

10 May 2019

**NORTH WEST QUEENSLAND MAYORS UNITE TO BRING CAMPAIGN TO HERBERT**

Nine mayors from North West Queensland have united to fight for a fair regional deal, bringing their campaign to the electorate of Herbert with a clear message for candidates - a strong Townsville, needs a strong North West Queensland.

The mayors chose to meet in Townsville (9-10 May) inviting parties and candidates to take a final opportunity to formally respond to their request for a better regional deal before the Federal Election.

Carpentaria Shire Mayor, Jack Bawden, said North West communities have long felt forgotten by the political process and if these communities continue to be ignored, it will also hurt Townsville's efforts to build a better future.

"That's why we developed our Six-Point Plan and have called for a better regional deal. It's also why we have worked with Townsville Enterprise in alliance on some aspects of engagement with Canberra since the floods," he said.

"The election, as well as the close competition in Herbert, presents an important opportunity for all of us to have a louder voice. We know many people in Herbert do have sympathy with their neighbours and understand that a strong Townsville needs a strong region - not just as we recover from devastating flooding, but into the future.

"Our message is simple - if you haven't made up your mind this election, maybe how they treat us in this moment – your mates in the North West - might just help you decide. Either way please make sure that your preferred political party and their candidates are supporting all our communities.

Through tourism, beef exports, the North West minerals province and as the closest neighbouring administrative centre - the communities of the North West share a strong linkage and make a major regional economic contribution toward Townsville's desire and need to build a stronger future as well.

"Over the last six months, we have called on the Government, Opposition and Cross Bench to commit to our Six-Point Plan for a better regional deal. It's encouraging that during our visit to Townsville this week, the Coalition, Labor Party and minor parties have all provided varying levels of support for our Plan," Cr Bawden said.

"In our previous meetings, Labor party representatives had indicated in-principle support for our Plan. At yesterday's meeting we had a positive discussion with Labor Queensland Senator Murray Watt and welcome Labor's commitment to ongoing engagement with NWQROC and plans for regional investment - we look forward to upcoming announcements that will benefit our communities.

"Minister Matt Canavan, candidate for Herbert Phil Thompson OAM, and Senate candidate Susan McDonald represented the Coalition. We thank the Coalition for delivering written support for the broader aspirations of our Six-Point Plan. If re-elected, we look forward to working with a Coalition Government to deliver on their commitment to pursue further deals in regional Australia, which will include consideration of a regional deal for North West Queensland.

"Rounding out our agenda were meetings with candidates from Katter's Australian Party, United Australia Party and Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party parties. Should they be elected, their welcome support for our strategic Plan will help ensure whoever governs delivers as we move forward.

"Although we know our fight isn't over, our meetings with candidates over the past two days show that our strategic planning and ongoing engagement of politicians has delivered some positive results – we're making headway to deliver on the investment and commitment our region deserves," he said.

"From here, once we receive formal written responses from all the parties we have engaged with, we will finalise and make public our assessment of what they will do to deliver a strong North West, and ultimately a strong Townsville."



“Although we have received a generous response to the recent flood disaster, our Six-Point Plan goes to the heart of what our communities need to build a strong and sustainable future:

- *Fair funding for our beef, freight and tourism roads;*
- *A power policy for the real world including remote Australia;*
- *Investing in water infrastructure and dams;*
- *Building our productive regions with sustainable populations through immigration incentives and correct tax arrangements;*
- *Delivering first world telecommunications and connectivity; and*
- *Funding and delivering community services in a way that works for remote communities.*

“The North West injects billions into the national economy, almost three times more per capita than the rest of Queensland. An important contribution - too important to be ignored.

“The election isn’t the final word because we aren’t going away – but given the close contest in Herbert it has been an important opportunity – and maybe undecided locals will spare a thought for their regional neighbours.

“We are putting everybody on notice that we will continue to be vocal and will fight for our communities until we get a better deal for our communities. We aren’t going away and look forward to working closely with whoever forms government after 18 May,” Cr Bawden said.

Download the NWQROC Six-Point Plan at: [www.nwqroc.com.au/fairregionaldeal/](http://www.nwqroc.com.au/fairregionaldeal/)

Read the Coalition and KAP responses at: [www.nwqroc.com.au/fairregionaldeal/nwq-election-campaign-herbert/](http://www.nwqroc.com.au/fairregionaldeal/nwq-election-campaign-herbert/)

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