

Experience Western Downs

It's the people that make it.



WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
**COMMUNITIES PARTNERING
FRAMEWORK**

Mayor's Welcome

Welcome to the Western Downs, where it's the people that make it. Our region is home to a wonderful array of community and private sector organisations. These organisations are ingrained in the fabric of our active, vibrant communities and we love to see them prosper.

Located only an hour from the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport, and just two and half hours from Brisbane, the Western Downs offers a healthy regional lifestyle. Our proximity to the city affords the Western Downs region a wealth of growth and development opportunities boosted by significant investments in road and air logistics. The Western Downs is a recognised leader in agribusiness, energy and manufacturing and we are successfully advancing our region as a tourism destination.



**"We're all about
being great
neighbours."**

We're a happy, inclusive community with attractive recreational spaces, first-class facilities, high-quality essential services, and unique local initiatives and events. Our people come from diverse backgrounds and ages united by social, cultural, and sporting activities and an intrinsic desire to make our communities the best they can be.

Western Downs Regional Council's Communities Partnering Framework sets our expectation that private sector companies and corporations operating in our region will be great neighbours, supporting social license through communities partnering. It's about empowering our communities to partner with the private sector, and Council, to deliver legacy outcomes we can all be proud of.

Council has built a strong culture in the community partnering space, setting a clear expectation that future developments in our region support strong economic, social and environmental outcomes. We want to build, foster, and maintain this culture of strong community partnering between the private sector, Council and the community to activate participation and connection to boost our local economy, embrace innovative opportunities and future-proof our region.

This strategy allows Council to set clear direction for the private sector to support, engage and partner with our schools, Indigenous corporations, health care agencies, social service groups, sporting organisations, clubs and not-for-profit groups. Working together, we can ensure our children, grandchildren, and future generations will thrive and strive to live, work, study and play on the Western Downs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Western Downs Regional Council acknowledges the traditional owners, the Barunggam, Iman (Yiman), Bigambul, Wakka Wakka, and the Jarowair people, as the custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.



Corporate Plan 2021 - 2026

Western Downs Regional Council strives to be a diverse region at the forefront of the changing world.

Economic Development Strategy 2023 – 2028

VISION: The Western Downs is a strong, resilient and diverse economy and liveability is strengthened in the region by 2028.





What is Communities Partnering?

Strong collaboration and partnerships are required to be able to deliver on the pillars and targets of the Economic Development 2023 - 2028 strategy, ensuring that the region delivers on the vision to be a strong, resilient and diverse economy with a growing liveability.

Western Downs Regional Council defines Communities Partnering as **“a collaborative, long-term and strategic partnership, driven by a shared commitment to strengthen economic, environmental and social outcomes across the Western Downs and its communities, enabling a sustainable future.”**

Why is Communities Partnering important?

Companies based and operating in the Western Downs are the drivers of the region’s strong economic growth, and growing diversification. Whilst Council acknowledges the important role of small businesses in the region, large scale companies have a significant impact on the region. This communities partnering framework is tailored to large businesses who either employ over 200 employees and / or have an annual turnover of more than \$250 million, as well as large-scale developments with a construction cost of over \$100 million.

A strong culture of Communities Partnering has been established in the Western Downs over the past two decades. This has enabled partnering relationships between the private sector, community organisations and Council and delivers sustainable economic and social outcomes.

Council aggressively attracts business and investment opportunities to the region and enables good development that is the right fit for our region. This Communities Partnering Framework is established to support companies with their social license to operate and Environmental Social Governance (ESG) responsibility by defining clear expectations and indicating the support Council and other organisations can provide to enable strong partnering relationships.

This Communities Partnering Framework will ensure economic, environmental and social outcomes are protected, nurtured and advanced, ensuring our children, grandchildren and future generations will be able to enjoy living, working, studying and playing right here in the Western Downs.



Partnering with our Communities

CORE EXPECTATIONS - Adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements from all levels of government.

- ✓ Submit all required documentation in good faith and on time.
- ✓ Where relevant, communicate this information to all stakeholders.

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS - Actively build, foster and maintain strong partnerships within the community.



- ✓ Enable respectful, early and ongoing dialogue with the community, landholders, stakeholders and Fire and Emergency Services.
- ✓ When possible, enable an 'open door' to field queries, e.g. shop front, community liaison, hotline.

STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY - Actively contribute and build a diverse, strong and resilient economy.



- ✓ Grow local talent by investing in education and skills and fostering employment pathways.
- ✓ Support local content by leveraging Chamber of Commerce and TSBE membership and networks, and ensure payment for goods and services are made promptly.

GROWING LIVEABILITY - Invest in liveability in the region for future generations to live, work, play and study.



- ✓ Legacy investment in the community addressing locally identified needs, including investment in long-term housing.
- ✓ For significant projects, complete Social Impact Study addressing (cumulative) impacts on community and (social) infrastructure. Enter into Road Infrastructure Agreement (if applicable).

IT'S THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE IT - Actively contribute to, and participate in our communities.



- ✓ Strive for workforce to live local and participate in our communities, including through volunteerism.
- ✓ New residents are actively welcomed and assisted to build local connections.

CARE FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT - Take pride in our environment, and mitigate adverse impacts.



- ✓ Understand your ecological impact and mitigate any adverse impacts from planning stages through to decommissioning.
- ✓ Strive for the highest standard of co-existence between industries and land uses.

FIRST NATIONS - Develop meaningful partnerships with our First Nations community.



- ✓ Traditional Owners of the Western Downs are acknowledged and respected.
- ✓ Collaborate with Indigenous Business Connector, enabling Indigenous procurement.

CELEBRATE YOUR IMPACT - Assess your impact and celebrate your contribution to our communities.



- ✓ Consider completing a self-assessment and share your achievements and successes.
- ✓ Actively market and share your commitments and investment to the communities of the Western Downs.



Our Commitment to You

PROGRESSIVE AND RESPONSIVE COUNCIL

- Council aggressively attracts business and investment opportunities that are the right fit for our region.
- Whilst we meet our due diligence, we are a fast and responsive local government.
- Council is committed to actively seek and foster strategic partnerships.
- Open to arrange frequent and regular meetings to discuss any challenges and opportunities.
- Council's Economic Development team acts as conduit, ensuring one point of contact within Council.

CONTEMPORARY AND CALIBRATED PLANNING SCHEME

- Support high quality development, enabled by Council's planning scheme and a pragmatic approach to development assessment.
- Development applications are assessed on average within 13 business days.
- Many development uses, where consistent with a zone, are code assessable reducing risk for submissions and other complications.
- Pre-lodgement Meetings are encouraged to provide technical feedback on your proposal to avoid unexpected delays.
- Early guidance on impact assessments and mitigation plans.
- Attend referral meetings together with you, to support your proposed development.

ENABLING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Introduce you to key stakeholders, e.g. Chambers of Commerce, schools, community organisations, and TSBE.
- Supporting strong business capability via Chambers of Commerce and Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE).
- We will help you engage with our community across the stages of development.
- We support and promote your community engagement across our channels.

**Contemporary
and calibrated
planning scheme**

**A pragmatic
approach to
assessment**

**Highly
competitive
application
fees**

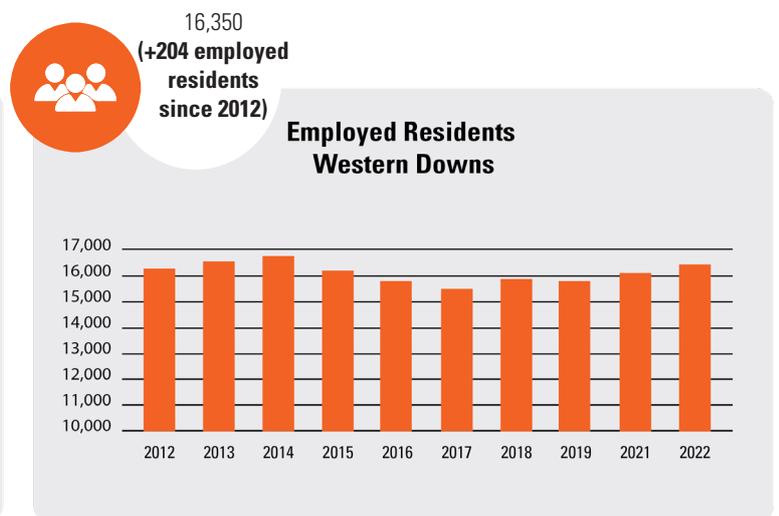
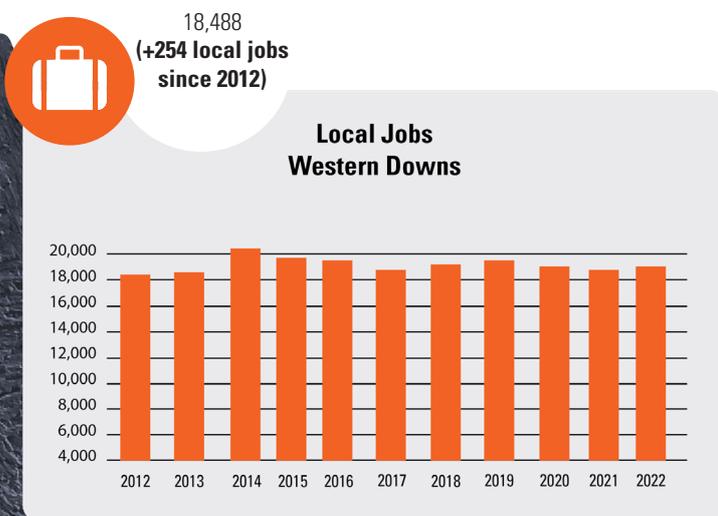
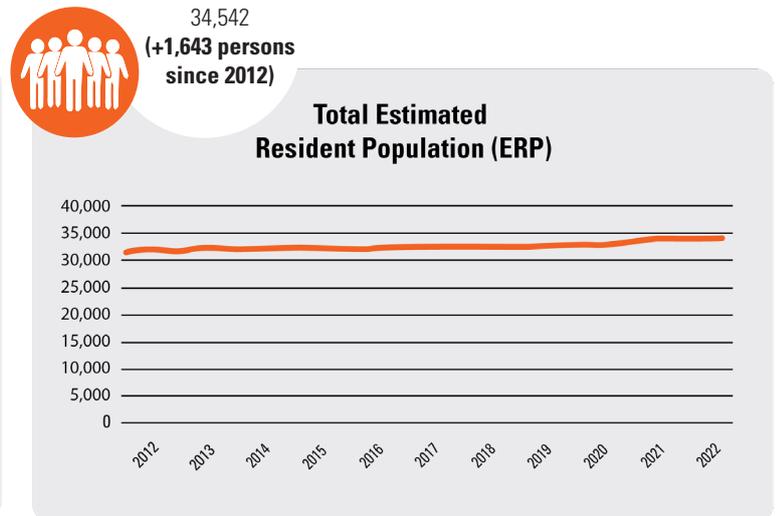
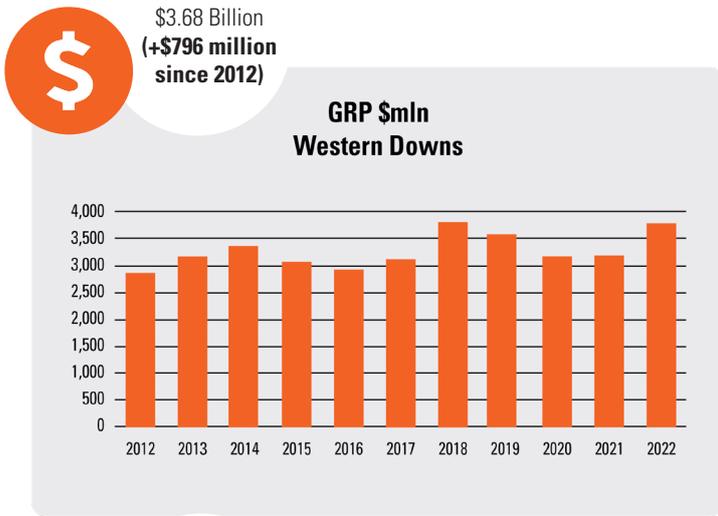
**Support
throughout the
process**

Strong Economic Growth

The Western Downs is a local government area of 37,937 square kilometres 2.5 hours west of Brisbane. Despite a small population of just under 35,000 people our region produces a significant share of critical goods and services for domestic and international markets.

The region has experienced significant economic growth over the past decade, demonstrated by a strong increase in Gross Regional Product. Strong economic growth has resulted in an increased number and diversity of local jobs.

The Western Downs population is forecast to grow to 38,251 in 2046 (QGSO high series).



BUSINESSES
4,890

TOP 5 LARGEST EMPLOYING INDUSTRIES

Industry	Number Employees	%
Agriculture	2,805	15.2
Retail Trade	1,981	10.7
Construction	1,775	9.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,420	7.7
Education and Training	1,327	7.2

- Coal, Gas
Solar, Bio-Ethanol
Hydrogen, Wind
- Diverse, resilient
Sustainable ag
sector
- 42% national feedlot
occupancy in a 200 km
radius of Dalby
- High value
Manufacturing
output



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Western Downs Regional Council

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