees
- Inclusion Audit, asking the question "How welcoming are our communities?"

### Innovation/entrepreneurship

- Advocate to Council for recycling of household waste
- Harness opportunities for innovation in the energy space
- Create linkages between high school leavers and employers looking for workers and/or business champions to encourage entrepreneurship. Potential establishment of micro factories to engage youth, with seed funding for their own business ideas.
- Give youth a voice
  - 1,000 voices project for youth

### Workforce Capability

- Advocate at a local level for Regional Jobs Committee (RJC)
- Launch initiative to record local business owners around their own journeys, and what they are looking for as employers, making recordings available in various places, including high schools, job agencies etc

### Natural resources

- Education, including for young people up to age 25 and urban/city education, around cooling landscapes

### Connectivity

- Advocacy for better connectivity in the Burnett Inland

# Introduction

“RE-Design – the Burnett Inland Future”, the theme of the annual Red Earth Leadership Forum framed the input from inspiring speakers and panellists and set the scene for solution focussed small groups to have conversations and develop action plans centred around circularity and co-designing an even better future for the Burnett Inland.

The Forum was held on Tuesday, 31st October 2023, where over 80 community leaders from across the Burnett Inland gathered to “think big” and contemplate a future Burnett Inland through the circularity lens.

The aim of the forum was to increase coordination and collaboration across sectors to build the resilience of the Burnett Inland, to create a space where Burnett Inland leaders could network to openly share ideas about the future and develop action plans, to support personal leadership and build a deeper understanding of how that contributes to the region’s future, to increase social connections, to help develop an understanding of Red Earth’s philanthropic structure and capacity to function as a backbone for the Burnett Inland, and to focus on circularity and the part it plays in building a better Burnett Inland for future generations.

**The first section of this report** provides an outline of the forum events as they happened. This is to provide an overview for those who were unable to attend as well as provide a point of reflection for those who participated. The outline is provided as an observation from the participant’s view, including participant comments.

**The second section of this report** provides information on the eight focus areas from the forum. The focus areas include:

- 1. Food Systems**
- 2. Tourism**
- 3. Industrial Development**
- 4. Liveable Communities**
- 5. Innovation/entrepreneurship**
- 6. Workforce Capability**
- 7. Natural resources**
- 8. Connectivity**

**The final section of this report** closes with a reflection and insights.



**Red Earth is dedicated to its people,  
concentrating on identifying and  
leveraging human, financial, and  
other resources to enhance the  
capacity of individuals and networks  
across the Burnett Inland.**



# Background

## The Background:

In 2022, Red Earth Community Foundation launched the inaugural annual Red Earth Leadership Forum where community leaders and members were invited to join us in the exciting journey of co-designing a plan, so that in 10, 20, 30 or 50 year's time, those following on would know where their region's strong foundation came from.

"RE-Design - the Burnett Inland Future", the 2023 theme was an opportunity for Burnett Inland people to spend time together, thinking deeply, co-designing and creating a collective impact through developing personal actions that integrated circularity into their individual, community or business decisions for the betterment of the region's long term sustainability.

The forum built on Red Earth's existing mission, commitment and foundations laid in previous years to implement the recommendations of the Burnett Inland Future strategy. The strategy provides a framework for a 3-year pathway to co-design our future.

The Burnett Inland Futures (BIF) rose out of the experience some of the South Burnett community had when they came together to oppose the loss of some of the region's most productive agricultural soil to an unsuitable mining development. Fortunately, this project did not progress, however it brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, some who wouldn't traditionally sit together, to consider how the region could urgently develop a plan that informs elected representatives, agencies, developers and others what local people's priorities and values are for today and the long term.

Red Earth Community Foundation considered how it could make available its resources and philanthropic structure to the wider region during these discussions. Following consultation with representatives from South Burnett Regional Council, AgForce, BIEDO, The Next Economy, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Stanwell and Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group, Red Earth agreed at the end of 2019 to initiate the first step by seeking funding from Stanwell's South Burnett Resilience Fund. The funding enabled a comprehensive analysis of existing regional strategies and propose an Action Plan for the future that would facilitate the Burnett Inland's long term wellbeing.

Red Earth through the support of the Rural Economies Centre of Excellence (RECoE) developed the first phase to guide our way forward. In particular, Dr Chad Renando, Dr Ben Lyons and Dr John McVeigh's expertise, research capabilities and academic integrity, along with their shared values of supporting rural and regional communities to thrive is acknowledged and appreciated.

With further support from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, the wheels of this strategy have gained further traction.

Red Earth Community Foundation facilitated the Burnett Inland Futures report in line with their mission and backbone function to help their communities help themselves.



# Background

## Purpose:

The purpose of the Red Earth Leadership Forum is to encourage local people to understand how they and others can shape their preferred long term future by:

- Providing a space for local community leaders to come together to THINK BIG... and ask "what would you want the Burnett Inland to be like in 10,20,30 or 50 year's time
- Continuing to collate region-wide conversations around the theme and develop actions towards co-designing an even better future for the Burnett Inland.
- Using a collective impact approach to identify and facilitate personal actions towards achieving our shared vision of the future.

## Objectives:

The objectives of the Red Earth Leadership Forum included:

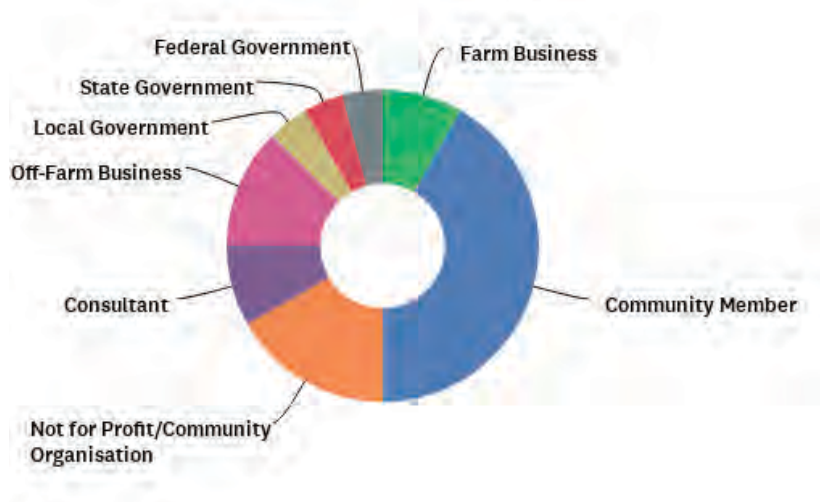
- Increase coordination and/or collaboration across community organisations or sectors to build the resilience of the Burnett Inland
- Develop an understanding of Red Earth's philanthropic structure and capacity to function as a backbone for the Burnett Inland
- Create a space where Burnett Inland leaders could openly share ideas about their 2060 aspirations
- Provide an opportunity to link leaders from the Burnett Inland to develop and progress 2060 action plans
- Build a deeper understanding and support for individual's personal leadership and how that contributes in an ongoing way to the Burnett Inland's future
- Increase social connections across the Burnett Inland
- Build the regions' focus on Circularity and the part it plays in building a better Burnett Inland for future generations

## Participation:

Each ticket to the Red Earth Leadership Forum included all meals and all sessions. The Forum had 87 people in attendance, including ticketed participants, speakers and volunteers. Powerlink provided sponsorship for 10 participants to attend.

### Sectors

The forum participants came from a range of sectors within and servicing the Burnett Inland. The main sectors represented were community members (41.67%), followed by not-for-profit/community organisations (16.67%). The off-farm business sector was represented by 12.5% of attendees and farm businesses were 8.33%. The remainder of participants represented consultants, local government, state government and federal government and research institutes.

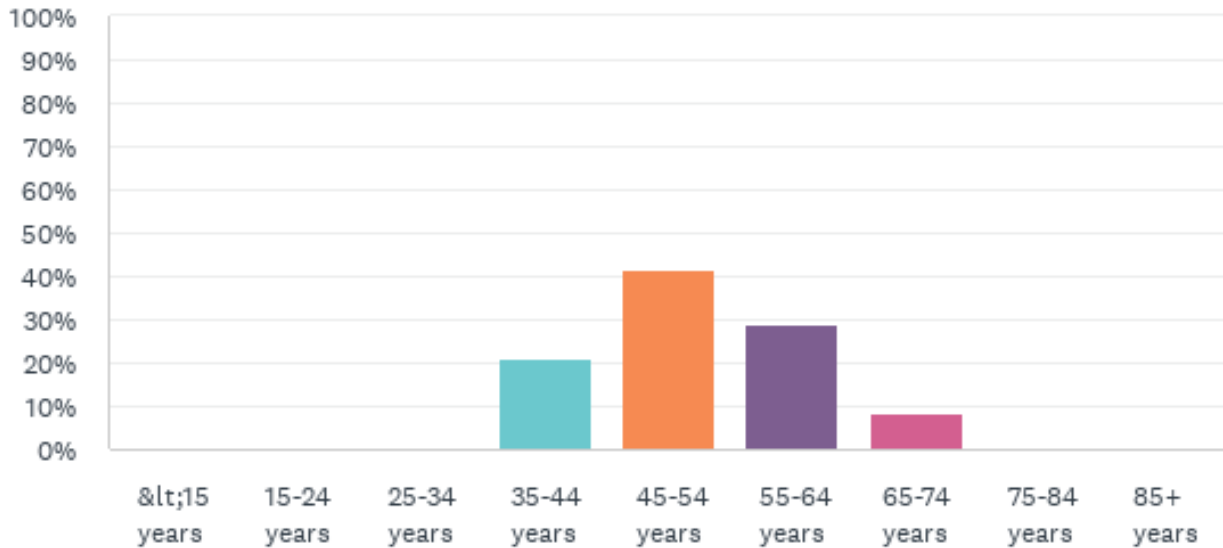




# Background

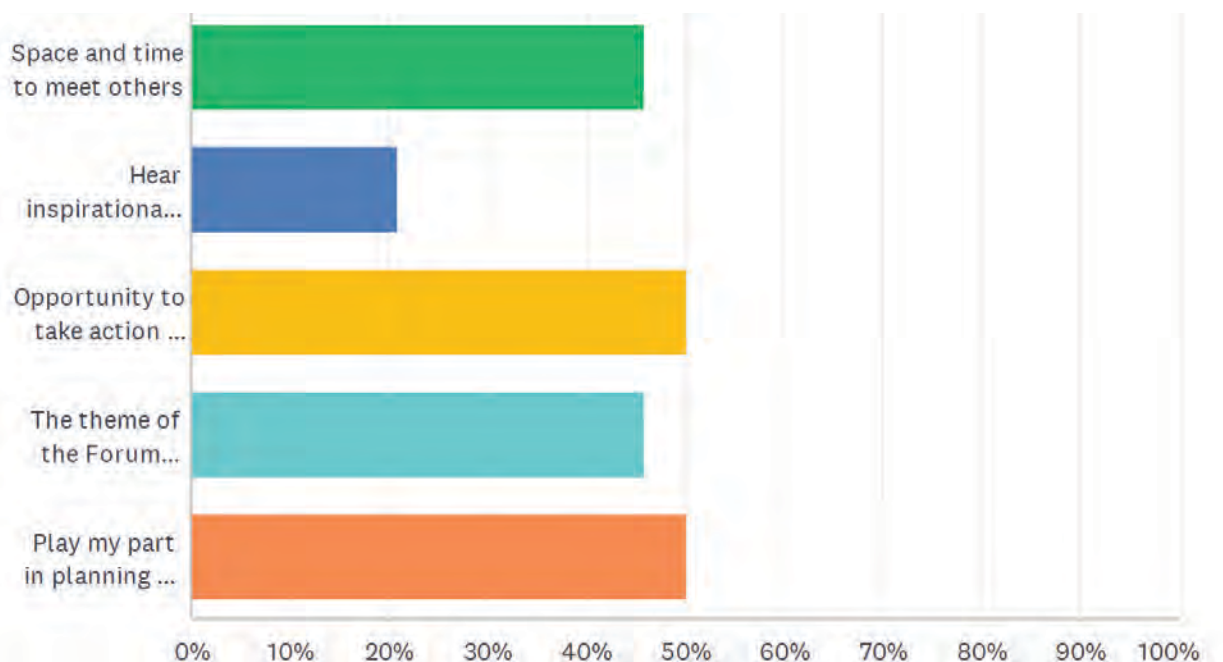
## Age

Forum participants represented a range of age groups. The survey results below indicate the main age group was 45-54 years (41.67%), followed by 55-64 years (29.17%), then 35-44 years (20.83%) and 65-74 years (8.33%) While the graph shows no representation of people under 35 years of age, they were noted to be in attendance, therefore we can safely assume no participants under the age of 35 years completed a survey.



## Reason for Attending

When surveyed as to why participants were interested in attending the forum, reasons included Play my part in planning for the region (50%), Opportunity to take action for the future (50%), Space and time to meet others (45.83%), The theme of the Forum, Circularity (45.83%), and Hear inspirational stories (20.83%).





**Forum  
Agenda**

**Tuesday,  
31st October  
2023**



## Welcome:

The forum began with a “Welcome to Country” by Aunty Florence Bell, a Wakka Wakka Traditional Owner. The State Member for Nanango – Deb Frecklington provided an overview of her region and welcomed the participants to Murgon and the Burnett Inland. Georgie Somerset, Chair Red Earth Community Foundation, provided an overview of the history and vision of the Red Earth Community Foundation and an introduction to the RECF Board members.

## Red Pitch:

The Murgon State High School dance group “Taring Wangun” for the second year attended the Forum. Unfortunately, due to illness of some members they were unable to do so for the 2023 Forum. However they took opportunity to present a “Red Pitch” to attendees inviting donations of funds to support their participation in local and state performance opportunities.



## Participant Interaction:

Participants were asked “**What would make today a success for you? ...in two words**”.

Menitmeter was used to collate this information.

Collaborative action	Great ideas	Connection and relationships
Connection	Inspiration	Collaborative action
Growth	Expanded collaborative networks	Connection & Understanding
Visible momentum	Stepping up	Seed watered for another new business to start
Outcomes innovation	New connections	Innovative ideas
Relationship	Collaboration Growth	Connections
Connection network	Great food	Collaboration
Collection of thoughts for a positive future	Thought and action	Networking, vision
Conversations that lead to action	Lasting difference	Receptive listening
Learning and understanding	Forward thinking	Alternative viewpoints
Tangible actions	Honest conversations	Connection, agreement
Local innovation	Genuine collaboration	Learn more about what I can contribute to in our region
Collaboration achievements	Togetherness and inclusion	

## Participant Interaction:

Participants were then asked “Describe Circularity”.

Menitmeter was used to collate this information.

Zero loss, zero waste ecosystem	Reusing valuable resources	Economic growth
Adding value to waste material	Waste or by-product becomes resource	Continuation of resources with minimal waste
The design of a product is not for a single use or purpose	Closing the loop on resource use	The flow on... how things flow into the next
An evolving vision	Ensuring complete utilisation of assets	Endless opportunities and collaboration
Unselfishly thinking of another’s plight	Linkages	Renew Upcycle Create Think Start
Keeping it in the community	Positive legacy	Make sure there is a future for everything
What comes out of the earth returns	Maximise use of resources	Every cog is vital for success
Creating greater value	Recycle Redesign Vision Creative Regenerative	Resource use and recovery
Renew, reuse, sustainable, resource management	Reuse, Recycle, Rework, Repair, Remanufacture	Manage our inputs and outputs
A non-x extractivist process	Reuse, regeneration, maximum use of all products	Recycling, reusing, replenishing and upcycling
Everything has a purpose and a purpose for everything	Ruse, recycle, reinvent, value add, nose-to-tail	Reclaim



## Circularity Leadership Lounge 1:

Facilitated by Andrew Bryant, local community members Ross Duncan, Jamie Ferguson, Anton Thorburn and Sean Nicholson, along with Stephanie McMahon, took part in this Leadership Lounge panel session. Each shared their leadership journeys and their personal actions to strengthen their communities.

Each panellist shared their insights around circularity, challenged attendees and shared some of their individual highs and lows along their individual journeys.

Ross Duncan provided his perspectives as the Company Director of North Burnett Recycling, running a Containers for Change depot with four full time staff that processes over 90,000 items per week at their Mulgildie facility.

Jamie Ferguson in his role as General Manager Business Development and Sales of Mort & Co's shared their business decisions influenced by their customers requirements for a sustainable product range. Jamie's shared how his Bachelor of Agriculture and work in the agriculture sector, both nationally and internationally has informed his insights.

Anton Thorburn shared the highs and lows, challenges and opportunities of founding his business "Thorganics" that produces organic compost products with the aim of improving soil degradation and regaining the resilience of regenerated land.

Sean Nicholson told of the journey and development of the Cherbourg Material Recovery and their Containers for Change facilities and shared his personal views that the world needs a radical shift in its thinking and actions on recycling design, environmental sustainability and looking after our planet for future generations.

Stephanie McMahon shared how she was a catalyst for change at Stanwell, advocating and planning sustainability priorities and commitments within the company. Stephanie heads up Stanwell's sustainability team who are working to establish the company's sustainability framework.

The diversity and experiences of the panel members made this Leadership Lounge panel session valuable and relatable to Forum participants.



**You have to believe in every aspect of your business and grab opportunities, even if they are unexpected.**

*Anton Thorburn*



**We need a radical shift in the way we live our lives if we want to save the planet**

*Sean Nicholson*



**Don't wait to be the most qualified person in the room, take action now to make a difference.**

*Stephanie McMahon*



## Circularity on a Global Scale:

**Dr Chad Renando**, Rural Economies Centre of Excellence, shared a global perspective on circularity and how it can and is being applied to the Burnett Inland.

Chad shared statistics that showed the four (4) top drivers for a circular economy (OECD 2020, The Circular Economy in Cities and Region: Synthesis Report) are climate change, global agendas, economic change and job creation.

Drawing on insights and learnings from case study 'Circular Economy Opportunities' Limestone Coast (an initiative of Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast and Government of South Australian, Green Industries SA), Chad highlighted the advantages from taking a regional approach to circular economy thinking, including better understanding of material flow, established activity and policy links, embedded sector-based approaches, stronger stakeholder relationships on a larger scale, maximisation of synergies between sectors and increased awareness on a larger scale.

Chad inspired participants to consider the possibility of circular economy in the Burnett Inland by sharing about the CELL initiative in Lake Macquarie (Circular Economy Living Lab). This initiative aims to create a thriving circular economy in its region, where waste is transformed into valuable resources, generating new employment opportunities and transitioning away from a carbon-intensive economy.

Participants were also interested in Chad's topic about recycled entrepreneurs - an idea that was new to many people in the room.

Chad concluded his segment by sharing insights from the 2023 Global Entrepreneurship Congress recently held in Melbourne. He finished up by providing participants with the five functions common to all ecosystem developments:

1. Clarity and understanding
2. Connection and connectivity
3. Capability and capacity
4. Collaboration for purpose
5. Advocacy and promotion



**Stephanie McMahon**, General Manager Strategy and Sustainability at Stanwell shared her learnings from a recent study tour in Western Australia, the UK, Europe and Canada.

Stephanie came home with some truly valuable insights around circularity after visiting

### Western Australia

- Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)
- Future Energy Exports CRC
- Kwinana Industries Council
- Synergy
- Rottnest Island Authority
- ATCO Western Australia

### UK / Europe / Canada

- Drax Power Station
- Killingholme Power Station
- GHD UK Energy Transition team
- Port of Rotterdam
- HyCC
- Tekniska Verken
- PwC Germany Sustainability Services
- Ruhr Valley - Metropole Ruhr Business
- Zollverein Museum
- ATCO Canada

As well as sharing interesting anecdotes from the study tour, Stephanie shared her top three most valuable circularity lessons:

1. Symbiotic clean industry hubs
2. Circularity of opportunity
3. Circularity of heritage

It was found that what is needed for symbiotic clean industry hubs is land, with access to power and transport, complementary clean industries, nearby support industries, a skilled local workforce and an effective governance structure.



In relation to opportunities from a circular economy, Stephanie highlighted the cooperation with educational institutions and the critical role they are playing in regional economic transition in the EU and UK. She also noted that regional economies which have successfully transitioned to post coal economies have used their unique value propositions to attract clean industry and they have co-located educational institutions.

Lastly, Stephanie spoke of the fact that communities which have successfully transitioned to post coal economies have found a range of ways to pay tribute to their coal-based heritage. The most successful of these models also make an important contribution to ongoing community life.

## Circularity Leadership Lounge 2:

Facilitated by Andrew Zerner, the second Circularity Leadership Lounge panel session featured local community members Robbie Clapperton, Scott Kapernick, Josh Gadischke and Linchon Hawks. Each shared their insights around circularity, drawing from their industry-specific experiences that includes primary production, food production, manufacturing and marketing along with their various management roles.

Robbie Clapperton shared from his experiences as a grazier highlighting how they run 'low input' farming practices, and the need to be adaptable due to seasonal impacts.

Scott Kapernick, General Manager of Teys, Murgon facility, spoke about the transition of the tanning industry, and the company's efforts to more effectively use and reuse their resources.

Josh Gadischke, owner of Plenty Foods, the world's largest manufacturer of macadamia oil, shared that their company was the first in the world to develop a way of extracting oil from macadamia nut waste, saying that they don't see by-products as waste, but rather as a raw material.

Linchon Hawks, General Manager Processing for SunPork Group shared his experiences and learnings from leading a large team through transition, including the difficulty from the fire in the the Kingaroy Swicker's facility. He spoke about valuing a team and having formalised pathways for ideas to be tabled.

Forum participants appreciated the panel members genuine and relatable style, with several insights sparking ideas that were taken into the Action Planning sessions later in the afternoon.



**You can give people guidelines, but more importantly you have to give them wings and have faith in your people.**

*Scott Kapernick*



**Curiosity is a strong trait of an entrepreneur.**

*Josh Gadischke*



**Put a plan in place, monitor it, and make changes depending on circumstances.**

*Robbie Clapperton*





## Guest Speaker:

Keynote speaker, Professor Veena Sahajwalla, spoke to the insights and inspiration gained in her role as Founding Director of UNSW Sustainable Materials Research and Technology (SMaRT) Centre.

Veena established that everybody wants to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come, before speaking about how perspectives need to shift around end-of-life products, noting that every product and every material has the opportunity to be reformatted into new and innovative products, meaning nothing should be seen as waste, rather than as raw materials for their next life.

Veena went on to remind participants that we are all owners of waste, and as communities inundated with waste, we need to find multiple pathways for the transformation of materials into end user applications, noting that if we don't, the harm it can cause to our environment can have severe consequences for our soil, water and biodiversity.

Veena posed the question, "Are we taking responsibility?" and encouraged participants to all be part of the ecosystem, to seek to understand materials, and to look for diverse solutions and opportunities.

Veena reminded participants that we can't afford to see waste as somebody else's problem or to think that it simply gets taken away, because there is ultimately nowhere else for it to be taken as we are all living on the one planet and we all have a part to play.

Veena spoke to the fact that if we can make useful products from waste, it can create jobs (including microfactories) and this kind of thinking can benefit rural communities.

A number of Forum participants spoke of how inspiring Veena's presentation was, and how it had sparked their thinking around waste and changed their perspective around their own personal responsibility.



**We can't afford to think in a linear way towards products, just because we've stopped using it doesn't mean it should go into landfill... all products and materials can be brought back to life over and over again.**



**Nothing should be seen as waste; an end of life product should be seen as a raw material for its next life.**



# The Speakers



## Georgie Somerset OAM

Georgie is a passionate rural leader and beef farmer, General President of AgForce (the first woman to hold the position) and Chair of Red Earth Community Foundation. She also serves on the ABC Board and is a Director of RFDS in Queensland, the Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service and the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal.



## John Carey

John is Stanwell's Stakeholder Engagement Manager (Southern Qld) and the Deputy Chair of Red Earth Community Foundation. He is also a Board member of Regional Development Australia, Wide Bay Burnett. John's extensive experience, combined with his passion for regional development, philanthropy, and sustainable energy, sees him dedicating his time and energy to being part of the Red Earth team helping build better futures for everyone.



## Professor Veena Sahajwalla

Professor Veena is an internationally recognised materials scientist, engineer, and inventor revolutionising recycling science. She is renowned for pioneering the transformation of waste in the production of a new generation of 'green materials' at the UNSW Sustainable Materials Research and Technology (SMaRT) Centre, where she is Founding Director.



## Dr Chad Renando

Chad is a Research Fellow (Innovation Ecosystems) with the Rural Economies Centre of Excellence at USQ, a Research Fellow with Queensland University of Technology, and the director of the not-for-profit Startup Status. At the Forum he spoke about circularity from a global perspective, drawing from his experience as the Managing Director at Global Entrepreneurship Network and lead for the planning team of the 2023 Global Entrepreneur Congress in Melbourne.

# The Speakers



## Stephanie McMahon

Stephanie is the General Manager Strategy and Sustainability at Queensland's largest electricity generator, Stanwell. Stephanie has been in the energy industry for the past 15 years. At the beginning of 2022 Stephanie set up Stanwell's sustainability team and has spent the past 18 months leading the establishment of the business' sustainability framework. In 2023, Stephanie was part of a study tour which visited Western Australia, the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and Canada looking at a range of sustainability case studies, including circular economies.



## Andrew Bryant

Andrew is employed as a Learning Manager with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, designing and delivering leadership programs. Outside of that full-time role, Andrew also provides workshop facilitation (leadership, emotional intelligence, suicide prevention) and hosting/MC services. Andrew was a resident of the Burnett for a total of 35 years, and still resides in the Wide Bay Burnett. Andrew believes the Burnett Inland is underestimated; in the level of potential its people and resources have that are yet to be developed.



## Sean Nicholson

Sean is an experienced project manager and works in business and community development with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council. After being instrumental in the Containers for Change initiative in the region, he has since been integral to the expansion and progress of this valuable project. He enthusiastically works on behalf of the Wide Bay Burnett community in economic development and is a strong advocate for our region, especially when it comes to embracing innovation and technology.



## Andrew Zerner

After completing a Bachelor of Applied Science in Rural Management through the University of Queensland, Andrew returned to the family farm where he ran a successful dairy operation with his parents near Murgon in the South Burnett. Andrew and his wife Katie continue to live on the family property and run a beef operation. Andrew has a passion for regenerative grazing principles and brings this to his coaching, teaching and advisory roles within RCS Australia. He loves working to help bring about positive change, where knowledge and appropriate management can reduce inputs and improve profitability and balance in people's lives.

# The Speakers



## Scott Kapernick

Scott was born and raised in Murgon and continues to reside on the family farm. After being actively involved in farming and the construction of the BP dam, Scott embarked on a career path with the Tannery, becoming an integral part of its operations. The journey continued when Teys Bros acquired the Tannery in 2005, and later, Teys Australia, a joint venture between Teys Bros and Cargill, in 2011. This journey culminated in him being appointed as the General Manager of Operations at the Teys Murgon facility in July 2014, where he continues to excel and drive the facility's success to this day.



## Jamie Ferguson

Jamie is the General Manager Business Development and Sales of Mort & Co's product range, including meat, fertilisers and stockfeeds. He was raised in Central Queensland on a mixed farming operation before working on large scale cattle breeding and feed lotting operations in NT, Qld and NSW. With a Bachelor of Agricultural Management, he has since worked in Australia, the United States and the Middle East in various marketing and management roles within the agricultural sector.



## Dr Ian Mackie

Ian is committed to building a strong enterprise approach to stimulating jobs and other employment opportunities in regional and remote communities in Queensland. His remit extends beyond his role as Deputy Director General for Thriving Regional Communities for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. He is committed to strengthening relationships across local government and the Commonwealth and other agencies, as well as with community and industry stakeholders.



## Josh Gadischke

With two decades developing and expanding Plenty Foods to become the world's largest producer of macadamia oil and a leading manufacturer of specialty cold pressed oils, Josh has employed technologies which harness the benefits of a circular economy by adding value to agricultural by-products. Supplying domestic and international companies and employing 40 staff, Plenty Foods has anchored itself as a leader in nut oils production and as an advanced manufacturer in conversion of nut waste into consumer and industrial product supply chains.

# The Speakers



## Anton Thorburn

Anton is the founder of Thorganics. Seeing shortfalls and failures in crops due to soil degradation, and witnessing the resilience of regenerated land, Anton created organic products to add to depleted soil. When coupled with a change in farm practices, this leads to better outcomes for production and future generations. Thorganics now produces organic compost products for commercial and domestic users, by turning local waste products into a carbon rich resource.



## Ross Duncan

Ross is the Company Director of North Burnett Recycling, running a Containers for Change depot with four full time staff. They process over 90,000 items per week at their Mulgildie facility. Ross is also an involved community member with a vision for recycling education in schools. He also has a desire to see small towns brought back to the bustling places they used to be, and plans to be part of the solution in Mulgildie with ideas around housing, events and industry.



## Robbie Clapperton

Robbie is a South Burnett grazier with a passion for regenerating landscapes on a budget. He aims to transform his business into one that supplies quality beef directly to the consumer and aspires to help other farmers adopt a more holistic farming model.



## Linchon Hawks

Linchon is the General Manager Processing for the SunPork Group. He has a vast and varied background, with over 30 years' experience in the meat processing industry. Linchon has experience across many disciplines in the pork, beef, and lamb industries. Linchon is proud of the achievements of his team of more than 800 employees and feels he is incredibly lucky to work with such an exceptional group of people in the SunPork team every day.

# The Metrics

The identified objectives measured/ outcomes to be achieved by the Red Earth Leadership Forum include:

- Increase social connection in local networks;
- Increase community engagement, a shared sense of purpose and community belonging;
- Increase access, participation, and diversity in network participation;
- Improve coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities
- Supporting the community be more resourceful, adaptable, and thriving so they can be more prepared for and resilient to the impacts of drought.

An anonymous survey was sent to 79 participants to gather their feedback from the forum. 31 responses were received, and responses are collated on the following pages.



## How well did we do in achieving our aims

The following questions identified what Red Earth wanted to achieve through the Forum. Participants rated how well we did based on a sliding scale, where 1 equalled “very low” and 5 equalled “very high”. The weighted average is shown below.

Increase coordination and/or collaboration across community organisations or sectors to build the resilience of the Burnett Inland	3.95 / 5
Develop an understanding of Red Earth’s philanthropic structure and capacity to function as a backbone for the Burnett Inland	3.64 / 5
Create a space where Burnett Inland leaders could openly share ideas about their 2060 aspirations	3.86 / 5
Provide an opportunity to link leaders from the Burnett Inland to develop and progress 2060 action plans	3.82 / 5
Build a deeper understanding and support for individual’s personal leadership and how that contributes in an ongoing way to the Burnett Inland’s future	3.64 / 5
Increase social connections across the Burnett Inland to build the regions’ focus on Circularity and part in building a better Burnett Inland for future generations	3.90 / 5

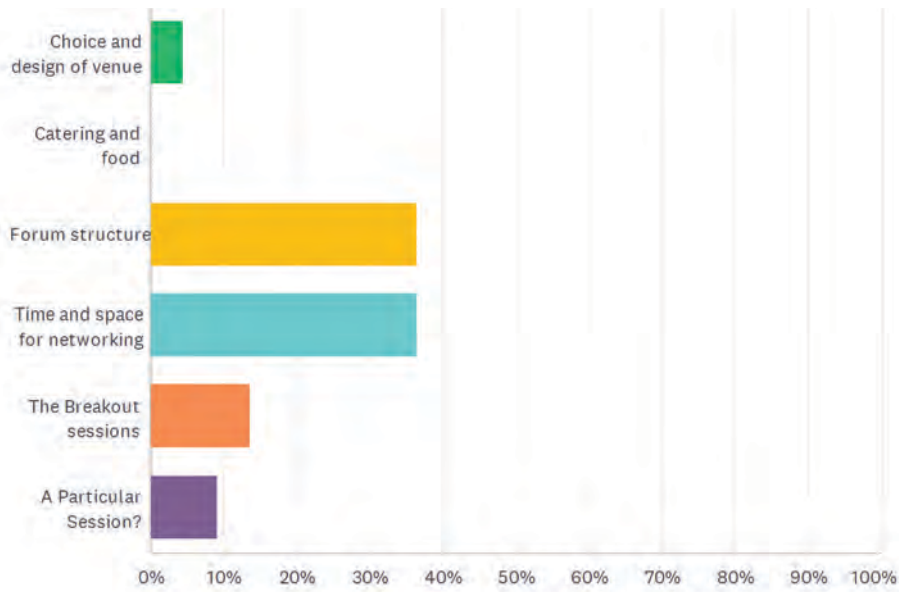
## How well did we do on the day

Participants were surveyed on how well we did in each of the following areas, with answers based on a sliding scale, where 1 equalled “very low” and 5 equalled “very high”. The weighted average is shown below.

Venue design and layout	4.55 / 5
Catering and food	4.59 / 5
Breakout rooms	3.95 / 5
Leadership Lounge 1 (Facilitated by Andrew Bryant. Panel members: Ross Duncan, Stephanie McMahon, Jamie Ferguson, Anton Thorburn & Sean Nicholson)	4.30 / 5
Leadership Lounge 2 (Facilitated by Andrew Zerner. Panel members: Robbie Clapperton, Scott Kapernick, Josh Gadischke & Linchon Hawks)	4.48 / 5
Focus on Circularity (Dr Chad Renando & Stephanie McMahon)	4.05 / 5
Big Ideas workshop session	4.00 / 5
Guest Speaker (Professor Veena Sahajalla)	3.62 / 5
Insights and Perspectives Panel (Georgie Somerset, Josh Gadischke, Ian Mackie, Dr Chad Renando, John Carey)	4.10 / 5
The Forum MC (Andrew Bryant)	4.62 / 5
<b>Overall experience</b>	<b>4.24 / 5</b>

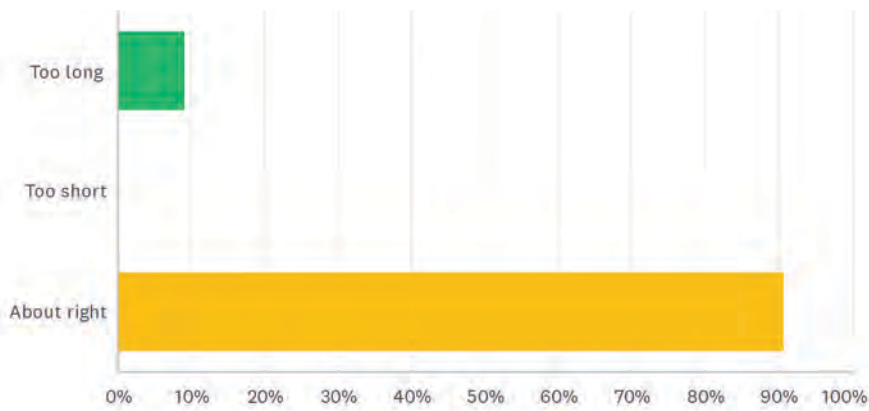
## Particular likes

The survey asked participant to highlight anything they particularly liked about the Forum. Forum structure and time and space for networking were highly appreciated, both ranking at 36.36%. 13.64% particularly liked the breakout sessions, and 4.55% liked choice and design of the venue. 9.09% said they liked a particular session.



## Length of the Forum

When asked about the length of the forum, a resounding 90.91% said the length was about right, with only 9.09% stating it was too long.

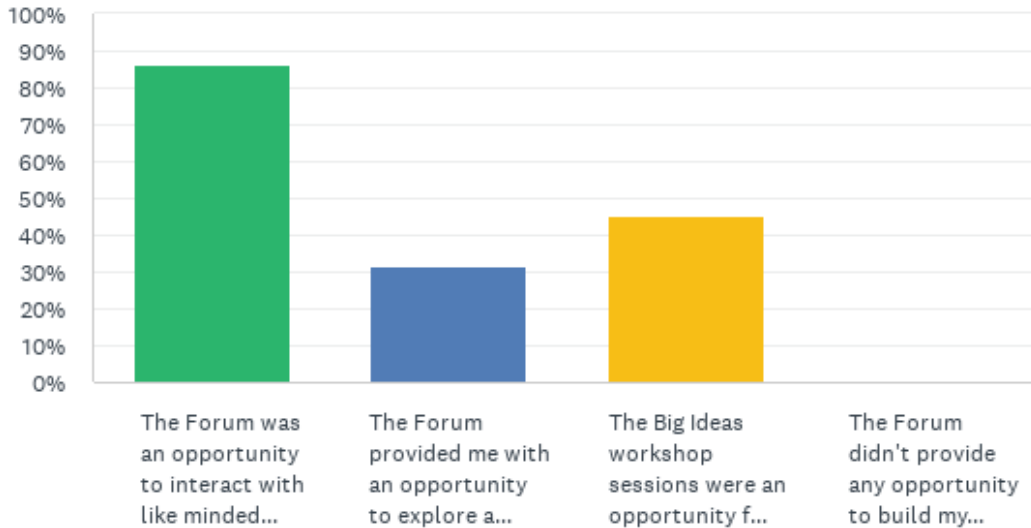




## Opportunity to build networks

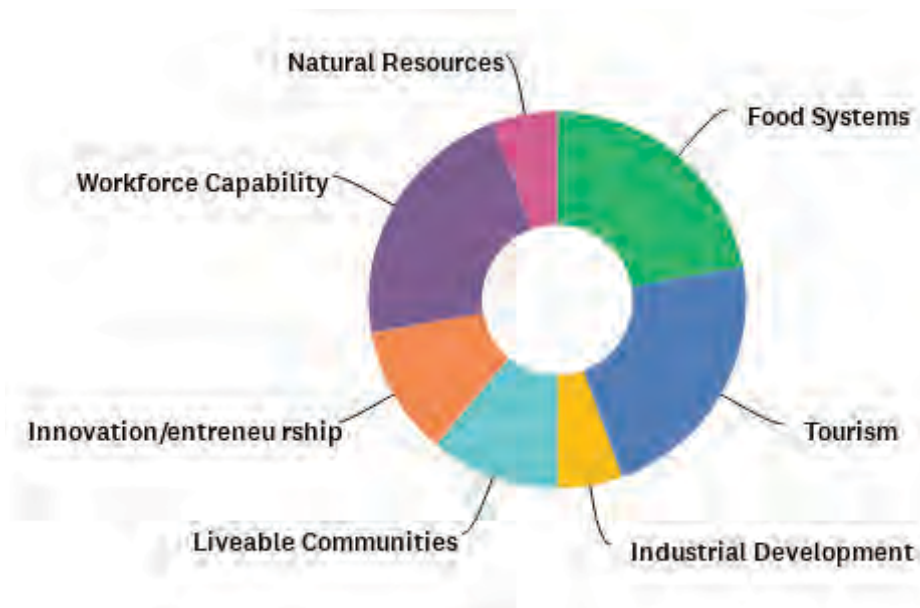
The survey also asked "In what way did the Leadership Forum provide an opportunity to build your networks and/or interest groups within the Burnett Inland?"

Of participants who responded to the survey, 86.36% indicated the Forum was an opportunity to interact with like-minded individuals. 45.45% stated that the Big Ideas workshop sessions were an opportunity to contribute to the future of the Burnett Inland and 31.82% identified the Forum as an opportunity to explore a subject area of interest. Notably nobody said that the Forum didn't provide any opportunity to build their networks.



## Focus Groups

When asked which working group participants would like to be connected with, the top three were Food Systems, Tourism and Workforce Capability (22.22% each), followed by Liveable Communities and Innovation/Entrepreneurship (11.11% each). Trailing behind was Industrial Development and Natural Resources (5.56% each), with no one putting their hand up to be involved in the Connectivity focus group.





It's the simple fact that you can be in the same room with people who want to go and do something. They are interested in the same things; they want the same outcomes, and they are willing to do something about it.

We accept knowledge and wisdom from older people normally, but to see someone young like Robbie Clapperton who has the willingness to make a change and to make a stand in his community is so valuable.

I love that Red Earth is independent and there are no hidden agendas, it's about bringing out the best in people in rural communities for the best outcomes. That's what I value about Red Earth.

*Melinda Thorburn*



It's a great time for community groups and businesses to come together to network and share ideas and start putting some actionable tasks in place to **start making a difference in our community.**

*Megan Nilon*





## Focus Areas - Big Ideas, Solution Stations and Action Plans:

Forum attendees chose one of the eight focus areas presented and broke into groups to brainstorm 'Big Ideas' for each topic. During the initial brainstorming session, the focus group and facilitator collated information and ideas on butchers paper, which informed the solutions generated and actions planned in the following sessions. Following the forum, all the content on the butchers paper for each focus group was digitised into Miro (as shown at the bottom of each focus group overview in this section of the Report).

Later in the afternoon, participants returned to their focus group (or a different group if it was their preferred area of interest after hearing a summary of the Big Ideas presented by each facilitator after the first session) to develop take away actions they were going to strive towards, whether that was to form a working group, undertake research or find funding for a particular identified initiative.



### Food Systems

**Facilitator:** Georgie Somerset

#### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Reduce bureaucracy for waste recycling locally
- Summit of relevant agencies regarding waste
- Check if food rescue is happening effectively locally

#### Big Ideas:



## Industrial Development

Facilitator: John Carey

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Research project around Burnett Inland circular economy strengths and inputs

### Big Ideas:



## Liveable Communities

Facilitator: Andrew Bryant

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Youth Summit / Forum
- Investigate functionality of committees
- Inclusion Audit, asking the question "How welcoming are our communities?"

### Big Ideas:



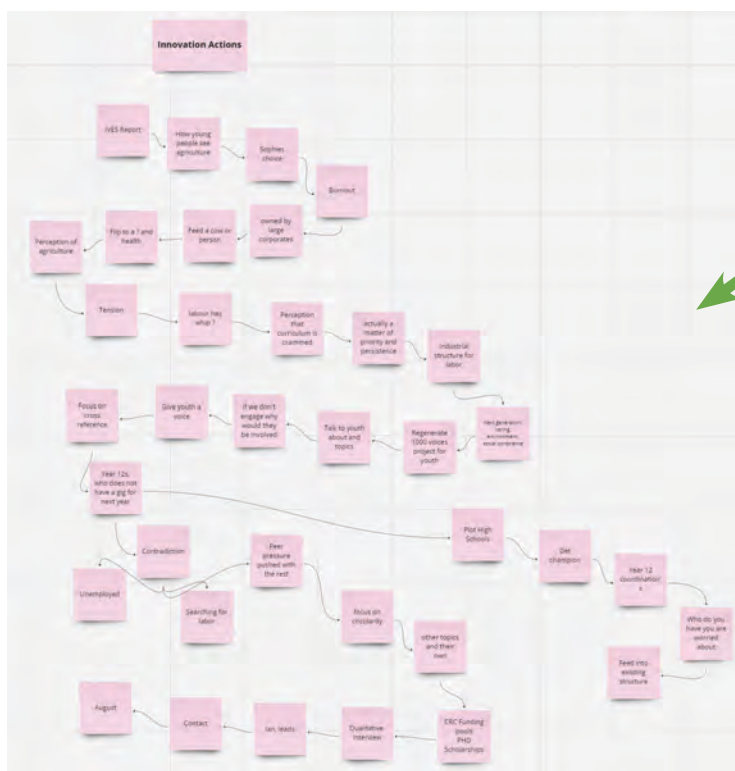
# Innovation/entrepreneurship

Facilitator: Dr Chad Renando

## Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Advocate to Council for recycling of household waste
- Harness opportunities for innovation in the energy space
- Create linkages between high school leavers and employers looking for workers and/or business champions to encourage entrepreneurship. Potential establishment of micro factories to engage youth, with seed funding for their own business ideas.
- Give youth a voice
  - 1,000 voices project for youth

## Big Ideas:



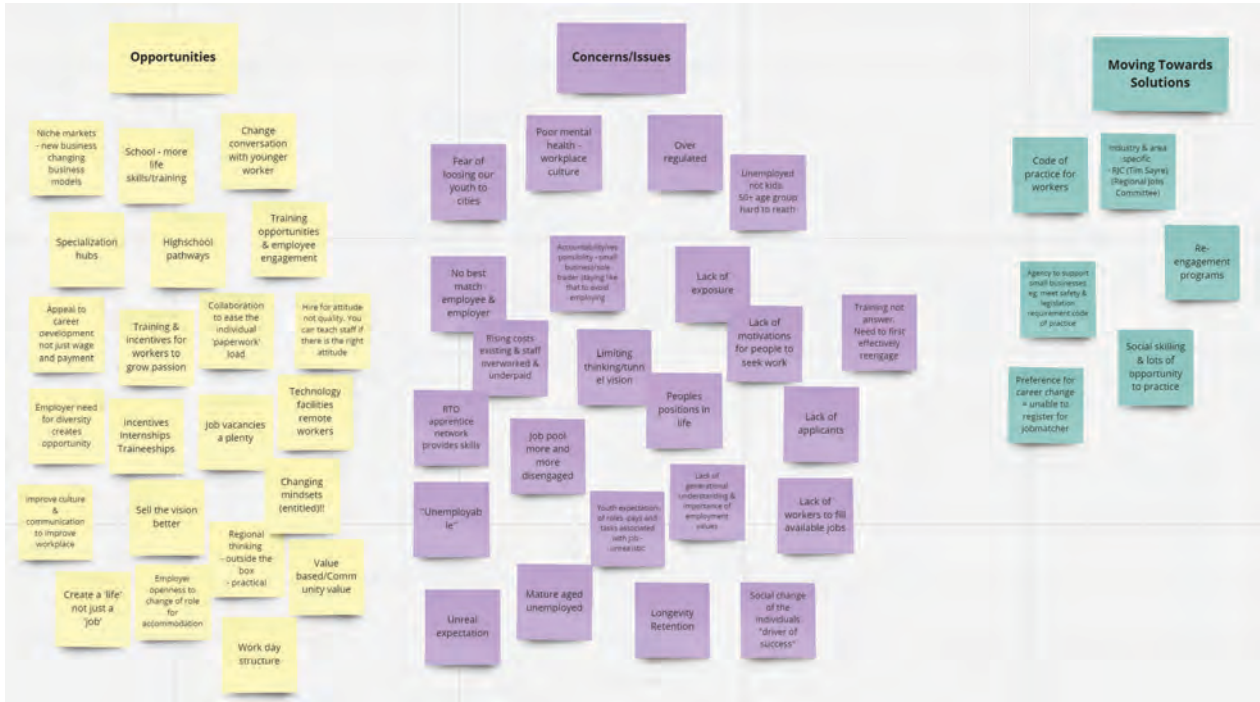
## Workforce Capability

Facilitator: Katie Zerner

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Advocate at a local level for Regional Jobs Committee (RJC)
- Launch initiative to record local business owners around their own journeys, and what they are looking for as employers, making recordings available in various places, including high schools, job agencies etc

### Big Ideas:



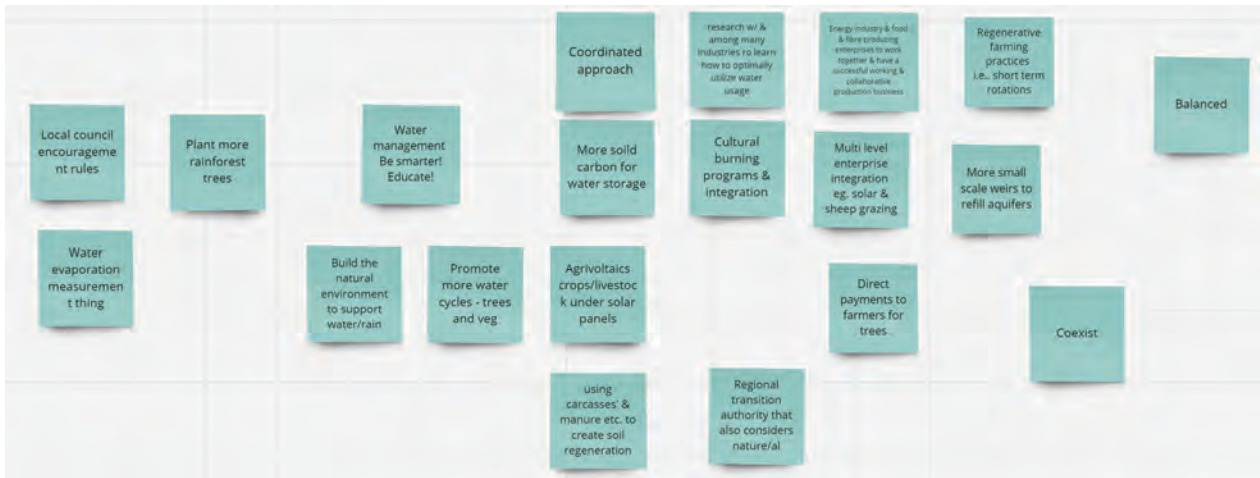
## Natural resources

Facilitator: Andrew Zerner

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Education, including for young people up to age 25 and urban/city education, around cooling landscapes

### Big Ideas:



## Connectivity

Facilitator: Jo Donnison

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Advocacy for better connectivity in the Burnett Inland

## Tourism

Facilitator: Stephanie Denman

### Intended Outcomes / Action Planning:

- Minimising silos by bringing together a working group or community of leaders for the whole region to prioritise needs
- Investigate possibility of a Wide Bay Burnett / Burnett Inland regional tourism organisation for the creation of regional calendar of event
- Promotion of local events to locals
- Growing local business by hosting business-specific themed Hub in a Pub events so that business owners can meet and network with others in the space

### Big Ideas:



The Red Earth team are now in the process of following up with Forum participants to ascertain who would like to commit to being part of each Focus Area Action Group.

Zoom sessions will then be facilitated with each Action Group at the end of January to help further develop solutions to the Big Ideas generated and to activate each group to move forward with their identified initiatives.

The Workforce Capability Action sites Group has been self-organising and has already sought funding for one of their initiatives, with auspicing and support from Red Earth Community Foundation.



### Insights, Perspectives, Reflections and Next Steps:

The event concluded with a panel of national thought leaders Georgie Somerset, Josh Gadischke, John Carey, Dr Ian Mackie and Dr Chad Renando sharing reflections from what they had heard throughout the forum and encouraged attendees to take action around “what could come next for the Burnett Inland”.

Chad shared his excitement that the ‘Hub in a Pub’ initiative had been activated, as a direct result from last year’s Leadership Forum. He said he was looking forward to seeing what outcomes happen in the region as a result of this year’s Forum.

John encouraged participants to step out and make a difference, because even small actions can have big impact.

MC Andrew Bryant closed the event by asking participants to reflect on what kind of narrative we tell ourselves about our region, and what kind of narrative we tell others, imploring participants to see the region’s untapped potential, available resources and endless opportunities.



**We can all be world changers from right here in the Burnett Inland.**

*Andrew Bryant*



**Be the ripple, the stone has been dropped into your pond.**

*John Carey*



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Red Earth Community Foundation exists to invest in people and act as a catalyst for the Burnett Inland region to thrive into the future



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