

South East Queensland: Australia's First Data Community

June 2021



Advocating for a Smart Region

Industry and community development are at the heart of the Committee for Brisbane's activities, with a focus on investment, infrastructure, environment, tourism and cultural development.

The Committee recognises the significant economic challenges facing South East Queensland, post-COVID-19, and believes the Smart Region initiatives presented in this Paper have the potential to be a foundational enabler of growth and investment, well into the future.

The Committee's support for a Smart Region – to be realised as Australia's first Data Community – is part of its role to promote the region and to achieve sustainable economic and lifestyle benefits for businesses and communities.

The projects set out in this Paper will support modelling (in reference to an "ambitious City Deal") in the joint Queensland Government and Council of Mayors (South East Queensland) document, *Transforming SEQ*¹, that "indicates the SEQ economy may be up to \$58 billion bigger than 'business as usual' if we ... turn the dial on our region's productivity and competitiveness".

We are advocating for the ethical and transparent capture and use of data to improve productivity and competitiveness and to benefit the lives of South East Queensland citizens and visitors. We are advocating for policies and actions to develop and support a bold, sustainable digital economy.

The Taskforce

This Paper was prepared by the South East Queensland Smart Region Taskforce, comprised of more than 30 Members of the Committee for Brisbane (see page 7)

Collectively, this group has significant experience across Australia and globally on Smart City policies and projects.

About the Committee for Brisbane

The Committee for Brisbane is an independent, not-for-profit organisation whose Vision is for greater Brisbane to be the world's most liveable place.

Established in 1958, for more than 60 years the Committee has been an influential, apolitical organisation that has provided strong advocacy for the city and region.

The Committee comprises more than 150 organisations, companies and individuals who are committed and motivated to create a better Greater Brisbane.

Statewide benefits

Because the Committee for Brisbane operates under a geographic brief (ie greater Brisbane/South East Queensland), the recommendations presented in this document focus on that region. In almost every circumstance, however, the ideas and aspirations are relevant for the whole State and easily transferable.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Committee For Brisbane acknowledges the First Nations People of the region and their continuing connection to and care of the land, waters and community of that region. We also pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Looking beyond South East Queensland, the proposals presented in this Paper would empower citizens, communities and small businesses to better participate in the digital economy.

All of Queensland should benefit from the ethical and transparent capture, access to and use of data.

Alignment with government policies and programs

The "Purpose", "Vision" and "South East Queensland Smart Region Legacy" presented in this document have been developed with a view to long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for South East Queensland by harnessing data to benefit the community.

Our proposal to create "Australia's first Data Community" supports the intent of Transforming SEQ¹:

- We want to ... deliver: Digitally enabled communities that connect our residents and businesses with information and the globe through faster, more reliable digital infrastructure. Similarly, we want to unlock more data to support greater innovation and more responsive decision-making.
- Establish SEQ as Australia's leading Smart Digital Region by ... taking a regionwide approach to data and digital connectivity.
- ... leverage our region's smart cities' strengths to achieve the objective of establishing SEQ as Australia's leading Smart Digital Region.
- A Smart Digital Region is one that connects and empowers its residents and businesses and embraces "smart" solutions on a regional scale to accelerate productivity and improve the quality of life.
- For governments, this includes investing in smart solutions that will create efficiencies, improve services and infrastructure delivery, and seamlessly and quickly connect businesses and residents with their needs.
- For business, this includes opportunities to grow in a vibrant regional economy.
- As citizens, it includes using information and technology to improve our lives.

Phase One and Phase Two

This Paper represents the first phase of planning and preparing for a smarter future – presenting the ideas and aspirations for our region and State.

Phase Two would be to determine the specific processes and timeframes required to deliver on the aspirations.

The Committee for Brisbane's Taskforce members have the experience and expertise, and are ready, to contribute meaningfully to Phase Two – implementation.

Purpose

The Committee for Brisbane will play a leadership role to promote and help drive South East Queensland's journey to becoming Australia's first Data Community, ensuring that community good and regional economic benefits are critical influences on policy-making and action.

Vision

South East Queensland will be Australia's first Data Community – a digitally integrated region built on strong ethical foundations to harness technology and data for social good.

As a Smart Region that embraces continual improvement, South East Queensland's achievements will be measured by an empowered community that enjoys improved quality of life and wellbeing; frictionless public access to information and services; and unlocking the data economy to drive a thriving regional economy.

South East Queensland Smart Region legacy

South East Queensland: Australia's first Data Community.



Connected

Outcome

Any citizen or business can access the data and information that is important to them – anywhere and anytime.



Creative

Outcome

Business and community entrepreneurship is nurtured and facilitated through world's-best standard digital and data literacy.



Equitable

Outcome

South East Queensland is more liveable, sustainable and equitable, driven by a social licence to operate as a Smart Region that is underpinned by good data practices and the data literacy competency of businesses and citizens.



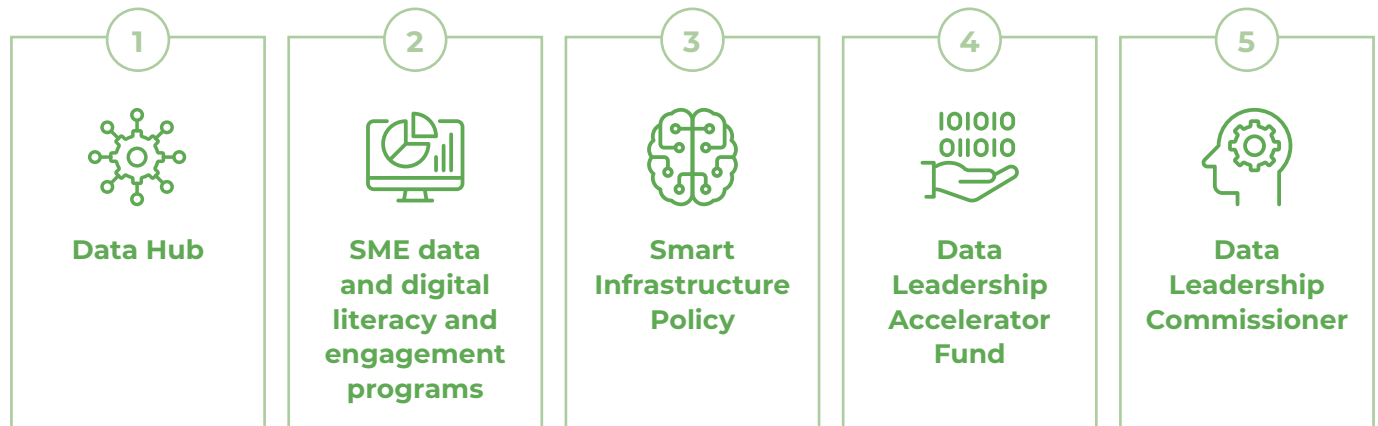
Enterprising

Outcome

Economic opportunities are identified and realised through governments, businesses and local communities participating in the data economy, including data transparency, access and sharing.

Australia's first Data Community

The South East Queensland Smart Region Taskforce has proposed five steps (projects and actions) to achieve the goal of South East Queensland as Australia's first Data Community:



1. Data Hub

The Committee seeks the establishment of a Data Hub – a dedicated facility to champion data leadership and empower citizens, communities and businesses to participate in city analytics.

Smart cities use Internet of Things devices and related technologies to gather data about the real-time status of the built environment. City analytics uses urban informatics to make sense of this data to optimise city services, such as transport networks and waste management, and to support evidence-based decision making to collectively plan and design the future of cities.

To help put this first project into action, the Committee is supporting a funding application by QUT and others for a three-year R&D project to conceptualise, design, test and deliver a prototype of a dedicated DataCare¹ facility (a Data Hub) and associated urban data literacy and engagement program. The prototype Hub would be established in Brisbane.

The purpose of the Data Hub would be to increase data transparency, data access and data sharing to enable new data-driven commercial opportunities for local businesses and SMEs and empower local communities and citizens to participate in city analytics.

Although consumers contribute much of the data upon which a smart city operates, its systems often remain opaque and closed off to public understanding, scrutiny and control. Additionally, there are concerns around privacy and loss of autonomy. The algorithms that power city analytics may be prone to pre-existing biases, for example predictive policing models based on flawed or inaccurate racial or socio-economic profiling, that may have unintended or even harmful consequences. Fostering wider participation in city analytics by people, communities and small businesses will improve scrutiny and contestability.

Urban data in the digital age has the potential to make our cities more liveable, sustainable and equitable. This potential can best be realised if the social licence to operate a smart city is underpinned by good data practices. Businesses, community groups and citizens should be able to access city analytics to derive their own benefits, once safe access is provided.

The DataCare facility (the Data Hub) can be tailored to raise awareness of data ethics, to run data literacy training seminars, to engage in participatory data analytics, and to speculate about city futures.

DataCare will increase data transparency and autonomy, showcase new business opportunities, and empower citizens and the community.



2. SME data and digital literacy and engagement programs

Associated with the Data Hub (and part of the QUT-led DataCare project) a data literacy and engagement program would provide a tiered approach to prepare the region and its citizens for maintaining data and technological sovereignty, by raising awareness of data-related concerns and improving levels of data literacy before engaging in data actions and data futures.

Through the DataCare prototype, we propose to demonstrate the value of improving data literacy and trust among citizens and the wider community, and showcase the opportunities that this would create for a Smart Region.

This would enable South East Queensland and other Australian cities/regions who deploy the DataCare model to maintain their social licence to operate a Smart City/Region.

In parallel with the data literacy and engagement program, the Committee is advocating for the State and/or local governments to develop a Charter of Digital Capability.

The Charter would set down minimally acceptable internet service standards for South East Queensland to enable SMEs and their staffs to competently ask for and access suitable standards of service (ie to inform and support their digital literacy).



3. Smart Infrastructure Policy

The Committee for Brisbane advocates for a statewide Smart Infrastructure Policy to bring the State into line with national best practice and help shape better outcomes from the significant pipeline of investment in the region.

The Queensland Smart Infrastructure Policy would articulate a minimum level of technology and data enablers to be embedded in state-funded infrastructure* projects, over the value of \$10 million. Relevant data enablers might be a tool, process or method for enabling (activating) data, such as analytics.

The policy's requirements would enable the State to leverage its traditional "bricks and mortar" projects to generate greater social and economic value for the community and the environment by accelerating productivity gains. For example, the City of Canterbury Bankstown in NSW is applying Artificial Intelligence to information collected by its recycling collection truck fleet, that identifies bin contamination in real time, resulting in predictive modelling and swift education and/or enforcement action (and cost savings) in days, rather than weeks or months.

Similar policy structures and objectives could be adopted for infrastructure projects undertaken by South East Queensland's 11 local governments.

The primary beneficiary would be a community that experiences safer, more efficient and more sustainable "publicly funded" infrastructure and services, while seeing taxes invested in digital and data strategies to deliver better outcomes.

For the ecosystem of planners, designers and infrastructure operators, the Queensland Smart Infrastructure Policy would help to catalyse investment in a marketplace that could be a world leader in the provision of advice and support to deliver the smartest infrastructure.

* For the purposes of the Policy, "infrastructure" includes all State-funded horizontal and vertical infrastructure, as well as major social/cultural and public realm investments.



4. Data Leadership Accelerator Fund

The Data Leadership Accelerator Fund would be led by the State and used to catalyse local government co-investment in data-enabling actions and investments to deliver better services to the community and enhance efficiencies.

As an example, the City of Darwin has co-invested in the roll-out of environmental sensors and other enablers, including the ability to control streetlight illumination (brightness and timing) through sensors to deliver cost savings while maintaining the usability and safety of an area; and the implementation of a parking sensor system to enable drivers to locate an available parking space via an indicator or app, easing traffic congestion and reducing vehicle emissions by being able to locate a parking spot with greater efficiency and convenience.

Using technology and data investments to deliver “more for less” will be critical for the post-COVID economy.

The Fund, with an initial \$20 million investment, would be structured to encourage partnership-driven co-investment with local government, building a pipeline of projects that embed a range of data leadership essentials such as privacy and security, ethics and governance.

Such projects would contribute to the Committee's Vision of South East Queensland becoming Australia's first Data Community and a data leadership global exemplar, where decision-making and the expenditure of taxpayer funds is aligned with improved trust and accountability.

Local governments, as co-contributors to projects initiated by the Data Leadership Accelerator Fund, would have the opportunity to deliver better services to their communities, such as generating economic development opportunities, reducing the digital divide, and greater inclusion in decision making.

For the community, the Fund could deliver a multiplier effect that accelerates economic recovery and delivers more sustainable outcomes.

Looking beyond South East Queensland, a Data Leadership Accelerator Fund could boost the deployment of data hubs across Queensland to champion data literacy and empower citizens, communities and small businesses to better participate in data analytics and the digital economy.



5. Data Leadership Commissioner

The Committee seeks the appointment by the State Government of a Data Leadership Commissioner, similar to the current Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC).

The OIC plays a key internal role in maintaining standards on information privacy within the Queensland Government.

The Data Leadership Commissioner would play a key external role, helping local governments, businesses and the community build their data leadership capabilities – to more fully participate in the digital economy by embedding data purpose, privacy, security, ethics and governance standards within their actions and investments.

Data can make Queensland more liveable, sustainable and equitable.

Realising this potential will require good data practices, and an independent Data Leadership Commissioner would enforce the data vitals of privacy, security, ethics and governance.

This is an initiative that would deliver opportunities for public, private and community stakeholders.

It would send an important signal to the private sector that the State is open for business and committed to leveraging the power of digital and data in economic recovery and reform.

It would provide the State Government, and by default local governments, with a dedicated focus and support for innovating on data to ensure our region becomes a leading Data Community.

It should provide a mandate to mobilise critical digital economy functions, such as data exchange and sharing, and exploring data trusts to ensure value from data is distributed equitably through the community and economy; and ultimately set the framework for the most efficient use of public funds to deliver on the region's strategic goals.

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