



Queensland  
Decarbonisation  
Hub

Centre for Policy Futures

# Regional Perspective

## CHRRUP Regional Futures Round Table

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# Change is Inevitable

## PASTORAL PIONEERS (150+ YRS)

### Opening the Central Highlands

The first pastoralists unlocked the agricultural backbone of regional Queensland, demonstrating how vision and bravery redefine regional capability.

## 60 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

### 6 Decades of Mining & Power

As showcased through 50+ years of industrial evolution, continuous adaptation and growth have shaped our towns, infrastructure, and sovereign wealth.

## THE PRESENT CROSSROADS

### Structural Transition is Upon Us

Change will happen regardless. We are now at a pivotal historical moment where we must actively shape our next economic chapter or let it default.

# What Happens Without a Plan? Cautionary Lessons and Local Reality

## CAUTIONARY HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

### Unmanaged Transitions Destroy Regional Capacity

- **Charters Towers**

Gold rush exit led to massive population contraction and decades of economic stagnation before new industry took hold.

- **Karumba**

Industrial shifts and fishery/port changes impacted infrastructure investment without a coordinated multi-sector replacement plan.

- **Mount Isa**

Current mine contractions demonstrate the severe economic cliff faced by isolated communities reliant on single-commodity life cycles.

## OUR LOCAL BURNING PLATFORM

### Bluff Mine: The Reality on Our Doorstep

- ⚠ **Sudden Abandonment**

Bluff Mine highlights what happens when operations cease abruptly without a structured post-mining land use framework.

- ⚠ **Infrastructure Demolition vs Asset Loss**

Without pre-planned regulatory holding patterns, multi-million dollar water, power, and road assets are lost.

- ⚠ **Direct Threat to Community**

Worker displacement, loss of local procurement, and long-term environmental remediation uncertainty fall squarely on the region and State.

- ⚠ **The Imperative**

Bluff Mine proves that waiting for mine closure is too late. Proactive, place-based planning must start while operations are capitalised.



# The Challenge: Economic Exposure & Sovereign Wealth

**60% - 75%**

DIRECT & INDIRECT  
DEPENDENCY

## Jobs Exposed to Single Sector

60% to 75% of all direct and indirect employment in the Central Highlands is tied directly to mining. Unmanaged contraction threatens the entire socio-economic ecosystem.

**25+ Mines**

MATURING ASSET CLIFF

## Impending Horizon in 10 Yrs

Over 25 coal mines across Queensland face end-of-life horizons within the decade. Without productive transition, massive regional economic cliffs are guaranteed.

**New  
Wealth**

PRIMARY INDUSTRY ENGINE

## Sovereign Value vs Metro

Regional resources and agriculture do not merely circulate existing dollars; they create brand new sovereign wealth that funds Queensland's essential public services.

**\$ Billions**

COST & STATE RISK TRANSFER

## Asset Sterilisation Risk

Demolishing installed grid, power, water, rail, and hardstand infrastructure transfers huge financial liabilities to the State and destroys vital transition platforms.



# A Place-Based Approach

## 1. VALUE REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

### Sovereign Value & Primary Industries

Regions are vital for Queensland's success. Supporting primary industries and emerging low-carbon manufacturing ensures continuous state wealth generation.

## 2. CRITICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

### Act While Operators are Capitalised

Time is critical. We must transition land and assets while mining companies hold tenure, active capital, and site liabilities—ensuring zero risk transfer to the State.

## 3. PROSPER 2050 & NEW INDUSTRIES

### Post-Mining Ag & Industrial Land Bank

Aligning directly with DPI Prosper 2050 to unlock bio-refining, renewable energy, and intensive and sustainable agriculture using preserved high-value mine infrastructure.

## 4. WHAT'S NEXT: PLACE-BASED LEADERSHIP

### CHRRUP as the Neutral Regional PMO

Transition cannot be mandated from capital cities. Real success requires a place-based approach with CHRRUP coordinating industry, community, and government.



## Contact

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