

City meets country for CQ agri project

THE skyscrapers of Brisbane might seem like an odd place to discuss cattle and grain, but taking the country to the city proved a winning strategy for the Central Highlands Council.

Taking an unconventional approach to advocacy, council's CEO Scott Mason, Mayor Peter Maguire and the Central Highlands Development Corporation General Manager Sandra Hobbs issued an invitation to Queensland Government department heads and other relevant organisations to attend a presentation on the opportunities for an agribusiness precinct in the

Central Highlands region.

"The response was fantastic," said CHRC CEO Scott Mason.

"About 40 people filled the room and the enthusiasm was palpable.

"We had senior representatives from Aurizon, Graincorp, ESSCO and the departments of Agriculture and Forestry, Premier and Cabinet, State Development, Queensland Treasury, Transport and Main Roads, Trade and Investment. Mr Mason said investors and supporters of the meat processing plant, Yamala inland transport hub and

oilseed and grain processing facility collaborated to put forward a proposal that showcased opportunities in our region.

"We proved that there are viable options for our local economy despite the deceleration of the resource sector and we clearly demonstrated our enthusiasm and commitment to make something happen," he said.

Mr Mason said that the next step was for council to package the project initiatives into a format that would attract attention from the Australian Government.

"We're looking forward to

working with the Member for Flynn, Mr Ken O'Dowd, who will support a bid for funding to offset enabling infrastructure," he said.

"On the state government front, the project falls squarely within the parameters of the Queensland Treasury's Market-led proposals initiative that facilitates projects aimed at economic growth.

"And, in terms of continuing research to strengthen the proposal, we will engage the CSIRO to quantify the logistical and financial benefit from locating a meat works and inland transport port in the Central Highlands."