

Isisford

Community Development Action Plan



September 2025

Foreword



Isisford **Yellowbelly Country** on the banks of the Barcoo River. The township was settled in 1874 and called Wittown after the founders James and William Whitman.

It is without a doubt the most beautiful town in Western Queensland, no other town in the region has such close access to a river which is why a fishing or camping trip is a must.

Around 100 people call Isisford home, but its natural surrounds are no secret, and hence the population grows dramatically during the winter when grey nomads secure a spot along the leafy river. With plenty of room, dozens of caravans can comfortably spread out and still have room for campfires. In fact, some of the travellers have come to enjoy Isisford so much they return annually and stay for weeks at a time.

Another bonus for the tourist is that Isisford has the basic necessities including a well-stocked grocery shop, health clinic, school, post office, café, mechanic, information centre/library, pool, golf course, tennis court, race course, self-service fuel depot, shower and toilet amenities for any short- or long-term travellers and a hotel/caravan park all run by the locals.

The Barcoo Interpretation Centre in the main street is the bigger attraction and consists of a 60-seat theatrette, cafeteria and museum

describing the evolution of nature from 100 million years ago to the present. The feature attraction is the replica and life size model of the *Isisfordia duncani* which lived around Isisford 98 million years ago.

The interpretation signs in the main street explains the history of the buildings and locations around the town. It's worth a wander up the main street to see them all.

Our beautiful park behind the council office has a playground for the kids, picnic shelter and other attractions including a museum, machinery display. In St Agnes Street is the former Isisford District Hospital Museum which demonstrates the medical history and the significant risks of living in a remote part of Australia.

Heading out of town to the southwest 15km is the Oma waterhole. It is a larger expanse of water along the Barcoo River which is also a great fishing and camping spot. The camping area has a shower and toilet block. In July every year a fishing competition is held which draws hundreds of anglers to the waterhole to compete for many prizes.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with Rural Aid to build a stronger community.

Isisford Industry Recreation and Development Association

Our Story



Isisford is a vibrant town of around 100 passionate persons nestled in the heart of central Queensland. Positioned on the banks of the Barcoo River, this district is part of the broader Channel Country—a region renowned for its unique inland river systems and expansive floodplains. The land, characterised by its striking landscapes and diverse ecosystems, has been a source of life and inspiration for many generations. The river, which meanders through the heart of Isisford, is not just a geographical feature but a vital lifeline that has shaped the town's development and cultural identity.

For tens of thousands of years, the land around Isisford has been home to the Kuungkari People. Their deep connection to the land is reflected in the rich Aboriginal heritage that continues to influence our community today. The traditional custodians of this region have long revered the Barcoo River and its surrounding environment, with stories and traditions passed down through generations. Their enduring legacy is evident in our commitment to preserving and respecting the natural world that they have cherished for countless generations.

The settlement in Isisford began in 1874, with the town being officially surveyed in 1877. The arrival of pastoralists marked the beginning of a new chapter, as the area transitioned from its traditional Aboriginal stewardship to a burgeoning centre of agricultural enterprise.

The establishment of the Teddington Arms Hotel and the development of nearby grazing lands signalled the town's growth and its emergence as a key player in the region's economic landscape. The introduction of the railway in the early 20th century further accelerated this growth, connecting Isisford to broader markets and facilitating trade and transport.

As the 20th century unfolded, Isisford continued to evolve. The town became a focal point for the local wool industry and served as a hub for surrounding pastoral stations. Despite the challenges faced by rural communities, Isisford has maintained its unique small-town charm and character. The enduring presence of historical landmarks, such as the iconic Isisford Post Office and the original old Oma cattle yards (circa 1870s), provides a window into the past and a sense of continuity with its heritage.

Today, Isisford is renowned not only for its historical significance and heritage sites but also for its vibrant community spirit and natural attractions. The Barcoo River remains a central feature of our town, offering recreational opportunities, the venue for our famous annual three-day fishing competition and contributing to the scenic beauty that makes Isisford a special place to live and visit.

Our Vision

A Vision Statement is a vivid description of what our community aspires to become, without its current barriers, but tied to what we value as a community.

The statement below is our intended outcome:

A vibrant, welcoming, united and family-friendly community, where heritage and lifestyle proudly combine to create progressive and community-driven action for all generations to live, work, play and age well.

Our Guiding Values

Guiding values are the fundamental, moral, and ethical beliefs that we share as a community. They represent core principles and capture what our community considers important. They help foster trust, respect, collaboration, and unity.

The following six guiding values and attitudes provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely:

- **Community Pride and Connection:** Ensuring all residents experience a sense of welcome, community connection, inclusion and pride in our heritage, uniqueness, achievements and future.
- **Respect for Heritage:** Appreciating our unique heritage, stories and traditions and their importance in community and economic development.
- **Small Town Lifestyle:** Retaining our unique sense of the country way of life, local connections and rural landscapes.
- **Safety:** Maintaining high levels of community safety with a low crime rate and anti-social behaviours.
- **Positive Mindset:** Fostering community attitudes that embrace change, proactive 'can-do' behaviours, optimism and hopefulness.
- **Community Inclusiveness, Connection, Unity and Engagement:** Valuing the involvement and contribution of all our community residents and groups; appreciating and respecting the diversity of all cultures, opinions, and ideas.



Our Goals

Community goals are broad statements of intent that direct our efforts towards accomplishing our vision in line with our guiding principles.

Below are the six community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely:

- To provide a safe and attractive living and working environment where all people feel safe, connected, involved, supported and empowered.
- To retain families in the town by continually strengthening our livable country lifestyle and local employment opportunities.
- To support, promote and celebrate active community participation and volunteerism.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider returning to our community for work, business, family and lifestyle opportunities.
- To preserve, maintain and strengthen our community assets and heritage.
- To protect, preserve and promote the Barcoo River.

Our Challenges

Like many small inland rural communities, our community needs to respond creatively to a series of demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges. These issues include:

- Volunteer fatigue – a few people doing the same thing on each committee
- Drought and the challenge to keep amenities looking green
- Accommodation – for visitors, new residents and key workers
- Limited retail business base
- Lack of secondary and tertiary education options
- Limited local employment opportunities
- Access to facilities – pool closed during peak tourist season
- Road quality – dirt roads, limited connectivity with major roads, narrow roads
- Shortage of skilled labour – trades
- Lack of support from local government – poor communication
- Small size of local market
- Uncertainty of commodity prices
- Fostering community harmony and connection – overcoming community tensions



Our Assets

People

- Welcoming, friendly community members
- Passionate community builders
- **Volunteers:** Qld Ambulance Service, SES, Rural Fire Brigade
- Local LRC Councilor
- Council employees
- School principal
- Nurses & health staff
- Seniors & young people
- Gardeners
- Local musicians & creatives
- Visitors, tourists & returning visitors
- **Sportspeople:** golfers, horse sports people
- Roo shooters, anglers

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- Community spirit and support for each other; community passion
- Safe and drug-free community
- **Museums:** OBIC, Bakery, Hooper's Store, Whitman's Hospital
- **Heritage sites:** historic downtown, Clancy's Heritage Building, Old Hospital, Heritage Shearing Shed, Whitman's Well, historic cemetery
- Heritage plaques/interpretative signage
- Local heritage publications
- Kuungkari People heritage
- **Heritage connections:** Major Mitchell story, Banjo Patterson connection
- Photographic collection
- Barcoo River heritage
- Oma Waterhole
- Yellow Belly Country & metal sculptures
- Fossils: connection to Isisfordia Duncani

Institutions

- LRC office and work yard
- Local staff and specialist staff of LRC
- Medical Centre
- State School
- Library
- Police/QGap
- Post office
- Visiting service providers
- **Emergency services:** Queensland Ambulance Service, SES, Rural Fire Brigade

Our Assets

Physical

- **Recreation facilities:** tennis court, swimming pool, bowling green, skate park, racecourse, park, old recreation grounds, hall, golf club and 18-hole golf course
- **Community facilities:** medical centre, community garden, airport, road network, cemetery, river boat ramp
- **Physical features:** Barcoo River, Yuranigh Pond, Oma Waterhole, Barcoo Weir, Blue Tree Project tree (mental health), natural and pastoral landscapes, Mainstreet aesthetics
- **Tourist facilities:** tourist park, caravan park, camping grounds, OBIC, new toilets & showers in main street and at Oma Waterhole, museums, Yellow Belly sculptures x3
- **Heritage buildings:** Old Hospital, Clancy's Hotel, shops, heritage woolshed
- **Big sky:** brilliant stars, sunrises & sunsets
- Great Artesian Basin
- **Location:** half-way between Longreach and Blackall
 - Bird life

Economic

- **Events:** fishing competition, horse sports/ Team Penning weekend, Sheep and Wool Show, golf club competitions, ANZAC Day, youth dance concert
- **Retail businesses:** Food Barn general store, post office, fuel outlet, mechanic
- **Hospitality businesses:** Whitman's Café, Golden West Hotel/Caravan Park, short term accommodation at Old Hospital, Campground
- **Tourist trails & attractions:** Barcoo Way, Outer Barcoo drive Freight services
- Roo box owners
- Local pastoral properties
- Golf club markets, car boot sale
- River camping
- Shearing
- Facebook page
- Outback Destination Tourism Plan of LRC
- Economic Development Charter, Small Business Friendly Grants Program and Quarterly Business Breakfasts of LRC

Social Networks

- **Sporting groups:** fishing, golf, race club
- Pub events
- OBIC events: Thursday night meals, Sunday buffet breakfast
- Sir Wally Rae School Sports day
- Youth dance program
- Seniors group and program
- Recycling program
- School P&C
- Consumer Advisory Network (CAN)
- Isisford Industry Recreation & Development Association (IIRDA)
- Museum Committee
- Isisford Facebook page: "Where the hell is Isisford?"
- LRC Quarterly Business Breakfasts





Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

Building a more connected & active community

ACTIONS

1

1. Promote **volunteering and community engagement** through the following actions:
 - Continual invites to community members to voice ideas, suggestions and actively volunteer
 - Recognise and celebrate community volunteers, through media exposure and an annual 'Volunteer Appreciation Event'
 - Seek support from Queensland Volunteering and utilisation of their resources

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

2. Form a **Community Hub Task Team** to explore potential to create a Community Hub facility in Isisford and which undertakes the following initiatives:
 - Research and learn from successful community hubs in other rural communities, including regular liaison with the community of Clermont who are pursuing the establishment of a similar facility and organisation
 - Explore local and state government support and funding resources
 - Develop a Community Hub Action Plan that outlines structure, budget, funding opportunities, programs and promotion
 - Design and implement a 'Community Asset Mapping Exercise' that identifies and connects resident gifts, talents and learning/recreation needs
 - Identify a community space to provide an initial operating space
 - Based on the responses from the 'Community Asset Mapping Exercise', identify, create, promote and operate a set of initial regular and one-off events to attract community interest and involvement, including a calendar of simple and low-cost family events and 'Meet and Greet' occasions
 - Promote membership
 - Form Community Hub Structure and leadership Team

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

3. Instigate a **calendar of low-cost events that connect residents and build community relationships in Isisford** e.g. Family Fun Day, Good Neighbour Day, street parties, local talent nights, Christmas event in the mainstreet etc.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

4. Identify a volunteer to coordinate the promotion of **positive messages** of the Isisford community through radio, print and social media.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

5. Encourage the Isisford State School to explore implementation of the BOI **'RuMAD? Program'** to grow active child and youth engagement in community development.

Timeframe: Short-Term and Ongoing

LEAD GROUPS

IIRDA
LRC
Community Hub Task Team

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

ISS
RA
CDP, MDP & Sponsorship Program of LRC
Queensland Government youth grants
Volunteering Queensland
FRRR

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Two

Developing local tourism potential

ACTIONS



LEAD GROUPS

Tourism Strategy Task Team

River Camping Task Team

Astro-Tourism Task Team

LRC

IIRDA

OBIC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

IIRDA

Museum Committee

Golf Club

Isisford sporting groups

Small Business Friendly Grant Program

CDP, MDP and

Sponsorship Program of LRC

RDAP

RDAEWQ

RAPAD

BBRF

RA

DESBT

FRRR

1. Develop an **Isisford Tourism Strategy** through the formation of a Tourism Strategy Task Team that will:
 - Audit current tourism attractions, facilities, events, public art, trails and the town's key events
 - Review regional tourism links, activities and trails
 - Identify opportunities to enhance existing products and offerings
 - Develop Isisford's unique brand
 - Identify new initiatives to enhance the appeal of the OBIC
 - Identify opportunities to create new tourism products, especially cultural tourism, nature-based tourism, astro-tourism and opportunities that builds upon the strong local heritage, fishing and Barcoo River reputation
 - Identify ways to incorporate more effectively Kuungkari People heritage
 - Provide insights into greater connection with the Dinosaur Trail
 - Identify options to grow and diversify visitor accommodation options
 - Identify initiatives to develop and market the Old Hospital as a tourist attraction
 - Recommend ways to enhance marketing, customer service, community storytelling and operator networking

Timeframe: Immediate to Medium Term

2. Identify and advocate for the implementation of **improvements to the Caravan Park** including more cabins, amenities, tourist information and a more appropriate fee structure.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

3. Form a **River Camping Task Team** to:
 - Conduct surveys of river campers and fisherman to gain feedback and idea improvement
 - Identify and advocate for improvements to river access and camping
 - Identify new initiatives to ensure the return of the 'grey nomads' and broaden the appeal to families
 - Advocate for river improvements including a river walkway and appropriate fees

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

4. Advocate for the **opening of the swimming pool during the tourism season and its heating.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

5. Form an **Astro-Tourism Task Team to identify, design and implement an Isisford Dark Skies Astro- Tourism Project**, including the following actions:
 - Research into Astro-Tourism initiatives in other small rural communities, including the towns involved in Astro-Tourism WA and in the Winton Region
 - Design and construct a Dark Skies viewing platform
 - Organise a set of Astro-Tourism community events
 - Promote as a tourism asset and opportunity

Timeframe: Medium Term and Ongoing

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Strengthening business attraction, retention & expansion

ACTIONS

3

1. Instigate an **entrance sign targeting Isisford's need and opportunity for specific trades.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

2. Continue to promote and support opportunities for the **revitalisation and use of Clancy's Hotel.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

3. Participate annually in the **'Tidy Towns Queensland Awards'.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

4. **Promote awareness of the Economic Development Charter, Small Business Friendly Grants, Quarterly Business Breakfasts and specialist staff of LRC.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

LEAD GROUPS

IIRDA
LRC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Isisford businesses
DESBT
RDAEWQ
Tidy Towns - Queensland Awards of KQB
Small Business Friendly Grants program
RDAP
RAPAD



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Four

Preserving local heritage

ACTIONS



1. Continue to identify and advocate for **heritage enhancement and beautification improvements to the main street.**
Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing
2. Continue to identify volunteer and financial resources to **extend the collection of Yellowbelly Country metal sculptures.**
Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing
3. Develop a **Town Heritage Walking Trail** with map and connections highlighting Isisford's heritage.
Timeframe: Short-Term
4. Undertake an **audit of current heritage signage** and advocate for improvements and additions.
Timeframe: Short-Term

LEAD GROUPS

IIRDA
LRC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Isisford businesses
RDAP
CDP
MCP
FRRR



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Five

Improving 'Ageing in Place'

ACTIONS



3. Form an "Ageing in Place" Task Team to explore and pursue options and funding possibilities to develop a **Clermont community-managed aged care service** model, based on the town of Bell 'Staying in Place' initiative (Bell Cares) and their provider (Trilogy Care)

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

2. Encourage and coordinate **services to help seniors better navigate health and ageing options.**

Timeframe: Short-Term and Ongoing

LEAD GROUPS

"Ageing in Place" Task Team
LRC
Medical Centre

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

IIRDA
Bell Cares
Queensland Health
Trilogy Cares
Mable platform
Visiting health service groups
MDP, CDP and Sponsorship Program of LRC



Abbreviations

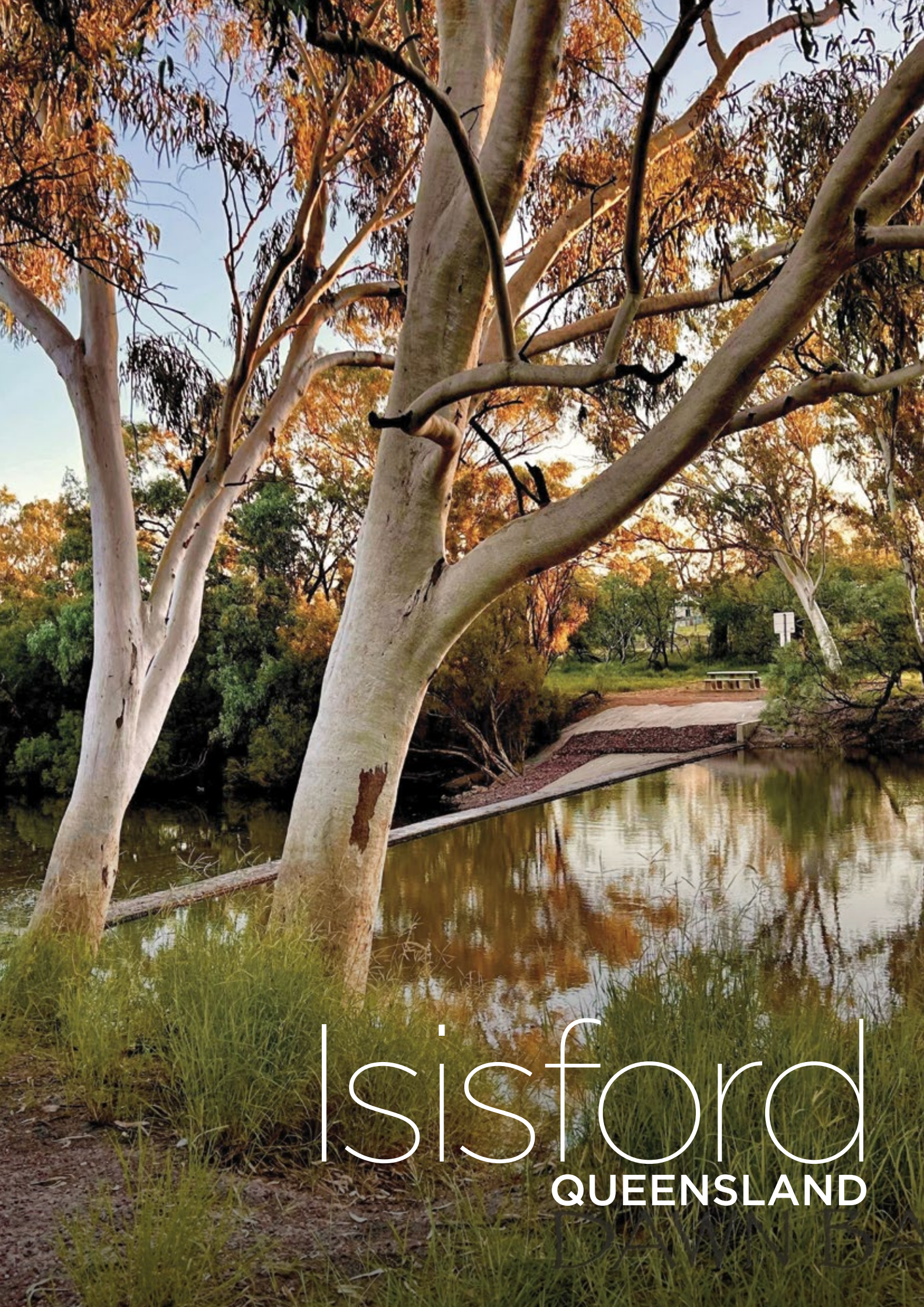
BBRF	Building Better Regions Fund of the Australian Government
BOI	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
CDP	Community Donations Program of the Longreach Regional Council
DESBT	Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
FRRR	Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
IIRDA	Isisford Industry Recreation & Development Association
ISS	Isiford State School
KQB	Keep Queensland Beautiful
LRC	Longreach Regional Council
MDP	Mayoral Donation Program of the Longreach Regional Council
OBIC	Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre
QGap	Queensland Government Agent Program
RA	Rural Aid
RAPAD	Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board
RDAEWQ	Regional Development Australia Eastern & Western Queensland Committee Inc
RDAP	Regional Arts Development Fund

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This Plan respectfully acknowledges the Kuungkari Peoples as the traditional custodians and First People of the lands which comprise the township of Isisford and its districts. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Kuungkari Peoples.



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QUEENSLAND