

MONTO

Community Development Plan



August 2020

Foreword

The thing that makes a place a home is the people. Monto is the home of a diverse community of people. From the quintessential farmer to the more contemporary personas – and a full spectrum in between. They exist in one town; in one community we call home.

There is something special about Monto, apart from its abounding natural beauty and feeling of belonging. There is always a connection to the little Burnett town that reaches far and wide. We believe Monto really is the centre of the universe.

“ When we have the courage to walk into our story and own it, we get to write the ending. ”
Brené Brown

Monto has reached the moment to embrace change. Acknowledging the past and bringing together collective wisdom and energy to move into deeper connection and a prosperous future. This Community Development Action Plan envelopes a grass roots desire to explore what it means to be a small, rural, Queensland community in these modern times of change and challenge. It is a real, living document and an action plan that will adapt and change to the community landscape and cultural developments.

We extend much gratitude to Rural Aid for the opportunity for a ‘town makeover’ which enabled our community to be graced with the expertise and wisdom of Peter Kenyon. We are grateful for the time Peter spent listening and facilitating what is in the minds and the hearts of the Monto people.

Our deepest appreciation goes to each and every Monto community member who choose to make their home here and contributed towards the conversations, ideas and knowledge sharing in the development of this plan. Those who have deep historical connections and those who have been drawn to the community for a fresh start. You make Monto unique.

Those who have the courage to express ideas, to live aligned with their values and lead their community in an authentic way are truly inspiring and Monto possesses many of these leaders. Thank you to each and every one who co-created this Community Development Action Plan.

May our whole community lead Monto into a richer, healthier community with people who can solve one’s own problems and write the story of their collective future.

Melinda Jones & Carly Baker-Burnham
MONTO

Acknowledgements



The formulation of this Community Development Action Plan was initiated and funded by Rural Aid as part of their ‘Our Towns’ Initiative, of which the town of Monto was a winner. Facilitation of the community engagement process and preparation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and assisted by Tracy Alder and Jen Curnow-Trotter from Rural Aid and passionate Monto residents Carly Baker-Burnham (The Rex Monto) and Melinda Jones (Monto Magic). Special thanks to so many Monto community members and staff from Burnett Catchment Care Association & North Burnett Regional Council, who gave so generously of their time, wisdom and skills.

Finally, the Plan acknowledges the traditional custodians of country for the Monto community – the Gooreng Gooreng people and their significant contribution to our District past, present and future.

Our Story



The Monto District is situated approximately 200 kilometres west of the coastal cities of Bundaberg and Rockhampton, and 477 km north west from Brisbane. The District comprises the key agricultural service town of Monto, and a set of five attractive villages: namely Mungungo, Mulgildie, Bancroft, Kalpowar and Moonford.

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, Monto and surrounding area was home to people from the Gooreng Gooreng, Wakka Wakka & Willi Willi Aboriginal language groups.

Monto is one of the newest towns in Queensland, having come into existence as recently as 1924 when, under the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley Land Development Scheme, larger properties were resumed and prime agricultural land was provided in smaller lots to soldiers who had returned from World War I. 1.4 million acres of the large properties were resumed by the Queensland government to create the town. The vision was for a vast and productive agricultural settlement supporting a population of 50,000 people.

Monto was also the first town in Queensland to be designed under town planning techniques. In 1926 the state government designed Monto as a “Garden City” and the first town buildings were constructed, many in an art deco style. In 1928 the railway connected the district to Maryborough. The Monto Shire Council was established in 1932 but was forcibly amalgamated by the State Government in 2008, and today is the most northerly town in the North Burnett Regional Council.

Farming activities have always been the mainstay of the local economy. Current major industries of Monto include beef, pork, fodder, pulses, grains, tree nuts, milk production and timber. Historically however, Monto was once a significant dairy producer, with the construction of the Monto Dairy Factory in 1929. However, there has been a dramatic change over the last 50 years. In 1964, there were over 420 dairy farms - today only three remain. Due to dairy deregulation the factory closed in 2001. A similar story has occurred regarding the number of piggeries in the district with the removal of import tariffs on cheap pork imports, which has resulted in a reduction of smaller piggeries and large expansion of a select few.

Tourism is increasingly becoming an important element to the local economy, with the district home to a fascinating array of folklore, buildings, and a unique natural environment. The impressive Art Deco style Monto Town Hall was built in 1939-40 by Hall and Phillips Architects. Hall was one of Brisbane’s most successful architects of the early 20th century. He also designed the Brisbane City Hall, Tattersall’s Club and Sandgate Town Hall. The natural jewel of the District is the Cania Gorge National Park - within this 2931 hectare park there are a variety of eight walking tracks ranging in length from 300m to 22km, weird and wonderful rock shapes, more than 150 different types of plant community and more than 90 species of birdlife.

Our Vision

A vibrant, family friendly and safe community, embracing traditions and contemporary practices in order to create progressive and community driven action for all generations to live, work, play and age well.

Our Goals

- Actively promoting our community as a lifestyle, work, business, investment and tourist destination
- Creating the environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider returning to our community for work, enterprise development, family and lifestyle opportunities
- Enhancing levels of local business service, confidence, viability and networking
- Actively pursuing new economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that strengthens and diversifies our local economy and local job options
- Pursuing key road and infrastructure improvements
- Enhancing our community capacity by continually building and diversifying its local leadership base
- Valuing and strengthening community collaboration, partnerships, collective action, volunteerism and active citizenship
- Maintaining our strong sporting and cultural traditions, clubs and facilities



Our Guiding Principles

The following 6 guiding principles provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives –

- **collaboration & positive mindset** – committing to a high level of community and stakeholder cooperation, partnership, and networking, as well as fostering community attitudes that embrace change, proactive 'can-do' behaviours, optimism and hopefulness
- **economic & business growth** – facilitating and supporting a strong, innovative, customer-focused, profitable and collaborative business environment as well as promoting practices that support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community
- **respect for heritage and traditions** – appreciating our unique heritage, stories, traditions and cultures and their importance in community and economic development
- **community-led** – believing in our community members as architects and builders of their social and economic future, through intergenerational weaving and encouraging the involvement of community residents of all ages, and respecting the diversity of opinions and ideas, while retaining our unique sense of village-life, country feel, safety, freedom, community connection and family orientation
- **respect for agriculture, our natural environment and rural landscapes** – protecting and understanding the current and potential importance that agriculture contributes to the local, regional and national economy, as well as valuing our unique natural environment and rural landscapes
- **embracing new opportunities** – building upon local assets, capacities and creativity; and facilitating opportunities and experiences that enable all residents to see and experience their community as a place of opportunity



Our Challenges

Monto is not unique when it comes to challenges faced by small rural communities. There are many issues shared, however there are some unique to this community.

Over time, Monto has experienced problems attributed to typical rural decline and social implications, namely -

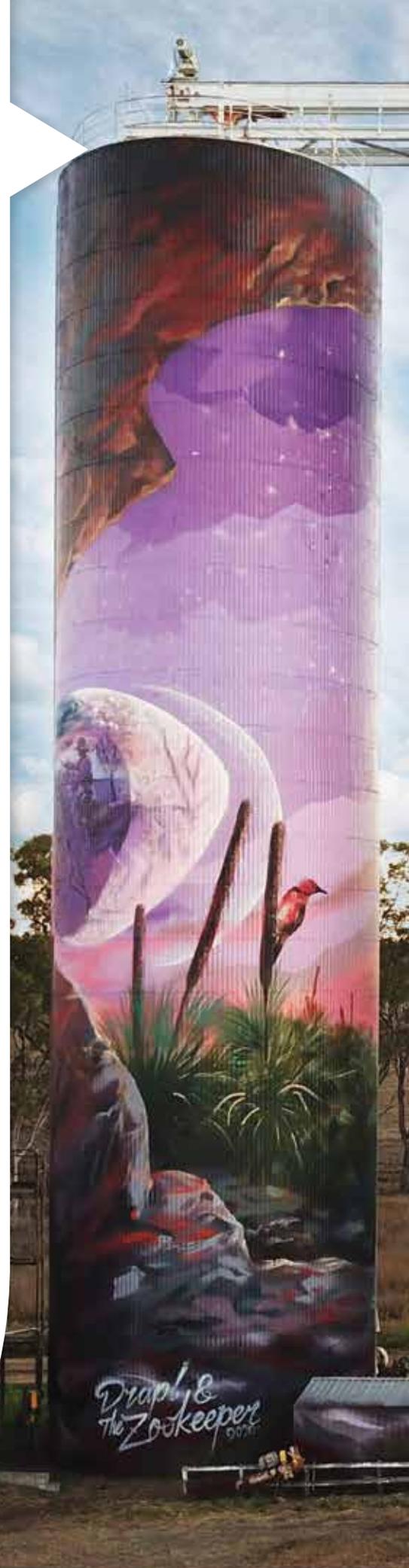
- Population decline
- Loss of local services, tradespeople & traditional industry jobs
- Ageing population - declining youth demographic
- Impact of online shopping and lack of support for local business
- Affordable labour (competition with mining industry and FIFO appeal)
- Seasonal tourism
- Limited educational resources to access specialist activities and support services
- Insurance compliance and red tape for community groups
- Declining levels of community engagement and volunteerism
- Lack of youth engagement and boredom
- 'Silo' building attitudes and lack of group collaboration
- Strong traditional attitudes - 'It has always been done this way'
- Limited childcare support

Key agricultural challenges -

- Increased cost of farming land
- Farming energy and water costs
- Freight, transport and communication costs
- Labour shortages and lack of youth retention in the agriculture sector

Key environmental challenges -

- Impact of ongoing drought and flood
- Lack of infrastructure like shade in public green spaces and main street
- Poor signage
- Poor footpaths and pathways
- Unattractive town entrances





Our Assets

People

- Rural lifestyle
- Friendliness and welcoming community
- Child friendly community
- Community can-do and self belief spirit
- Safety and low crime rate
- Great place to age well
- Large variety of groups in the district

Physical

- The five villages, Mungungo, Mulgildie, Bancroft, Kalpowar & Moonford
- Small community halls - Mungungo, Mulgildie & Kalpowar
- Scenic rural land/farming landscapes
- Close location to a number of major centres. Approx 250km to Gladstone, Rockhampton, Bundaberg
- Upper Burnett River Catchment
- Cania George National Park (22,000-hectare park) and Cania Dam- strong Aboriginal presence dating back 19,000 years
- Kroombit Tops National Park
- Three Moon Creek
- Wuruma Dam
- Walking trails & tours, 4WD self-drive tours
- Coomingleh State Forest (lookout) and Kalpowar State Forest
- Cannindah ancient coral reef
- Hurdle Gully Lookout and Hurdle Gully Scrub
- Rail Corridor - track trail, tunnels, railway station
- Tellebang Mountain
- Swimming Pool
- Parks - Memorial, Apex Park. Jaycee Skate Park
- Showgrounds complex
- Monal & Splinter Creek
- Mulgildie Sports Ground & Rodeo arena
- Monto Combined Sports Complex
- Mungungo Sports Grounds
- Monto Botanical Gardens Landcare

- Famous sons and daughters - Kenny Russell (famous QLD jockey), Chilla Seeney (famous rodeo rough/horse bronc rider), Mal Meninga & Greg Heading (Rugby League), Michael Caton (Actor), Gil Jamieson (Renowned Australian Artist), Jeff Seeney (Former Deputy Premier), Mark Steketee (Australian cricketer), Prof Megan Davis (Aboriginal Australian activist & Human Rights Lawyer), Len 'Rusty' Cook Darryl Norwood & Harry Caine (Boxers), Arthur Hamblin & Chris Postle (Artist), Daphne Fancutt & Wayne Hampson (Tennis), Martin Kent (Cricketer), Mark Ostwald (touch football), Ryan Seeds (Campdrafting), Courtney Winfield-Hill (Cricket/football), Alan Heidrich (QLD Judo)

Social Networks

- Service groups - Rotary, Lions, CWA (X3), Masonic Lodge, Order of the Eastern Star, Men's Shed
- Religious groups - Uniting, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Jehovah Witnesses, Monto Christian Ministry, Seventh Day Adventists
- Landcare groups
- Sporting clubs - netball, cricket, rugby league, touch football, little athletics, pistol, rifle, pony, tennis, bowls, golf, race, polo cross
- Youth groups - Girl Guides, Australian Army Cadet Unit, Blue Light, Presbyterian youth group
- Cultural groups - quilters(X2), Historical Society, arts group, Monto Instrumental Community Ensemble, Monto Singers, old time dance groups (Mulgildie School of Dance - Hall & Mungungo Arts - Hall), Monto Gardeners
- Playgroup, visiting playgroup
- Monto & District Show Society
- The Rex Monto Limited
- Monto Magic Tourism Action Group
- LiveBetter - Monto Neighbourhood Centre
- Cadets
- Impact4Monto
- Montonians Luncheon

Our Assets

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- The Gooreng Gooreng, Wakka Wakka & Willi Willi people and their culture and attachment to Country
- Three Moon legends
- Monto Three Moon Historical & Cultural Complex
- Arts Group and Professional and amateur artists
- Legendary Mulgildie Bunyip Hole and Sculpture
- Monto & district art and mural trail
- 150 species of birds in the Cania National Park
- Lister Street Parkland and Artwalk
- Monto & District Historical Society and Museum Reserve
- Monto Art Deco Town Hall. Other Art Deco buildings
- The Rex Theatre - Art deco Theatre
- Historic Monal Goldfields and Cemetery
- Events - Wuruma Dam Fishing Competition, Monto Annual Race day, Cania Dam Fishing Competition, Cattle Shows, Monto Annual Cattle Drive and Trail Ride, Monto Silver Buckle Challenge & Campdraft, Monto Polocrosse, Agricultural Show, Mulgildie Campdraft, Monto Country Craft Markets, Monto Spring Markets & Flower Show, Mulgildie Rodeo, Festival of the Three Moons (previously known as Monto Dairy Festival), Mungungo V's The World Cricket Event
- Statues - Ken Russell Jockey at Lions Park Monto
- Rail heritage - Kalpower Tunnels and Monto Railway Precinct
- Beautiful Betsy plane crash story and site Kroombit Tops
- Beautiful Betsy replica at Monto & District Historical Society and Museum Reserve
- Valued past & present community elders - Beryl Bleys, Ken Gleadhill, Phyliss Lea, Glen Baker, Graeme Sanderson, Harold 'Spook' Ware, John Lynn, Bruce Jamieson, Tommy Goody, Jan Darlington, Carol Larsen, Kev Hockey, Warren McLachlan, Alan McDonald, Adrian Kummerfeld, Lyn Woodall, Les Hotz, Joan Heilbronn, Nancy Peardon

Institutions

- North Burnett Region Council
- Ridgehaven - 36 beds, 10 units
- Police station
- Monto State High School, Monto State Primary School, Mulgildie State Primary School, St Therese Catholic Primary School & Monto Kindergarten
- Hospital and health services
- Medical Centre
- Family day care
- Emergency services - QFES, SES, Rural Fire Brigade, Ambulance
- NDIS partner in the community and service providers
- St Vincent De Pauls.
- Translink service
- ADRA secondhand store

Economy

- North Burnett Regional Council, Burnett Catchment Care Association, Monto Magic Tourism Action Group, Ag Force, Monto Growers Group, Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation, Regional Development Australia, Wide Bay Burnett Region of Councils
- A few existing dairies
- Expanding piggery industries
- Numerous viable grazing & cropping properties
- Service sector- doctors, taxi, blue care, Ridgehaven (aged care facility)
- Retail sector- banks, post office, supermarkets, pharmacy, fuel outlets, butcher, clothing shops, cafes
- Manufacturing sector- steel fabrication, building and construction
- Tourism sector- three caravan parks, RV stopover, four hotels, two motels
- Two local butchers with their own abattoir
- Pioneer Cottage Information Centre
- Logging, sawmills

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

Population Attraction & Lifestyle

ACTIONS

1

- 1. Development of a 'Population Attraction and Lifestyle Campaign'** that especially targets former youth residents, city-based families seeking a great environment to raise kids and ageing city residents seeking that ideal village lifestyle including-
 - Formulate a comprehensive plan
 - Develop and implement a media strategy
 - Collect and disseminate stories of why people came to or returned to Monto
 - Create a welcoming committee, strategy and kit
 - Target former youth residents with an attachment to the town (potential 'Home Comers') - regular communication about 'opportunities in their hometown', organisation of school reunions

Timeframe: 2024-25

- 2. Design and implementation of a local job and income generation strategy,** including-
 - Local traineeships campaign
 - Emphasise 'localism' in job appointments
 - Identify and support a local enterprise facilitator to develop localised enterprise ideas to become income generation realities, through linkage to mentors, workspace, funding options, training
 - Investigate training and open learning options

Timeframe: 2022-25

- 3. Securing funding for a school music program across all schools equally**

Timeframe: 2021

- 4. Enhancement of youth recreation options**

Timeframe: 2021 and onwards

LEAD GROUP

**Monto Magic Tourism Action Group
LiveBetter (Neighbourhood Centre)**

OTHER PARTNERS

**North Burnett Regional Council
Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation
Burnett Catchment Care Association
Monto State School
Monto State High School
Builyan State School
Mulgildie State School
Abercorn State School
St Therese School**

Theme Two

Tourism Development

ACTIONS

2

- 1. Formulation and implementation of a Monto District Tourism Plan and branding strategy** including –
 - Identify points of difference, identity and brand
 - Celebrate and build on the appeal of the small villages
 - Build upon the Three Moon legends and the Bunyip story as marketing campaigns
 - Develop the Silos Mural Project and an Art Trail
 - Utilise heritage photographic material in public spaces
 - Ensure better coordination of events
 - Develop Indigenous tourism products
 - Revamp walks at Cania, making them more accessible to all abilities
 - Establish tourist drives in the Kalpowar State Forest
 - Celebrate & promote our local villages, localities and significant historical sites
 - Investigate Ag Tourism opportunities
 - Develop a mailbox art scheme
 - Install fibre-glass cows through the community
- 2. Design and implementation of a signage/town entrance strategy** including-
 - Undertake an audit of existing signage
 - Prepare and implement a coordinated signage strategy on all town entrances
 - Develop and implement a road design and signage plan to attract visitors into the main street
 - Enhance entrances to towns with botanical gardens, trees and shrubs
 - Use trees and shrubs to screen industrial sites
 - Remove or update old outdated signs on highway

Timeframe: 2021 - 2025

LEAD GROUP

**Monto Magic Tourism Action Group
North Burnett Regional Council – regional focus**

OTHER PARTNERS

**Landcare Monto
Monto Rate Payers Association,
Kalpowar Hall Committee
Mungungo School of Arts Inc,
Mulgildie Hall Committee
Tourism related businesses,
Accommodation businesses
Burnett Catchment Care Association**

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Mainstreet Appeal & Development

ACTIONS



1. Develop and Implement a 'Newton Street Beautification Plan'

including -

- Prepare a plan based on the 2006 'Progress Monto' document
- Identify, plan and implement key works as part of the 'Rural Aid Town Makeover Week.'
- Beautify and green with significant actions and low maintenance gardens
- Create child and people friendly spaces
- Construct more shelter, shade and seating
- Foster greater streetlife feel - more business activity on pavements, more mainstreet community events, more alfresco dining
- Develop a plan and commitment with local businesses to utilise Council's main street funding program
- Design and install a 'selfie' photograph attraction
- Instigate artworks and sculptures
- Slow the traffic
- Develop and implement ideas for better use of the iconic Town Hall. Night lighting/tours

Timeframe: 2020 - 2025

2. Undertake the restoration of the Rex Theatre as the town's key community hub.

- Formulate a 'Concept, Financial and Works Plan' for the evolution of the Rex Theatre into a community hub space
- Identify funding options for implementation, including employment of a Coordinator
- Undertake necessary restoration work
- Introduce a calendar of events and activities as spaces become functional
- Convert street front apartments into enterprise workspaces
- Convert street front shops into gallery, information and display areas

Timeframe: 2020 - 2025

LEAD GROUP

**The Rex Monto
Monto Magic Tourism Action Group**

OTHER PARTNERS

**Monto Businesses and Community Groups
Monto Landcare,
Monto State School
Monto State High School
Builyan State School,
Mulgildie State School
Abercorn State School & St Therese Schools,
Monto Garden Club
North Burnett Regional Council**

Theme Four

Physical Environment Enhancement

ACTIONS



- 1. Develop a 'Green Space Strategy'** including –
 - Undertake an audit of local parks and degree of shade
 - Develop a plan for creating more shade and greening in Monto
 - Develop a quality child friendly play area and oasis accessible to all abilities – trees, shade, equipment, fencing, barbecue area
 - Create a community garden

Timeframe: 2020 - 2024

- 2. Build an undercover arena for horse events at the Showgrounds**

Timeframe: 2025

- 3. Develop an Enhancement plan for the Pool** including –

- more shade
- extend pool hours
- heat for winter
- build water park features

Timeframe: 2023 - 2025

- 4. Develop a 'Footpath Development Strategy'** with priorities being – around Ridgehaven and between Ridgehaven and the hospital, Mulgildie, hospital side of railway and Lister St

Timeframe: 2021 - 2025

LEAD GROUP

**North Burnett Regional Council – regionalised focus & infrastructure owner
Monto Magic Tourism Action Group**

OTHER PARTNERS

Monto & District Show Society, Swimming Pool Lessee, Monto Swimming Club, Landcare Monto, Burnett Catchment Care Association, Local & Visiting playgroups

Theme Five

Business Retention, Expansion, Attraction & Creation

ACTIONS



- 1. Continue the newly created 'Support/Buy Local' Campaign** including the tangible benefits of spending locally

Timeframe: 2020 and onwards

- 2. Instigate actions to create 'referral lines' between local businesses** and focus on actions to enhance **business collaboration**

Timeframe: 2021 - 2025

- 3. Target the attraction of tradespeople to Monto**

Timeframe: 2020 - 2025

- 4. Lobby/Attract key medical services to Monto** – dentist, speech, OT, physiotherapist, local birthing facility, local dialysis unit, mental health, allied health, counselling and support services.

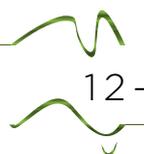
Timeframe: 2020- 2025

LEAD GROUP

Monto Magic Tourism Action Group

OTHER PARTNERS

North Burnett Regional Council, APM - NDIS, Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO), Monto & District Rate Payers Association, State Member for Callide, Federal Member for Flynn, Monto & District Businesses



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Six

Community Building Initiatives

ACTIONS



1. Advocate for a Monto Community Board to return some level of local community ownership, delegation and decision-making and well as annual review of community plan

Timeframe: 2020 – 2021 and onwards

2. Instigate mechanisms for community to come together more to celebrate, share ideas, express aspirations and plan for the future

Timeframe: 2021 and onwards

3. Improve internal communications to ensure everyone knows what is happening in the district and what other groups are doing

- Facebook page specifically focused on community events
- Improve Monto website
- Instigate a community newspaper/newsletter

Timeframe: 2020 – 2021 and onwards

4. Develop initiatives to grow community involvement, connection and pride including –

- Identify and support whole of ‘Community Connectors’ that link residents and groups together as a united community through leadership development
- Promote key community building values- positivity, less gossip, welcoming spirit and volunteering
- Hold more family friendly events

Timeframe: 2021 and onwards

5. Develop a ‘Youth Engagement Strategy’ including –

- Instigate ‘hangout spaces’ for teenagers
- Instigate initiatives that provide young people with more opportunities for their voices to be heard and their leadership capacity developed

Timeframe: 2021 and onwards

6. Identify and implement possible community transport options

Timeframe: 2021 - 2025

7. Establish a community gym

Timeframe: 2021 and onwards

LEAD GROUP

**Monto Magic Tourism Action Group
The Rex Monto**

OTHER PARTNERS

North Burnett Regional Council, LiveBetter (Neighbourhood Centre), Monto Driving Force, Red Earth Community Foundation, Burnett Catchment Care Association

Theme Seven

Rail Corridor Development

ACTIONS



- 1. Develop and implement a 'Rail Trail' Strategy** including –
 - As Stage One, a cycling and walking trail from Mulgildie to Mungungo
 - Utilise tunnels as attraction
 - Develop outdoor fitness station
 - Develop walking track through railway cutting from school to railway
 - Install rails and hog back sleeps in a replica tunnel at the rail station precinct.

Timeframe: 2020 - 2025

LEAD GROUP

Monto Magic Tourism Action Group as Licence holder of Monto Railway siding & Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail

OTHER PARTNERS

**Landcare Monto
Kalpowar Hall Committee
Gladstone Regional Council
North Burnett Regional Council
Monto Grain Co-op and adjoining landholders to the rail corridor**

Theme Eight

Agriculture Sector Developments

ACTIONS



- 1. Strengthen the resourcing of the Burnett Catchment Group to support more farmer information, education and research initiatives** including more trials, study tours and a one site Information Hub

Timeframe: 2020 - 2025

- 2. Seek funding for a Coordinator for the Grower's Group**

Timeframe: 2021 - 2021

- 3. Establish a Grazier's Group**

Timeframe: 2020 - 2021

- 4. Construct new stable facilities and cattle sheds at Showgrounds**

Timeframe: 2021 - 2025

LEAD GROUP

**Burnett Catchment Care Association
Monto Growers Group**

OTHER PARTNERS

**Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation – with a regional focus
North Burnett Regional Council
Burnett Mary River Group,
Monto & District Show Society
Ag Force
Agriculture business owners**



This little town that prides itself for being a caring community with all the essentials I need, has been my home from my arrival aged 14 to now my 80th year. It has a heart and I love it dearly and am proud to call it home with so many wonderful friends who care.

Nancy Peardon

*“In one word what Monto means to us is “Home”
... we can't think of anywhere else we'd rather be.*

Monto has held endless opportunities for us! The country spirit shown in the community gives us reassurance to be able to live and raise our children here, and the support we have already received from the community helps us work harder and grow our business.

Luke & Tara Harm



Monto
QUEENSLAND