

# Manufacturing

## IN THE WESTERN DOWNS



The strength of the Western Downs economy comes from a powerful mix of energy, agriculture and construction – a great foundation for success in manufacturing.

### Opportunities

While the region's economy is underpinned by agriculture (cotton, grain, beef, pork and chickpeas), it is also known as the "energy capital of Queensland" with substantial investment and construction in coal, gas, hydrogen, wind and solar industries.

With strong investment in the region, opportunities for manufacturing continues to grow. Currently there are 135 manufacturing businesses covering agri-food, food products, machinery and equipment.

According to the Queensland Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, the main strengths of the Western Downs Region include:

- Location of Australia's newest regional airport with access direct to international markets
- Australia's leading agricultural sector in production and innovation
- Strong transport infrastructure connectivity

including the \$1.6B Toowoomba Bypass and Warrego Highway upgrades.

- Growth in the feedlot sector and associated beef processing industry with long established export orientated processors located across the region
- Strong education including tertiary institutions
- Key industry sectors are supported by a strong and innovative manufacturing sector that has built expertise across agriculture, mining, civil construction and coal seam gas
- Resilient and diverse economy

According to Western Downs Regional Council other key benefits for manufacturers are:

- Fast council approval process
- Low land acquisition costs
- Skilled stable workforce
- Collaborative manufacturing culture



Experience Western Downs

It's the people that make it.



### Future focus – innovation, digital technologies and sustainable practices

Manufacturing matters to Queensland because it is vital to our state's economy, employs around 180,000 people, drives innovation and contributes more than \$19.2 billion to the economy. By 2026 the Queensland Government sees the State as an international market leader in the delivery of advanced manufacturing technologies, systems, products and services that are innovative, sustainable, and embedded in local and global supply chains.

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water has established the Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10-year Roadmap and Action Plan to help achieve that vision.



Population 34,542 (2022)  
Employment in manufacturing 1,177  
(3.4% of the population)



Western Downs Council development  
assessment process takes on average  
14 days



135 manufacturing businesses (2022)



GRP in 2022 was \$3.6 billion which  
was an increase of 12.4% from the  
previous year



Jeff Wade - Wade Custom Fabrication Tara



Council is committed to diversifying and growing the regional economy, attracting new business and investment in emerging markets and maximising air, land and rail connectivity opportunities. To learn more, view the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028 at [wdrc.gld.gov.au](http://wdrc.gld.gov.au).

Western Downs Regional Council Economic Development team supports new businesses looking to:

- Facilitate and promote business and industry events to enhance growth in key industries
- Support business development opportunities through collaboration with key strategic partners
- Refer businesses to government agencies and economic development organisations providing business support and funding opportunities
- Provide information on developments and investment within the Western Downs Region
- Provide economic impact modelling and statistics to support grant and funding applications

## Western Downs Regional Council Supports Manufacturing Industries

We want to empower our entrepreneurs so they can convert their ideas into commercial success stories with social and economic benefits to our region. So Council is committed to a proactive approach to economic growth through an award-winning planning scheme geared towards development throughout the region. This means a fast approval process for major projects, competitive application fees and support throughout the process.



## Going Global

Global resource companies operating in the Western Downs are supported by many small and medium enterprises, including manufacturers, opening doors for products and services to become part of global supply chains. The strength of the region's resource, construction and agricultural sectors make it prime for a variety of manufacturing specialties including:

- Machinery and equipment
- Fabricated metal products
- Mining equipment
- Technology services
- Food processing
- Innovative processing technologies
- Precision tooling and niche machining
- Products for use with wind turbines, cooling towers, solar thermal generators and energy storage systems



## The Manufacturing Workforce

Manufacturing makes up 6.4% of employment in the region with the sector offering many opportunities for skilled and non-skilled workers.

## Training

Locally trained apprentices are sought after by manufacturers across Queensland due to their reputation for quality training and industry experience. Local apprentices are often sourced through Gateway to Industry Schools Programs for advanced manufacturing and also through Trade Training Centres at Dalby State High School, Miles State High School and Chinchilla State High School. The Western Downs is well-served by TAFE Queensland who now offer dual trade courses required in the high demand electrotechnology field, eliminating the need to travel to upskill.



## References

[www.economy.id.com.au/western-downs](http://www.economy.id.com.au/western-downs)

TSBE - Western Downs Development Status Report

Queensland Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water [www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/regional-development/our-regions/darling-downs-south-westDowns](http://www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/regional-development/our-regions/darling-downs-south-westDowns)

<https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/regions/queensland/darling-downs-south-west>

[www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/1531024/advanced-manufacturing-roadmap-full.pdf](http://www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1531024/advanced-manufacturing-roadmap-full.pdf)

## REGIONAL PROFILE

Rich in natural resources, natural beauty and natural history, the Western Downs is the place to be. These natural strengths are supported by strong industry foundations across the agriculture, energy, manufacturing, and construction sectors. Together with significant and continuing investment in infrastructure and tourism, these have positioned the Western Downs as one of the highest performing local government areas in Queensland, and Australia.

Known as the Energy Capital of Queensland, the Western Downs is experiencing high economic growth, investment, consistently high employment and includes some 38,000km<sup>2</sup> of land. The region boasts an impressive \$4 billion worth of approved renewables, including \$2.4 billion under construction.

One of the greatest benefits of the location of the Western Downs is the connectivity and proximity to the supply chain and relevant markets.

Another is a connected labour pool resulting in good workforce relations and retention rates and a diversity of industries with high workforce attraction.

Western Downs Regional Council's Gross Regional Product was \$3.68 billion in the year ending June 2022, growing 12.4% since the previous year (economy.id)

Home to a growing population of more than 34,500 residents, the Western Downs offers contemporary technology and opportunities in a friendly regional location.

Modern facilities such as aquatic and fitness centres, art galleries, museums, cinemas and civic centres bring a metropolitan feeling to regional communities.

The region also offers residents accessibility to public and privately run medical and health care services including access to hospitals, medical centres, dental and other health care professionals.

The roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN) and increasing mobile and internet coverage has positively impacted the global connectivity of businesses, lifting productivity and profitability. Dalby is classified as 'Business Fibre Zone' providing business grade fibre at reduced wholesale prices.

Residents enjoy a lower cost of living due to affordable housing (less than half of QLD average), ease of access to schools, work and retail outlets, with the NBN providing the network connectivity required for families and businesses to flourish.

It also offers a growing, diverse regional economy across agriculture, intensive agriculture, manufacturing, resources and renewable energy.

## INNOVATION

Digital technologies create opportunity for growth and transformation. Technology is a continually evolving field and the Western Downs offers local businesses contemporary communication solutions via NBN access to stay connected and current.

The information and statistics included in this document are reliant on the accuracy of sources as listed and were accurate as at the time of printing. January 2024.

## A SNAPSHOT



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE TRENDING LOWER THAN QLD AVERAGE



A SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED WORKFORCE



GRP: DOUBLED OVER 15 YEARS



DEVELOPMENT & DEVELOPERS SUPPORTED AND WELCOMED WITH WDRC PLANNING SCHEME



COMPARATIVELY STRONG INDUSTRY SUPPLY CHAINS PER CAPITA OF POPULATION

Energy Capital of Queensland: Resources & Renewables



# NBN

INNOVATION: NBN ROLLOUT = DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY & SPEED FOR YOUR BUSINESS

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AVERAGE DISPOSABLE INCOME \$3K HIGHER THAN QLD AVERAGE

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