

**MEDIA RELEASE: RAPAD APPEALS TO STATE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE GREEN INVESTMENT
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The Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is appealing to the state government to sit down with its seven member councils and the Sustainable Australia Fund and other major players, to introduce Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs) into Queensland to unlock investment in our, and other, regions.

EUAs are mechanism for accessing funding to build or upgrade infrastructure to be more environmentally sustainable and are available in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

RAPAD Special Projects Officer Morgan Gronold says the finance provided through EUAs can make it easier and more affordable for councils to support environmentally and economically beneficial projects.

For example if a whole food café in Blackall was renting a premises and wanted to cut their operating costs and reduce their carbon footprint they could borrow the money to install solar panels from a private investment company, but rather than pay the loan off in a traditional manner the business would pay back the funds through council via a long term additional rates charge.

“It’s a way for councils support and enable small businesses to reduce their operating costs and environmental impact more cheaply.

“This benefits the whole community because that small business can use any savings generated by the infrastructure to employ more locals or invest in their own community,” he said.

Elsewhere in the country EUAs are limited to existing non-residential properties, but RAPAD wants the State Government to make Queensland the first to offer them to all properties and vacant land where regional projects can be supported including renewable energy, regenerative agriculture and climate resilience opportunities.

“They are a unique form of finance that can unlock investment to yield a public benefit good, through unlocking commercial opportunities for businesses and residents of Queensland,” he said.

RAPAD is in positive discussions with the Sustainable Australia Fund about this initiative and understands the Queensland Government is investigating the opportunity of EUAs for south east Queensland.

“We can see huge potential and opportunity for a deeper impact in rural communities and implore the State Government to invite us into the conversation, so together we can unlock green investment and capital for all Queensland communities,” he said.

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For interviews please contact:

Morgan Gronold 0448 739 759

 (07) 4652 5600

 info@rapad.com.au

 100 Galah Street | PO Box 592
Longreach Q 4730



#RAPADCWQ