# Alpha

## Community Development Plan

RURAL (aid) AUSTRALIA

**December 2020**

# Foreword

From 1846 when Sir Thomas Mitchell passed through the hills of the Rocky Drummond, making his way through to the Alpha creek, where this railway town of old was established in 1884.

Having been tried and tested for over 100 plus years, it has had its fair share of battles with floods, fires, drought and rail disasters. What you notice right off the bat, when talking with anyone who is local to this town, is that they aren't the type that will back down from a challenge. By their commitment, strong community spirit, resilience and with the occasional hand from a mate, they have shown that all challenges can be triumphed time and time again and proven that these are the values that keep a town like Alpha thriving.

As all things of value and worth show, with enough time and enough testing, a certain irreplaceable character and depth will be formed. This is what can be found both within the people and within the town that is called Alpha. Alpha has seen many faces come and go over the years, and has been nurtured and loved by so many, all, who have been so vital in the development of character that you find within the town you see today. Just as Alpha has changed in the past, so it is changing again today, being gradually shaped by the summoning of the energy and wisdom from those who have been before which will transition this town into a future that holds even deeper connections to its origins and an even more prosperous future.

This Community Development Plan seeks to bring about the dreams and visions which have been laid out by those who live in this community and present them in a document which lays the framework for what's to come next. We are grateful to the team from Rural Aid who have provided their expertise, their wisdom and their time, in tying together so many ideas and making them a reality.

To each and every Alpha community member who has shared in this journey of development that will reshape the township of Alpha for its lifetime, we thank you and appreciate you and would be unable to do this without you. When a group of people who share the same passion and interest for their community gets together and works towards the same goals, the power to achieve those goals is limitless and unstoppable....and that collaborative action has been acknowledged when this initiative recently won the Barcaldine Regional Council Australia Day Award!

**Written by the members of the Alpha township.**

# Acknowledgements

# Our Story



Alpha is a proud and beautiful small Western Queensland town with 335 passionate residents. Known as the "Gateway to the West", our town was named after an early pastoral property settled in 1863. The name 'Alpha' was taken from the Greek word meaning 'the beginning'. It is also the first letter if the Greek alphabet.

Alpha was initially established as a temporary terminus during construction of the Central Western Railway line. The railway, which was being built westwards from Rockhampton, was opened to Alpha in September 1884. The construction camp continued moving west, but a township remained at the former terminus.

Local government began in 1916 with the establishment of the Jericho Shire Council. Queensland-wide amalgamation of Shires in 2008 resulted in the incorporation of the Jericho Shire into the Barcaldine Regional Council. Alpha has gained a national reputation as the "Town of Murals". As a response to the devastating floods of 1990, two local artists,

Alice McLoughlin and Benny Fuentes and members of the Alpha Cultural Group, decided to brighten up the town with their artistic skills. The long term result was 28 murals which have been painted by local and former resident artists and add to the colourful ambiance of our community. They illustrate the day-to-day life of people in the bush and the pioneering history of our district.

Economically, our district is still a highly valued prominent beef production area, but due to its location within the Galilee Basin, mining is likely to become important in the future.

In addition, Alpha's central location on the Capricorn Highway between Rockhampton and Longreach ensures it's continuing important travelling stop service roles. While the community has endured an extended drought period, Alpha has a long history of mateship and collective response to hardship. It will survive and grow.
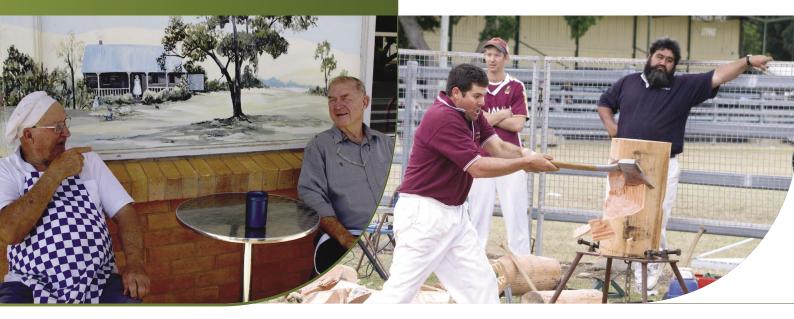
# Our Vision

## To be a vibrant, safe and family friendly community that attracts new residents, visitors and business opportunities

# Our Goals

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

- To develop and promote our community as a desirable and friendly place to stop, stay, experience and reside.

- To encourage greater use of our parks and open spaces by both residents and visitors.

- To continually enhance our lifestyle and employment options that attract younger families.

- To create an environment where young people experience new opportunities and feel supported and involved.

- To actively pursue new economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that strengthen and diversify our local economy.

- To encourage a strong, innovative, customer-focused, and collaborative business environment.

# Our Guiding Principles

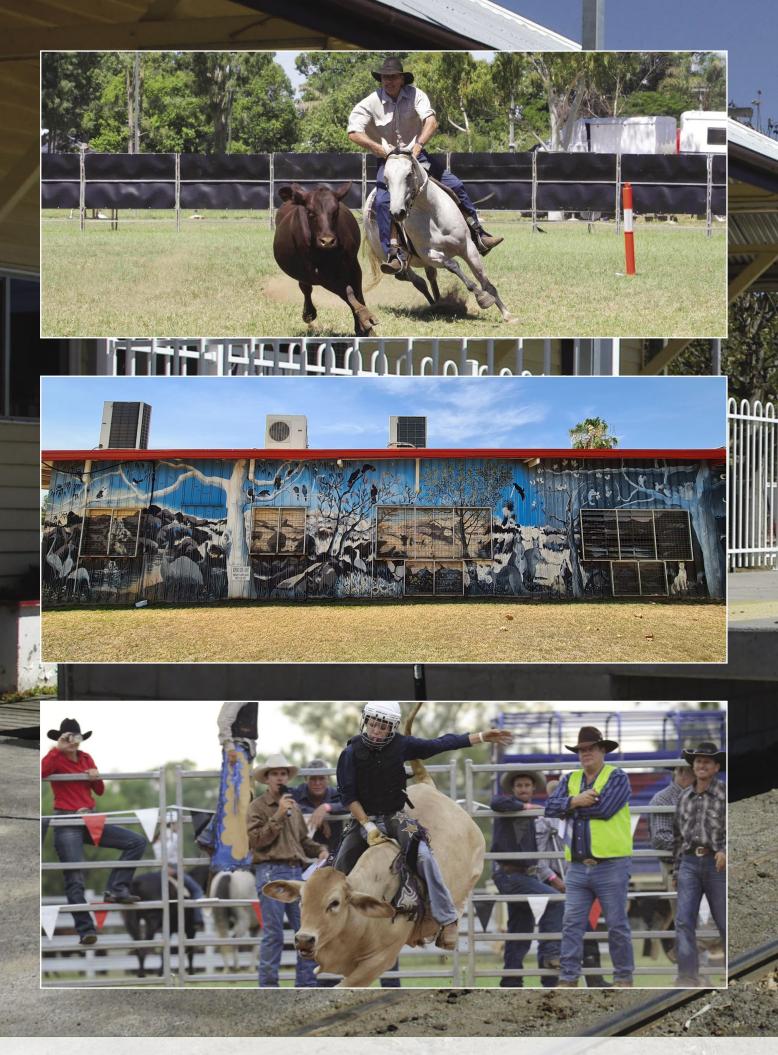The following seven guiding values provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives:

- **Sense of community** – ensuring all community members experience a deep sense of connection, inclusion and involvement.

- **Small town feeling** – retaining our unique sense of small town values and charm.

- **Active Citizenship** - fostering attitudes and behaviours that encourage greater community engagement, volunteerism and ownership.

- **Safety** – maintaining high levels of community safety, low crime rate and wellbeing.

- **Pride** – encouraging pride and times of celebration relating to our heritage, uniqueness and achievements.

- R**espect for heritage** – appreciating our unique heritage, stories and traditions and their importance in community and economic development.

- **Commitment to business excellence** - nurturing attitudes and behaviours that result in outstanding business practices.

# Our Challenges

Like many inland small towns, Alpha is experiencing population and service decline. The community faces a set of challenges which this Community Action Plan and local resilience seek to reverse:

- Impact of drought and COVID-19.
- Social isolation and impact on mental health.
- Main highway bypassing the town's commercial area.
- Unattractive town entrances.
- Lack of travelling public stopping in town and visiting the main street.
- Population and business loss.
- Ageing population.
- Loss of our young people and school population (halved in last 20 years).
- Lack of recreational options for teenagers.
- Lack of local employment opportunities.
- Online shopping, small customer base and lack of support for local businesses.
- Volunteer fatigue and declining community engagement.
- Local business practices and low level of digital awareness.
- Poor connectivity.
- Flood prone nature of town – floods in 1990, 2010, 2011.
- Deteriorating state of the town murals.
- Limited hours of the swimming pool.
- Lack of local doctor.

> " One of the only places you can still go to bed and feel safe.
> Rob ARNOLD
>
> Alpha is a critical link in the economy of the Barcaldine Regional Council
> and integral to the social success of our Region. A friendly, organised and
> inclusive community with an enormous ability to surmount any and all
> challenges thrown its way, Alpha will continue to be a vital hub for the
> future in the broader Central/Central Western Community.
> Sean DILLON
>
> Alpha is a great and accommodating community that is very supportive
> of our Police and other local agencies. The town is one of the friendliest I
> have worked in, in over 30 years of Policing. "
> Sgt Brian SMITH

# Our Assets

## Social Networks

- Show Society.
- Jockey Club.
- Isolated Children's Association.
- Historical Society,
- Golf Club.
- Rodeo Club.
- Swimming Club.
- Men's Shed.
- Churches - Catholic, Anglican, Uniting.
- Football Club
- Beat the Blues Project

## People

- Rural lifestyle and small town values and charm.
- Strong sense of community.
- Friendliness and welcoming community.
- Safety and low crime rate.
- Renowned arts people like Luke Roberts, Jane Neville-Rolfe and Isobel Hoch spent time living in Alpha.

## Physical

- Scenic rural land farming landscapes.
- Heritage buildings- Town Hall, Railway Station, hotel, churches.
- Settler park and its facilities- children's play equipment, skate park, BBQ facilities and toilet facilities.
- Sportsground complex with meeting facilities.
- Racecourse complex.
- Showgrounds complex.
- Location on Capricorn Highway and popular stopping point between Rockhampton and Longreach.
- 1-1.5 hour proximity to regional centres - towns of Barcaldine, Emerald, Clermont and Tambo.
- Belyando River.
- 25 metre swimming pool.
- Entrance to the Central Highlands.
- Netball and Tennis courts.
- Walking tracks and new bridge and its connection to a tragic rail accident in 1941.
- Surplus housing.
- Gym

# Our Assets

## Institutions

- Barcaldine Regional Council presence and Library.
- Hospital and community health services.
- Police.
- Education - State School.
- Day Care and Kindergarten.
- Emergency services – QFES, SES, Rural Fire Brigade, Ambulance.
- Queensland Rail.

## Economic

- Alpha District Tourism & Development Association INC.
- One of the largest cattle producing districts in Queensland.
- Tourism sector- hotel/motel, caravan and villa park, Golf Club meals.
- Retail sector- supermarket, pharmacy, post office, cafes, hardware, newsagency, craft shop.
- Service sector- hairdresser, two service stations and roadhouses, mechanical repairs, concrete supplier.
- Manufacturing sector- metal fabrication.
- Award winning Snow's Bakery.
- Rowley Robert's Visitor Centre.
- Race Day attracts up to 3500 visitors and the annual show 800 attendees.
- Location in the heart of the Galilee Basin mining precinct.
- Local coal deposits.
- Mobile Home Waste Dump Point.

## Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

The Name 'Alpha' was taken from the Greek word meaning 'the beginning'.

- Race meeting
- Rail heritage and Railway Station and Goods Shed.
- Events- 3 Markets a year, Campdraft, Cricket Day, Race Day, Annual Show, Christmas Tree, Rodeo, Golf Open,
- Known as the 'Town of Murals'- Mural trail involving 28 murals.
- Known as 'The Gateway to the West'.
- Tivoli Museum and its collection of memorabilia.
- Fossilised Forest Sculpture collection.
- Alpha Native Gardens.
- Beauty of the district inspired the visiting artist Harriet NevilleRolfe to paint the famous painting 'Breakfast at Alpha'.
- Jane Neville-Rolfe Gallery.
- Alpha Dip Yards.
- Alpha Cemetery.
- Connection to explorer, Major Thomas Mitchell.
- Heritage of the beef industry.
- Diversity of flora and fauna in the district.
- Outback Mates scheme – local identities who are ambassadors for the town.
- Town's streets named after famous poets.

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme One
## CBD Improvement

### ACTIONS

**1**

1. **Undertake immediate physical improvements including-**
   - Repainting existing concrete benches and concrete planters.
   - Erect a shed to house oversize chess pieces.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

2. **Develop and implement a 'CBD Beautification Plan' which includes-**
   - Auditing existing state.
   - Rejuvenating garden beds, nature strips and planter boxes.
   - Refreshing signage.
   - Creating more seating areas.
   - Enhancing heritage features.

   **Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing**

3. **Strengthen the 'Outback Mates' scheme.**

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

4. **Foster greater 'streetlife feel' through –**
   - More business activity on pavements.
   - More mainstreet community events.
   - More alfresco dining.
   - Encouraging food and coffee shops to stay open longer and more regularly.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

### LEAD GROUP

**Barcaldine Regional Council**
**Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc**

### OTHER PARTNERS

**Business community**
**Historical Society**
**Rural Aid**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Two
## Settler Park Development

**ACTIONS**

2

1. **Instigate the formulation of a three-year Park Development Plan by identifying and utilising appropriate professional assistance.**

2. **Undertake immediate improvements to existing structures, including-**
   - Fabricate and install raised community garden structures.
   - Improve the stance of the bull sculpture.
   - Paint existing wire sculptures.
   - Purchase and install a nine-hole frisbee golf area within the Park.
   - Develop a well-defined walking trail zigzagging throughout the Park.
   - Develop and implement an "Adopt a Garden" scheme for greater involvement and ownership by local groups and families in the Park's beautification and maintenance.
   - Install a set of plaques and artifacts along the walking trail to illustrate the heritage of the district.
   - Construct a carpark area on site of the former derelict house.
   - Develop a covered area with tables and seating.
   - Develop a roundabout garden for caravans and tourists.
   **Timeframe: Immediate to short term**

3. **Build a toilet block consisting of mother's room, shower and disability toilets.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to longterm**

4. **Increase the number of barbed wire sculpturers.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to longterm**

5. **Implement a bike track.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to longterm**

6. **Design and construct an amphitheatre.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to longterm**

7. **Design and implement a timber maze.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to longterm**

**LEAD GROUP**

**Barcaldine Regional Council**
**Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc**

**OTHER PARTNERS**

**Men's Shed**
**Historical Society**
**Local artists**
**Rural Aid**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Three
## Mural Trail Enhancement

### ACTIONS

**3**

1. **Undertake a 'condition and refreshment' audit of the 28 murals and Mural Trail.**
   - Upgrade and publish a 'Mural Walking Trail' flyer.
   - Create a Mural Hub starting point for the Trail.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

2. **Seek funding and artist support to undertake a systematic refreshment of the Mural Trail.**

   **Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing**

3. 5. **Develop seating and signage associated with the Mural Trail**

   **Timeframe: Short term**

### LEAD GROUP

**Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc**

### OTHER PARTNERS

**Barcaldine Regional Council**
**Business Community**

## Theme Four
## Youth Retention & Attraction

### ACTIONS

**4**

1. **Formulate a 'Youth Retention and Attraction Plan' that focuses on –**
   - Enhancing meaningful child and youth civic engagement.
   - Increasing youth recreation options.
   - Identifying local youth training and jobs options.
   - Identifying youth leadership opportunities.
   - Maintaining regular contact with young people after they leave the community.
   - Implementing a campaign to target the return of the 25-40-year-old cohort.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

2. **Establish an after-school youth drop-in centre.**
   **Timeframe: Medium to long term**

3. 3. **Investigate additional youth recreation options including greater use of swimming pool facility and a possible "Rage Cage" facility.**
   **Timeframe: Immediate**

### LEAD GROUP

**Barcaldine Regional Council**

### OTHER PARTNERS

**Alpha School,**
**Sporting Clubs**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Five
## Tourism Development

### ACTIONS

5

1. **Formulate a comprehensive 'Tourism Action Plan' which incorporates key elements, including-**
   - Auditing existing tourism product.
   - Identifying opportunities for existing tourism product enhancement
   - Building on the calendar of town events.
   - Identifying and developing new tourism product, including building on the horse and racing heritage and the beef industry.
   - Enhancing marketing, customer service, town storytelling and operator networking.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

2. **Establish physical infrastructure that enhances visitor appeal including –**
   - Creating interesting Alpha 'Selfie Spots' including main street.
   - Locating a tourism flyer stand in every business.

   **Timeframe: Short to medium term**

3. **Renovate Museum facility including-**
   - Levelling of the floor and general repairs.
   - Upgrading entrance step.
   - Improving physical appearance.
   - Enhancing artifact layout and interpretation.
   - Cataloguing collection.

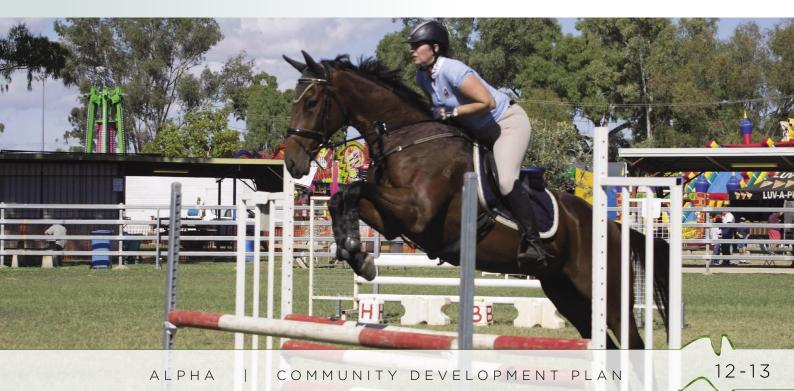   **Timeframe: Immediate to short term**

### LEAD GROUP

**Barcaldine Regional Council
Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc**

### OTHER PARTNERS

**Historical Society
Business community**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Six
## Signage & Entrances

**ACTIONS**

**6**

1. **Design and implementation of a 'Signage/Town Entrance Strategy' including-**
   - Developing an agreed town identity/brand.
   - Undertaking of an audit of existing signage and entrances.
   - Formulating and implementing of standardised, quality, and attractive signage within the mainstreet and all town entrances.
   - Removing or updating of old outdated signs.
   - Designing and implementing attractive and welcoming town entrance statements.
   - Erecting a 6m x 12m gate advertising Alpha as the 'Gateway to the West'
   - Erecting a billboard advertising 'what's in and happening' in Alpha.

   **Timeframe: Short term**

**LEAD GROUP**

Barcaldine Regional Council
Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc

**OTHER PARTNERS**

Business Community

## Theme Seven
## Community Structure Enhancements

**ACTIONS**

**7**

3. **Enhance Golf Club building including -**
   - Prepare and paint western exterior wall of the clubhouse.
   - Construct new rail screening to western side of outdoor area.
   - Affix branding board to eastern wall of outside area.
   - Repair and install new swings in children's play area.

   **Timeframe: Immediate**

2. **Repair and improve the Pottery Shed at the Showgrounds.**
   **Timeframe: Immediate**

**LEAD GROUP**

Alpha Golf Club
Alpha Showgrounds Committee

**OTHER PARTNERS**

Rural Aid

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Eight
## Business Retention & Expansion

**ACTIONS**

**8**

1. Evolve a local entrepreneurial development support eco-system that can facilitate and assist local enterprise ideas and opportunities to become a reality through connection to mentoring, workspace, information, networks and finance.
   *Timeframe: Short to medium term*

2. Actively explore, through feasibility studies, new economic opportunities that build upon community assets
   *Timeframe: Short to medium term.*

3. Instigate a 'Buy-local Campaign'.
   *Timeframe: Immediate*

4. Develop a local customer service program for local business employees that incorporates an 'Ask Me, I am A Local' theme.
   *Timeframe: Short term*

**LEAD GROUP**

Barcaldine Regional Council
Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc

**OTHER PARTNERS**

Business Community

## Theme Nine
## Connectivity Developments

**ACTIONS**

**9**

1. Review and identify town and district connectivity challenges, resulting in a Connectivity Development Action Plan.

2. Identify upgrade funding sources.

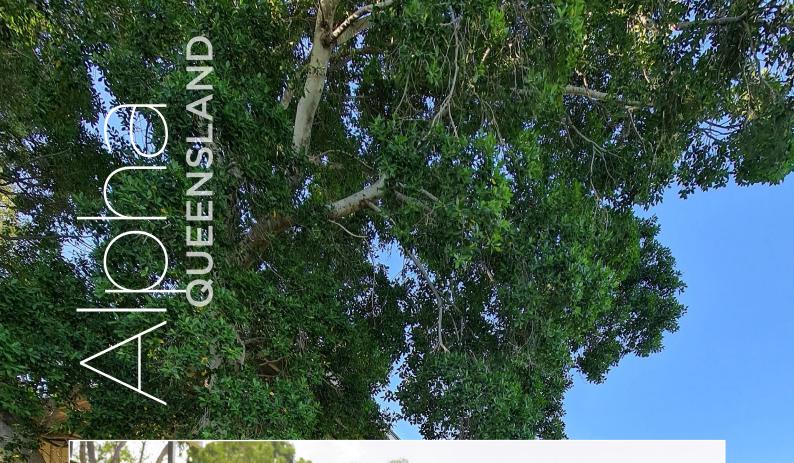3. Develop and implement Plan.
   *Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing*

**LEAD GROUP**

Barcaldine Regional Council

**OTHER PARTNERS**

Alpha District Tourism & Development Association Inc
Business Community

Alpha
QUEENSLAND

The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Federal Member for Maranoa
Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Certificate of Congratulations

10 Towns Committee

Community Event of the Year
10 Towns - Alpha

Barcaldine Regional Council

Australia Day Awards - 2021

The Hon David Littleproud MP