

MEDIA RELEASE:

Date 26/06/18

**LOCAL BUYING FOUNDATION INVESTS \$1 MILLION INTO BUSINESS FACILITATOR PROGRAMS**

The Local Buying Foundation has announced a \$1 million investment which will be used for business development in the Central Highlands and Isaac regions. The announcement was made during Queensland Small Business Week and at the Moranbah Traders Association Business Breakfast event held Friday, 15 June 2018. The successful organisations awarded funding were [Central Highlands Development Corporation](#) (CHDC) and [Greater Whitsunday Alliance](#) (GW3).

The Local Buying Foundation, which is an element of the Local Buying Program delivered in partnership between BHP and C-Res, supports funding for the implementation of strategic initiatives which build the capacity and capability of businesses located in the Central Highlands, Isaac and Mackay regions in Queensland.

Commencing from July 2018, the business communities in the Central Highlands and Isaac regions will benefit from the recruitment of resources to deliver the Bridging the Boundaries: Business Facilitator program. The Mackay region is expected to benefit from the Program with research being developed through GW3 into the near future.

The Bridging the Boundaries: Business Facilitator program will see staff appointed in the Central Highlands and Isaac regions with the primary role of bridging the boundaries of local government and facilitating connections and opportunities to grow responsive, viable, business ready and sustainable businesses across BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance's (BMA) and BHP Billiton Mitsui Coal's (BMC) operational footprint across the regions. A focus for the newly created positions include facilitating one-on-one mentoring and support, technology and innovation initiatives, coordination of training and development for small and medium enterprises, and development of networks and alliances with other organizations.

The Local Buying Foundation's capacity to resource projects and sponsor events is only possible due to the success of the Local Buying Program, which was established in 2012 by BHP who sought to develop a sustainable local procurement program.

The Local Buying Program is designed to be an innovative approach to increasing the local supply chain effectiveness and supporting regional economic development. It also reflects BMA's and BMC's genuine desire to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the social and economic well-being of the local communities in which it operates and the broader region.

Co-Chairs of the Local Buying Foundation, Peter Dowling and Kristy Marks advised that "the investment supported by the Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee demonstrates the commitment to building sustainable business communities for the future across the Central Highlands, Isaac and Mackay regions. Success from previous Business

Development Officer programs which were funded by BMA, provided the Local Buying Foundation with a model that could be moulded to suit the strategic intent of the Foundation.”

Garry Scanlan, Chief Executive Officer of GW3, “commends the Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee for their foresight and commitment to regional economic outcomes across these communities”.

Sandra Hobbs, General Manager of CHDC, said “We are very excited that CHDC is once again working in partnership with the Local Buy Foundation to deliver a business support and facilitation program for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Central Highlands region.”

**For more information:** please visit [www.localbuyingfoundation.com.au](http://www.localbuyingfoundation.com.au)

**Media Contact:**

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Image is of the Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee members.

Back row left to right: John Lee (Isaac Regional Council), Peter Dowling (Co-Chair of LBF, BHP), Ben Wearmouth (RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday), Cr Ayril Paton (Mackay Regional Council), Blake Repine (CQUniversity), Kirsty Appleton (LBF Project Officer), Garry Scanlan (GW3 Whitsunday Alliance).

Front row left to right: Sandra Hobbs (Central Highlands Development Corporation), Erica Fredericksen (Moranbah Traders Association), Browyn Reid (Small Company Big Business), Kristy Marks (Co-Chair of LBF, BHP), Tracey Cuttriss-Smith (C-Res).