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Communique

Lakeland Irrigation Area Scheme (LIAS) Detailed Business Case

March 2024

Regional Development Australia Tropical North (RDATN) awaits approval from the Queensland government to release the LIAS Detailed Business Case (DBC) to the public. During February, representatives from RDATN, Cook Shire Council and the Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation met with the Hon. Glenn Butcher MP, while RDATN Chair, Deputy Chair and CEO met with various Shadow Ministers, to discuss the next steps.

Hon Glenn Butcher MP – Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water

The Minister and Director-General were briefed on the preference for the Alternative Larger Scheme (296GL dam) and the socio-economic benefits such a scheme would bring, particularly in terms of Closing the Gap. The need for an early review of the Mitchell Catchment Water Resource Plan (expires November 2027), along with the need for a proponent was discussed. Sunwater as a proponent would enable the formation of a Mobilisation Taskforce, which would include representatives from Queensland and Federal governments, Cook Shire Council, growers, Western Yalanji nation and RDATN. Outcomes from the meeting:

- Mitchell Catchment Water Resource Plan unlikely to be reviewed before 2027 due to departmental resources focused on the Gulf Catchment Water Resource Plan review
- Should the Scheme progress, there was positive sentiment towards Sunwater being the Project Owner and establishing a Mobilisation Taskforce
- Consideration for accessing funding for the Detailed Design stage through the National Water Grid Authority

The RDA will continue to engage with the Queensland Government to support the progress of the DBC.

Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Ministers

The Shadow Cabinet met in Cairns during 19-20 February. The RDA Chair, Deputy Chair and CEO met with a number Shadow Ministers and canvassed a range of topic relevant to the RDA's Tropical North Queensland Economic Development Strategy. The Shadow Ministers included:

David Crisafulli (Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Tourism)

David Janetski (Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment)

Tony Perrett (Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)

Dale Last (Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Affairs)

Steve Minnikin (Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads)

John-Paul Langbroek (Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)

The LIAS was also raised. There was strong support from this group recognising the project of regional and state significance. There was an understanding that the Mitchell Catchment Water Resource Plan needs to be reviewed soon and that Sunwater could lead the project.

Advance Cairns Delegation

RDATN will join Advance Cairns and other economic development organisations from 6-7 March in Brisbane. Meetings are scheduled with various Ministers and Shadow Ministers. The RDATN CEO and Board Member Joe Moro, will represent the LIAS project as part of the Food and Water Security package being presented to the government.

CONTACT DETAILS

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