

# *The* Weekend Bulletin

Saturday, August 29 and Sunday, August 30, 2015 \$1.80 freight extra

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**Police catch  
hunters killing  
wild deer in CQ**  
Story, PAGE 3



**Foreshore  
master plan  
revealed**  
Mayor wants public  
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# 21000 JOBS FOR ROCKY REGION, DAM IT



**HIGH STAKES:** The development of several large scale beef cattle feedlots on the Fitzroy River Agricultural Corridor will create many job opportunities for workers like these at the Woorabinda Pastoral Company.

The 20,000ha vision for the Lower Fitzroy to grow over \$1 billion of product per annum is almost shovel ready: Special report, map, **PAGES 8-9**



**Anne Stunzner**

Mining booms come and go, but this is for the long term



# CQ has capacity to be a primary agriculture region

## \$3 billion suite of opportunity to tempt foreign investors

**Christine McKee**  
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FOREIGN investors are being courted with a \$3 billion suite of Central Queensland agribusiness and related infrastructure investment opportunities.

The cornerstone is water infrastructure projects, Eden Bann and Rookwood weirs, which would create 2100 jobs after construction.

Growing Central Queensland (GCQ) project officer Anne Stunzner (pictured) said agriculture was the long-term future of the region and a regional approach was needed to harness and grow opportunities and to address issues with infrastructure.

“As an example, there is one bridge between Biloela and Gladstone that isn’t rated,” she said.

“Produce from Biloela travels north as a road train, turns east onto the Capricorn Hwy to Gracemere, then changes down to doubles and travels south to the Port of Gladstone instead of going directly east... all because of one bridge.

“Without any cold storage facility to support agriculture, 35% of freight containers go past Gladstone en route to Brisbane where they are unloaded back up onto road and rail... it’s a profound inefficiency,” Ms Stunzner said.

GCQ is funded by the State Government, six Central Queensland

councils, CQUni and auspiced by Regional Development Australia. The steering committee is chaired by CQ Vice-Chancellor Professor Scott Bowman.

“Mining booms come and go, but this is for the long-term,” Ms Stunzner said.

“In the past there has been division among councils and governments, but now there’s a united front and the policy space in the Federal Government is supportive... the market drivers are there to support public/private partnerships.”

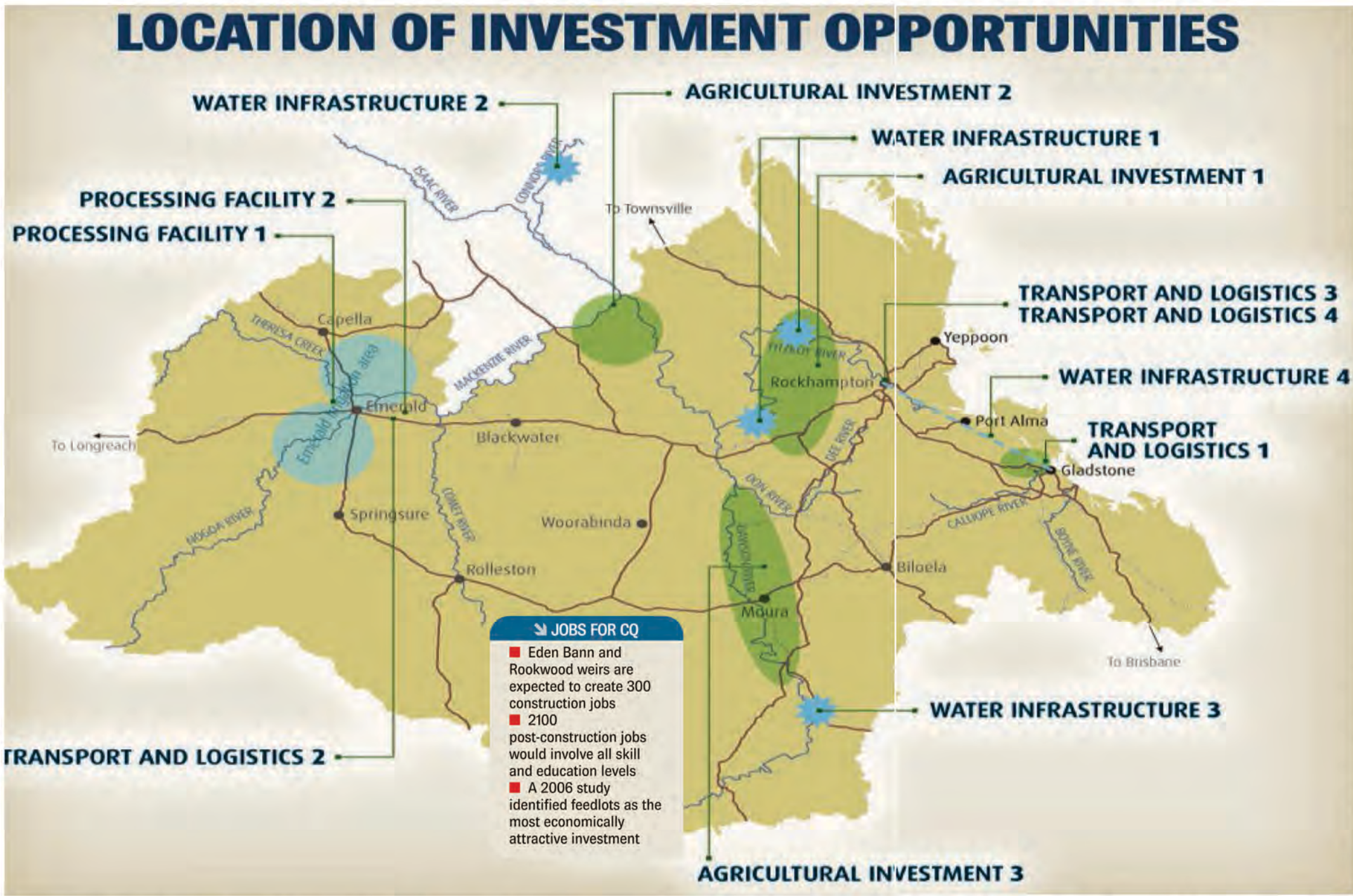
She is careful not to criticise The Gap dam proposal, saying it’s important to have vision and that everyone had the same desire to see the region grow as an agricultural catchment.

“If we can harness that passion and drive of the people behind The Gap dam proposal, Eden Bann and Rookwood Weirs can be shovel ready in six months... CQ has the capacity to be the primary agricultural production region in Australia, but splitting the focus is our danger,” Ms Stunzner said.

“We’re looking at a 30 to 50-year vision for 20,000ha to grow over \$1 billion of product per annum – and that’s just the Lower

Fitzroy, the catchment as a whole has four or five times this capacity. This is not a short-term construction project; it’s about long-term and sustainable production across the region. We have the experience to do it right and do it smart.”

Eden Bann and Rookwood weirs are costed at



\$496 million. Combined, they would flood 1200ha. The Gap dam would flood 78,000ha of high value agricultural land.

“It would cost \$10 billion to dam The Gap, making water unaffordable for farmers,” Ms Stunzner said.

“These weirs could be built and holding water in three years.”

The EIS is open for public comment on the State Development department’s website.



**Prime agricultural land at Rookwood sold at auction for \$3.65 million earlier this year**  
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

**POTENTIAL TO GROW**

**Fitzroy River Agricultural Corridor**

- The development of an agricultural corridor along the Fitzroy River and surrounding region.
- Potential exists to establish intensive livestock and horticultural enterprises.
- Suitable for development of several large-scale beef cattle feedlots, piggeries.
- Close to meatworks, labour force and good access to grain.
- Detailed studies completed and nine potential development areas identified (all greenfield sites).
- Has the support of State and local governments.

## Economics and environment go hand in hand

**Christine McKee**  
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WHILE Growing Central Queensland helps producers to move from broad-scale agriculture to intensive agriculture production, Anne Stunzner says there is \$400 billion in farm debt that needs to be resolved to allow for succession planning.

“We work off the idea that the family farm is the cornerstone of Australia’s agriculture industry,” she said.

“How do we enable those who need to exit to do that with grace and dignity, and those who want to grow to access capital?”

It’s one of the many challenges facing the future of Central Queensland agricultural production, along with the close proximity to the Great Barrier Reef.

“I feel totally confident we won’t get an EIS through State and Federal governments if this is going to damage the reef... they are too protective of it,” Ms Stunzner said.

“One of the greatest contributors to sediment run-off is broad-scale agriculture production.

“Best management practice is encouraged across the region to work to improve water quality.

“Intensification of agriculture further reduces sediment loads to the reef... international markets will



**OPPORTUNITY: Woorabinda Pastoral Company stock hands David Walker, Troy Draper, Catarina Williams, Steven Bounghi, Will Russell and Charles Huskic at the stockyards on Foleyvale Station.**  
PHOTO: ROK040914CCATTLE5

**“ Anne Stunzner: Everything flows down that river and we need to look after it**

be the drivers of clean and green, so it’s vital we maintain world’s best practice.

“Environment and economics are inextricably linked and investment will drive best practice.

“We are so aware now that everything we do impacts on the reef; everything flows down that river and we need to look after it.”

Woorabinda is one of the six shires funding GCQ and a significant agricultural producer in its own right.

Ms Stunzner said when the Fitzroy Basin

Association was being set up, the indigenous phrase “one river, one people” was coined.

“The indigenous people recognised the value of the river and that’s how we need to understand it. It’s the lifeblood and we need to incorporate indigenous understanding and involvement.”



**WORKING SMART: Student Henry Mollett at the launch of CQUniversity's new agriculture degree**  
PHOTO: ROK240715CAGRI3

## CQ opportunities pitched at investment forums

GCQ project officer Anne Stunzner heads to Canberra next month to pitch the potential for Central Queensland’s water infrastructure projects to federal politicians.

She says the opportunity for public/private investment lies in access to the \$5 billion low-interest loans scheme announced in



this year’s Federal Budget.

The scheme offers concessional loans for the construction of ports,

pipelines, electricity and water infrastructure that will open northern Australia for business.

Ms Stunzner is a Churchill Fellow and economist who majored in Asian studies. She has post-graduate qualifications in business management and law and along with her husband runs a 20,000-acre cattle property

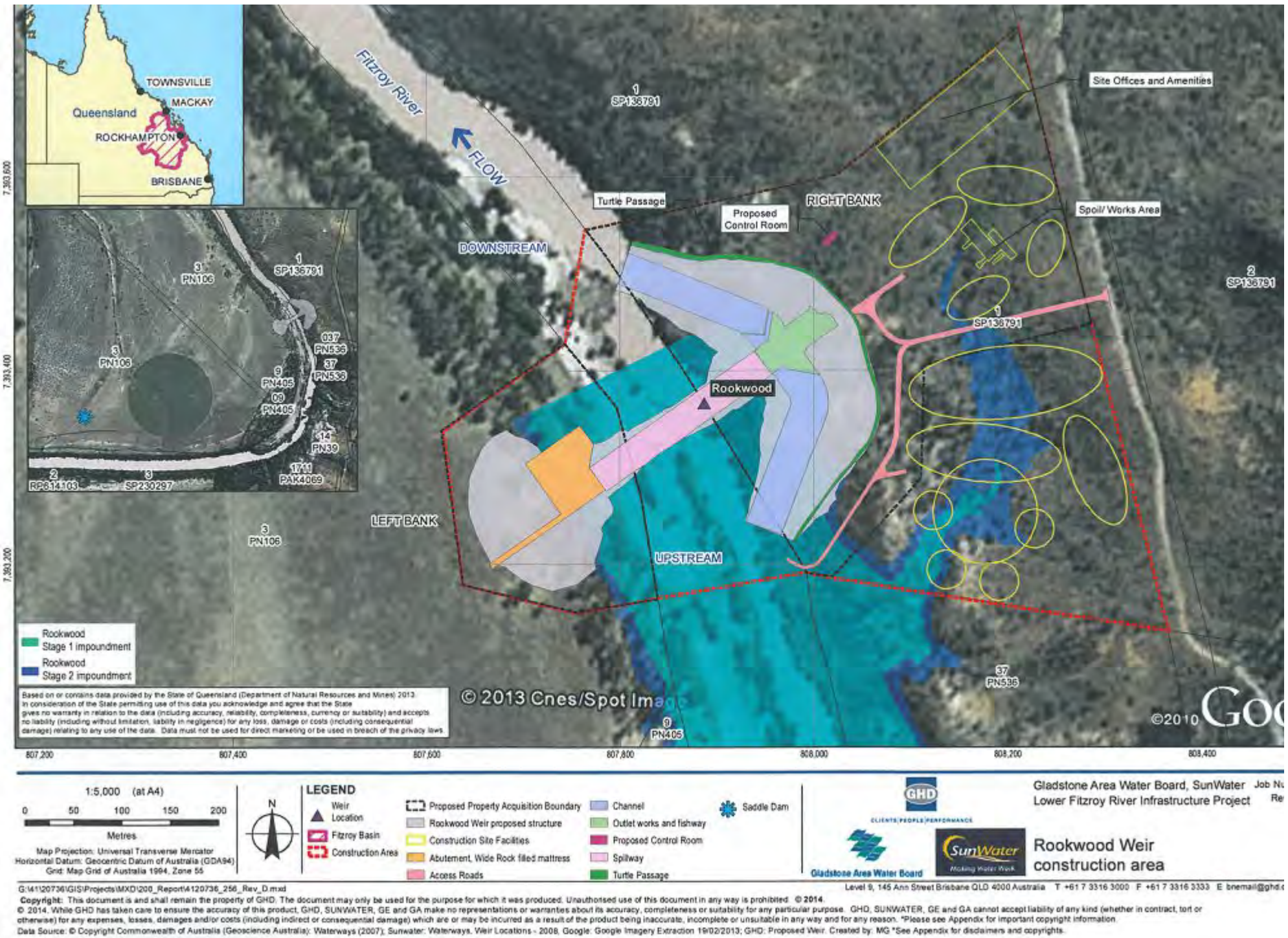
near Bajool.

“We’re taking CQ opportunities to the State Investment Forum in Cairns next month and the Federal Investment Forum in Darwin in November,” she said.

The concepts will also be pitched at the Singapore Agricultural Investment Forum in September.



The Rookwood weir plans and map



Rookwood Weir plans  
are well advanced

Submissions for the Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement for the Eden Bann Weir  
and a new weir at Rookwood closed at  
5pm on August 31.

PHOTO: STATE DEVELOPMENT





## Rookwood and Eden Bann v The Gap



**BIG VISION:** The long-held proposed super dam site at The Gap on Fitzroy River. But Mary Carroll says the focus should be on the Eden Bann and Rookwood weirs projects.

PHOTO: ALLAN REINIKKA ROK200814ADAM1

# Hope funding set to flow for weirs

THEY'VE been priority projects for Capricorn Enterprise since January 2014, and chief executive Mary Carroll says now is the best chance to secure funding for Eden Bann and Rookwood weirs.

Capricorn Enterprise, the region's peak economic development organisation, said the development of the weirs is crucial to the region's water and agricultural future.

"Now is our best chance in over 20 years in securing the \$495 million for these projects, which are



**Mary Carroll from Capricorn Enterprises.**

supported by all three levels of government, as well as business and industry," she said.

"The Environmental Impact Statement currently being assessed by the State Government is well advanced for Eden Bann and Rookwood weirs and will be completed by March 2016.

"There is well documented scientific and economic data surrounding the proposed weirs which we fully endorse."

The Priority Project supports the Fitzroy Agricultural Precinct as part of the "Growing Central Queensland" initiative which was developed by Regional Development

Australia Fitzroy Central West (RDAFCW).

It is supported by Federal and State governments as well as the six surrounding councils. "The development of these two weirs has been strongly supported since we reviewed our Priority Projects List over 18 months ago," Ms Carroll said.

"It is in the interests of all who live, work and invest in our city, our towns and our broader CQ region, to unite in our collective push for funding of these weirs because we will not get a better opportunity."