



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

ATTACHMENTS TO MINUTES ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

13 MARCH 2024

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Mayoral Minute

I want to begin by acknowledging the Councillors that sit around this table today, and I include Cr Gliori. I wish to thank you for your contribution to Southern Downs over this term. We have been subjected to many challenges over the last 4 years, and together we have got the job done. Beginning with COVID and the closing of the borders, the challenges faced with running the business, and the economy almost coming to a standstill. You all stepped up to the problems, and with our officers we found the solutions together.

As no doubt you all remember we were carting water to Stanthorpe at the start of the term and wasn't it a relief when it did rain. However, the rain also brought floods and thousands of kilometres of road damage, culvert damage, bridge damage, you name it - we had it. Rebuilding our roads has become a major focus since, and although we have allocated the biggest infrastructure budget ever over the last two years, there is still work to do.

The most important people on earth are our farmers and we have seen them go through so much in this term: drought, fire, floods, hail, frost, mice plagues, and low prices - you all stood shoulder to shoulder with them helping them when and how we could.

Councillors you tackled the big issues, controversial issues, the Botanical Gardens that we could not afford, the Library & Art Gallery Project in Stanthorpe, the Warwick Saleyards, our aging infrastructure, Condamine River Road, cost of living challenges including the highest level of rises in input costs for many years, housing issues, youth crime; and despite criticism that occurs during elections, you all stood your ground on these issues and were united.

I say thank you again to each and every one, whilst there has been some commentary about division, overwhelmingly most decisions have been unanimous.

I also want to acknowledge some more people beginning with our CEO, Dave Burges for his leadership at the helm of this organisation. I thank him not only for his stewardship but also for his advice, his counsel and his wry humour. I thank Marion for the role she plays in this organisation and the assistance she gives to the Office of the Mayor, and to Laurine for coordinating our schedules and commitments. I also thank our Media Team for their commitment and dedication, they have taken media to another level. I also acknowledge and thank the Directors and Managers that we work with more closely as a Council. Finally, I want to recognise the valuable contribution our staff make to this organisation, from our Front Counter staff to those who patch potholes and all in between - thank you for your commitment to our region, you are the heart and soul of what we do for our ratepayers.

I want to wish all candidates who are standing for either re-election or looking to be elected for the first time all the very best.

Finally, I would like to present Cr McNally and Cr Gliori with a small plaque in recognition of their commitment and dedication to local government, and the role they have played representing their community here on the Southern Downs.

Mayor Vic Pennisi

13 March 2024

Local Housing Action Plan



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Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

Southern Downs Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live and work, and we recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders continue to play within the Southern Downs region.

DISCLAIMER

The Southern Downs Regional Council Local Housing Action Plan is a non-statutory plan and 'living document' prepared as part of the Queensland Housing & Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025 (Action 5) to support local housing outcomes. This Local Housing Action Plan is not the same as a Housing Strategy under the State Planning Policy, or a housing study, but may inform statutory documents like a planning scheme.





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Partnership Acknowledgement



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Every Queensland
community deserves
to be a liveable one

The Southern Downs Housing Action Plan was developed with the support of the Queensland Government in association with the Local Government Association of Queensland.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LOCAL HOUSING ACTION PLAN

This Local Housing Action Plan (the Plan) is being developed through a joint initiative involving the Queensland Government, Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) to respond to a range of immediate, emerging, and longer-term housing challenges in the Southern Downs local government area.

This is an iterative process (see Figure 1) that does not intend to duplicate existing actions of Council or the actions under the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 or the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. It seeks to identify opportunities, consider an agreed response, develop targeted actions on key priorities and enable ongoing review of effort to adapt and respond to changing needs.



Figure 1: The Local Housing Action Plan Iterative Process

1.2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The plan provides an overview of key community and housing characteristics, and emerging issues related to housing in the community and identifies a targeted initial set of priority actions to respond to housing needs. It has been developed through a review of a range of supporting documentation including:

- Southern Downs Regional Council Planning Scheme V5
- Statistical data from the Queensland Government Statisticians Office, including Census and other data sets such as building approvals, rental market data and housing approvals
- Housing needs data from the Queensland Government
- The Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, and Homes for Queenslanders
- Southern Downs Regional Council Housing Needs Assessment (Nov 2019) and Addendum Report (Sep 2023).

Emerging issues and opportunities, key challenges and potential responses have been developed from the review of a range of data sets, anecdotal feedback, and preceding engagement opportunities with Council and other stakeholders. This Plan provides an overview of available information as a basis for discussion and decision making. It should not be viewed in isolation but considered as part of a broad response to supporting housing needs across the State.

1.3 INTERNAL CONSULTATION

Internal stakeholder consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Director, Planning & Environmental Services, Director Customer & Organisational Services, Manager Planning & Development, Manager Sustainability & Strategy, the Land Management Consultant and SDRC Planning Services team was undertaken to inform the LHAP to allow for comment on statistical profile and response opportunities. The discussion focused on housing needs and the current oversupply of bedrooms in houses based on the region's ageing demographic and the lack of housing density to cope with the expected growth over the coming years.¹

1.4 SOUTHERN DOWNS HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2019 the SDRC engaged the services of Foresight Partners to prepare a Housing Needs Assessment Report to inform the preparation of a new Southern Downs Planning Scheme.

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the adequacy of existing zoning allocations in the current planning scheme to accommodate projected growth to 2041 in the five key urban areas of Warwick, Stanthorpe, Allora, Killarney, and Wallangarra, as well as accommodate the planned growth and dwelling targets of the Shaping Southern Downs plan.

¹ Southern Downs Council, 2023, Discussion Paper to Inform LHAP Oct 2023.

In September 2023 the SDRC commissioned Foresight Partners to prepare this addendum report to the 2019 study. The purpose of this report was to update the analysis in the 2019 Housing Needs Assessment in consideration of

recent market changes and having regard to the State Interest relevant to housing.

As part of the preparation of the Southern Downs Local Housing Action Plan, both the outcomes of internal consultations

and the outcomes of the Southern Downs Housing Needs Assessment Report, plus the Addendum have been considered with relevant information included to inform actions.

2 KEY FACTS

2.1 THE SOUTHERN DOWNS REGION

The SDRC area is located in the Darling Downs South West region of Southern Queensland, about 160 kilometres south-west of the Brisbane CBD and bounded by the Toowoomba Regional Council area and the Lockyer Valley Regional Council

area to the north, the Scenic Rim Regional Council to the north-east, the New South Wales border to the south-east and south, and the Goondiwindi Council in the west.

The Southern Downs is predominately

rural, with numerous townships. The largest townships are Warwick and Stanthorpe, with smaller townships at Allora, Killarney, Wallangarra and Yangan. With a total land area of 7,122km² the Southern Downs region has extensive rural land that is used largely for agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing. Fruit, vegetable and graingrowing, forestry and viticulture are important industries.



2.2 FIRST NATIONS

The Southern Downs Regional Council acknowledges the original custodians of the land on which we live and gives respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with whom we foster effective, respectful and culturally sensitive engagement.

3 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

3.1.1 POPULATION

In 2021, Southern Downs was home to 36,641 residents. The current population forecast for the Southern Downs Region for 2023 is 37,050 and is forecasted

to grow to 41,747 by 2046, based on data available, representing an annual population increase of 0.52%³. Out of all the townships in the region, Warwick is

expected to see the largest growth (1.26% annually) with large average annual growth rates for the area outside of central Warwick.

Southern Downs Regional Council	Forecast year						Change between 2021 and 2046	
	2021 ↕	2026 ↕	2031 ↕	2036 ↕	2041 ↕	2046 ↕	Total change ↕	Avg. annual % change ↕
Southern Downs Regional Council	36,656	37,653	38,763	39,733	40,717	41,747	+5,091	+0.52
Allora and surrounds	2,635	2,710	2,815	2,895	2,981	3,070	+435	+0.61
Applethorpe - The Summit and surrounds	3,554	3,674	3,802	3,886	3,981	4,071	+517	+0.54
Glen Alpin - Girraween - Granite Belt	3,047	3,043	3,086	3,122	3,184	3,258	+211	+0.27
Killarney and surrounds	2,137	2,112	2,150	2,178	2,228	2,288	+151	+0.27
Rural North-West	1,823	1,905	1,978	2,054	2,136	2,214	+391	+0.78
Stanthorpe	5,314	5,490	5,672	5,786	5,873	5,953	+639	+0.46
Warwick - Central	12,477	12,680	12,859	13,043	13,217	13,425	+948	+0.29
Warwick - Balance	3,282	3,523	3,780	4,028	4,255	4,492	+1,210	+1.26
Yangan - Maryvale and surrounds	2,388	2,518	2,620	2,741	2,862	2,976	+588	+0.88

Table 1: Forecast breakdown for each area in Southern Downs (2021 – 2046).⁴

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region as of 2021 was 2,960 (5.9% of the total population).

³ Southern Downs Regional Council population forecast, *Informed Decisions*, July 2023.

⁴ Southern Downs Regional Council population forecast, *Informed Decisions*, July 2023.

3.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Table 2 below outlines the key demographic data based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census Data.

Data Category	Demographic Snapshot
Age	The median age in the Southern Downs region was 48.2 years in 2021 which is significantly higher than the median age of Queensland of 38.6 years. ⁵ The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within the Southern Downs region has a different and younger age structure than the non-Indigenous community, with 38% of the population aged 14 years or younger and only 7.5% aged 65 years or over.
Migration	Of the Southern Downs' residents in 2021, around 84.4% lived in the region one year ago , and 69.2% lived in the region 5 years ago . Other key places of residence for new Southern Downs residents (between 2016 and 2021) include Brisbane LGA, Toowoomba LGA, Gold Coast LGA, and Logan LGA.
Cultural Backgrounds	In the Southern Downs region, 81.4% of the population were born in Australia. This represents a higher proportion of Australian-born residents when compared to Queensland (71.4%). The top three non-English speaking backgrounds include Philippines, Italy and Netherlands.

Table 2: Summary of key demographic information for the Southern Downs Region for 2021⁵

Table 3 below outlines the key economic data based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census Data.

Data Category	Economic Snapshot
Household Composition	Lone person households make up 29.4% of households in the region, which represents a slightly higher proportion than Queensland. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within the Southern Downs have a higher proportion of one family homes, (78%) than those who do not identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (66.8%).
Family Composition	Almost half of families in the Southern Downs region were couple families with no children representing 49.6% of the population, which is higher than Queensland 40.3%
Family Incomes	The median total family income in the Southern Downs region was \$72,592 per year (average median income of \$1,396 per week) which is significantly lower than the Queensland median of \$105,248 per year (\$2,024 per week). Therefore, the Southern Downs has a higher proportion of low-income families when compared to Queensland, with 9.5% compared to Queensland's at 6.9%. Average household income has increased with only minor changes to the labour force participation rate.

Table 3: Summary of key economic information for the Southern Downs Region for 2021⁷

Housing Implications

Analysis of key demographic characteristics indicates several implications for housing in the region, including:

- A trend of an ageing population is particularly pronounced in the region, despite the influx of new residents during the pandemic. The region's older demographic will most likely

see the housing needs of the region evolve, leading to increased demand for accessible and age-friendly housing options.

- The traditional larger homes designed for families with children now constitute a smaller proportion of the market, reflecting a shift toward preferences for more compact housing options and a need for more diverse housing.

- However, as the housing needs analysis found, "anecdotal evidence, is that even people seeking to downsize from a large house still show a preference for a three-bedroom property, whether on a smaller lot (closer to town), or as a semi-detached dwelling or townhouse."

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021, Southern Downs LGA Census Data 2021

⁶ Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Regional Profile Southern Downs – median age, November 2023.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021, Southern Downs LGA Census Data 2021

- Anecdotal evidence, Council officer's observations, and planning approvals indicate recent increases in migration from overseas to meet business and labour force requirements of local firms. This has led to intervention in the housing market from medium-large firms seeking to house their growing workforce.

Ensuring a sufficient and suitable housing supply is crucial for maintaining diversity in the region's demographic and age profiles. Without an available housing stock, the region may face challenges in attracting new residents, leading to a continued ageing population and significant economic, labour force, and productivity implications.

3.2 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

3.2.1 HOUSING SUPPLY

Table 4 below provides a snapshot summary of the key findings for housing supply based on the Housing Needs Assessment Addendum Report for Southern Downs as well as 2021 Census data.

Trend Category	House and Land
Housing Supply	Total dwellings in the region in 2021 was 17,360 (91.3% being separate houses) . Between 2016 and 2021 detached dwellings increased by 1,195 dwellings.
Vacancy Rate	The vacancy rate (unoccupied dwellings at the time of the Census) decreased from 14.2% in 2016 to 12.7% in 2021 .
Vacant Land	There are 553 total vacant lots , with a subdivided supply of around 273 lots totaling 65ha in the region and 260 lots for broad hectare supply totaling 672.8ha. Around 55.5% of the total lot supply (296 lots) are zoned Low Density Residential, around 16.5% is zoned Rural Residential (88 lots), and 14.6% is zoned Medium Density Residential (78 lots).
Realistically Developable Supply	Of the available residential and mixed-use lots, 470 lots are realistically developable, with only some rural residential lots having some loss of land due to the possibility of flooding, but no loss of entire lots.

Table 4: Summary of key Housing Supply information for the Southern Downs Region 2021⁸

Housing Implications

Analysis of key housing supply characteristics indicates several implications for the region, particularly:

- There is an evident lack of housing diversity in the region which will lead to challenges in accommodating the diverse needs of the growing and ageing population in the region, potentially exacerbating issues related to affordability, accessibility, and overall housing suitability.

- There has been a minor increase in attached / semi-detached dwellings, from 1,329 in 2016 to 1,358 in 2021. However, with detached dwellings rising from 14,484 to 15,679 in the same period, the housing needs analysis found these remain the preferred housing typology in the region.
- Vacant Rural Residential lots in the LGA do not often change hands, with some lots purchased and held for many years without developing them⁹. This causes

constraints to the delivery of additional stock in a highly sought-after market segment (acreage properties).

- As in most of the State, Southern Downs has a low rental vacancy rate of 0.2% in the large centres of Warwick and Stanthorpe, 0.7% for Allora, 0% for Killarney and 1.7% for Wallangarra, constraining the ability for people to move to the region.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021, Southern Downs LGA Census Data 2021

⁹ Housing Needs Assessment Addendum Report - Southern Downs LGA pg 26

3.2.2 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT

The following section outlines key statistics related to housing affordability in the Southern Downs region (see Table 5).

Trend Category	Housing Affordability - Mortgage/Rental Stress
Mortgage Affordability	In Southern Downs, 37.7% of low income households with a mortgage were paying 30% or more of their household income on mortgage repayments. This proportion is much higher than in Queensland as a whole.
Rent Affordability	As of 30 September 2023, the median rent in the Southern Downs was \$380 per week for a 3 bedroom house and \$290 for a 2 bedroom unit. Some 34.7% of renting households were paying greater than 30% of household income in rent in 2021.
Sales and Pricing	Residential property sales in the Southern Downs were 748 sales per annum between 2012-13 and 2019-20, before increasing significantly to annual sales of 1,639 in 2021-22

Table 5: Summary of key Housing Affordability information for the Southern Downs Region 2021

Housing Implications

Analysis of key housing affordability characteristics indicates implications for housing in the region, particularly that rental affordability is an issue in the Southern Downs LGA as it is seeing housing pressures, including increasing rents and prices, limited market availability of rental properties, and very low rental vacancy rates.

3.3 SOUTHERN DOWNS HOUSING NEED

The Housing Needs Assessment Report examined the supply of land zoned for residential purposes (Low and Medium Density, and Rural residential) as well as Mixed Use and Township zone land that can be used for residential development.

Findings conducted by Foresight Partners show that the Southern Downs will need about 2,035 additional dwellings by 2041 (see Table 6), which is equivalent to 88 new dwellings being built per annum over a 23-year period to meet the demand¹⁰. These dwellings will be needed across the

region but particularly within the main employment centres.

There is sufficient vacant land to meet forecast demand, however this would need to be monitored over time to ensure this remained the case.

Type / Zone	Est. % Demand	Est. Dwelling Demand	Vacant Lots	Difference	Theoretical Max. Lot Capacity
LDR* (Incl. Township)	77%	1,401	336	-1,065	4,447
MDR** (or attached/semi-detached)	6%	109	77	-32	592
Rural residential	16%	291	88	-203	586
Rural	1%	18	n.a	n.a	
Total	100%	1,820	501		

*LDR – Low-density residential **MDR – Medium-density residential

Table 6: Forecast Dwelling Need by Type, Southern Downs LGA, 2023 to 2041

¹⁰ Foresight Partners Estimates, 2023, Housing Needs Assessment Addendum Report – Southern Downs LGA

4 KEY FOCUS AREAS

Areas of focus have been determined through a review of existing data and engagement with stakeholders as identified in the methodology. These focus areas will be considered when identifying and prioritising actions.

Overall, there is very little diversity or choice in the construction of new homes,

with the majority being single detached housing. Latent demand may exist for medium density housing, however, in order to invest in specific solutions, more evidence of market demand is required.

It is important to note overall adequate land is available for new residential construction; nevertheless, data on

privately certified, Council-certified, and removal dwelling approvals reveal a notable predominance of detached housing. The challenge lies not in approvals hindering supply but rather in market prices and developers strategically managing supply, especially in the context of rural residential areas.

4.1 SHORTAGE IN PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET

The region's rental housing operates in a constrained market, affecting availability. To support local demand and new entrants like skilled workers, accessible rental housing is crucial. Failure to address the rental shortage may have long-term adverse impacts on regional economic development, productivity, and labour force renewal in the region.

A notable surge in median value of rents has been observed since 2020. This trend can be attributed, at least in part, to the decrease in the total stock of rental dwellings, indicated by a decline in bonds

held by the Rental Tenancy Authority (RTA) from March 2021 onwards. Another contributing factor to the constrained rental supply is the acquisition of rental properties by owner-occupiers. According to discussions with local real estate agents conducted by Foresight Partners on behalf of the SDRC, the substantial rise in property prices during the pandemic led to the sale of many permanent rental properties to owner-occupiers. This, in turn, has intensified competition among renters for a reduced pool of available rental housing.

Notably, the adverse impact of Airbnb (or short-term) rentals on the permanent rental stock was specifically highlighted for Stanthorpe. As of June 2023, the scarcity of rental options was evident, with only 18 properties available for rent on Realestate.com¹¹. The table below (Table 7) delineates the number of rental listings in key areas within the region by type.

	House	Unit	Duplex / Semi-detached	Other	Total
Warwick	5	6	1	0	12
Stanthorpe	4	0	0	0	4
Allora	0	0	0	0	0
Killarney	0	0	0	1	1
Wallangarra	1	0	0	0	1
Total KUAs	10	6	1	1	18

Table 7: Rental listings by areas and types as at 30 June 2023

¹¹ Housing Needs Assessment Addendum Report – Southern Downs LGA- September 2023

The rental vacancy rates in the region also sit well below the 'healthy' rental vacancy rate (3%-3.5%) with each key area within the region seeing:

- 0.2% for the 4370 postcode (Warwick)
- 0.2% for the 4380 postcode (Stanthorpe)
- 0.7% for the 4362 postcode (Allora)
- 0% for the 4373 postcode (Killarney) and
- 1.7% for the 4383 postcode (Wallangarra)¹²

These vacancy rates indicate a significant shortage in the availability of housing for renting households. Another factor adding to the rental market pressures in the Southern Downs region are non-resident workers. The Southern Downs and Granite Belt area attract individuals engaged in long-term energy and construction projects, along with seasonal agricultural work, particularly in Stanthorpe. The fluctuating demand,

notably peaking between September and May leads to spikes in median rents during busy periods and restricts leasing options for houses and units in the off-season.

4.2 HOUSING FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

The Queensland Government's *Healthy Ageing Strategy* indicates there is increasing desire among older people to age in place, that is, continuing to live in their communities as they get older. The ability to age in place depends on multiple factors, including access to appropriate housing, transport, health services, and social participation.

Demand is notable when looking at the QGSO population projections (2023 series) which suggests that the proportion of Southern Downs residents aged 65+ will be around 36% by 2041.

The demographic trend indicates that the population of Southern Downs will continue to have a higher percentage of people in the older age bracket than the

Queensland average.

Addressing the needs of this ageing population necessitates a broader range of housing options. This involves offering diverse dwelling sizes, styles and tenures to cater to the older demographic seeking downsizing alternatives, beyond traditional aged care accommodations. Potential options include independent living units (ILUs) in retirement villages or over 55s accommodation, as well as a growing demand for specialised aged care facilities like assisted living and nursing homes.

As of June 2023, there were 16 aged care services providing 418 operational places within the Southern Downs region. Considering the increasing population of

individuals over 65 years and the rising demand for health support services, especially given that 34.4% of the population had one or more long-term health conditions in 2021, it is evident that there will be a growing need for suitable aged care services well beyond the current available capacity.

The ageing population poses a significant challenge for the region in the coming decades, and this issue is compounded by the limited diversity in housing stock. Internal Council consultations reveal a lack of variety in the construction of new homes, with the majority of developers opting for traditional single-detached housing.

4.3 SOCIAL HOUSING

As of June 2023, there were 78 applications for social housing with an average number of months on the housing register of 20.19 months (which is lower than the Queensland average of 27.94 months).¹³

The Southern Downs is experiencing a pressing need for increased social housing due to existing shortages and

the number of active applications on the housing register. Recognising this need, both the State and Federal governments are urged to invest in additional social housing, aligning with current state government policy. The primary challenge in the region lies in securing funding to address the shortage of social housing and provide essential support to the more vulnerable members of the community.

Although social housing is a State lead responsibility, Council is open to partnering with the State to potentially identify areas of need for more social housing through future engagement. These potential opportunities are outlined in Section 5.2 Actions.

¹² SQM Research

¹³ Queensland Government, 2023, *Social Housing Register as of 30 June 2023*

4.4 HOMELESSNESS

Estimates from the 2021 census state that approximately 118 individuals were experiencing homelessness in the Southern Downs region.¹⁴

Currently, Cornerstone Homelessness Program operates the sole homelessness

shelter of the region in Warwick, providing crisis accommodation and emergency relief for a smooth transition into permanent housing. Stanthorpe does not have a homelessness shelter, and low vacancy rates in caravan parks

and backpacker hostels during peak harvesting season can limit the Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre's ability to secure alternative crisis accommodation.

4.5 WORKERS ACCOMMODATION

The number of applications for workers accommodation is on an upward trend. Since January 2020, the SDRC has approved 16 applications to convert existing dwellings/structures to workers' accommodation. If completed, these would have the capacity to house some 124 workers.¹⁵

The Southern Downs region is currently grappling with housing shortages for its expanding workforce, prompting local businesses to explore investment opportunities in the housing market. Some firms are actively pursuing the expansion of their workforce through

direct overseas migration to the Southern Downs, increasing demand for housing to support these incoming workers.

Anecdotal evidence highlights instances where new staff, faced with low vacancy rates, are seeking accommodation upon receiving job offers. The availability of housing is paramount to meeting these needs, prompting the Council to consider appropriate strategies.

Furthermore, long-term energy projects are contributing to an increased regional workforce, intensifying pressures on the housing market. For instance,

while Macintyre Wind Farm provides some onsite worker accommodation, a significant number of workers are housed in motels or rental properties, exacerbating the strain on an already limited market.

The demand for unit accommodation, especially for medium-density housing, is evident in the region, with new residents who simply require accommodation to house themselves in the region and may choose to transition to single detached family homes in the future or other housing types.



¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021, Southern Downs LGA Census Data 2021

¹⁵ Housing Needs Assessment Addendum Report – Southern Downs LGA. September 2023

5 RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES

A Local Housing Action Plan enables engagement across all levels of government, and benefits from partnerships between private and not-for-profit organisations. An initial set of tactical actions has been developed,

enabling refinement through an ongoing iterative process. These actions provide for a targeted response and outcomes that will seek to either create immediate benefit or establish a foundation for the next phase of actions. More specific

responses will be determined in consultation with the local housing and social services sector. These responses can provide flexibility in delivery and support each of the broad areas identified.



5.1 EXISTING INITIATIVES

The SDRC has already worked on several key initiatives to address the housing crisis to date and look forward to accelerating opportunities in partnership with the State. Some of the key activities and initiatives the Council has implemented include:

- **Land Optimisation Strategy 2023**
 This strategy aims to maximise opportunities available for Council owned or controlled land for the community to engage in a secure long-term lease to provide outcomes for housing, development and community use. In August 2023 Council invited tender submissions for seven lots within the region.
 - o The following principles underpin the Strategy:
 - Optimise benefits of available Council land currently under-utilised;
 - Establish partnerships and best practise dealings with State

Government and industry to achieve positive outcomes;

- Meet the needs of our community in terms of housing and potential land use;
- Maximise revenue outcomes and value for money returns on available land assets.
- o Specific actions arising from the strategy include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Review Council's land register and offer vacant land for lease or disposal;
 - Investigate land suitable to meet housing needs within urban areas;
 - Apply to the State Government to purchase available land/to secure tenure arrangements;
 - Ongoing review of parks and reserves to establish highest and most appropriate use.

Community Housing Provider

Partnership. Council has commenced an initiative to partner with one or more Community Housing Providers (CHP) to facilitate and expedite the delivery of further housing in the region. The partnership could include Council providing land, facilitating streamlined approval processes and potentially co-design of any project. An outcome may also be the inclusion of Council staff housing in an integrated development. To this end, an Expression of Interest was circulated to twelve reputable and experienced CHPs in August 2023. Six of these organisations subsequently presented to Council in November 2023 and one was invited back to the region to discuss options in greater detail in December 2023. Discussions are ongoing and it is anticipated that potential project/s will be identified and progressed through 2024.

- Commence the development of a new **Southern Downs Planning Scheme.**

5.2 ACTIONS

The SDRC, with the support of the Queensland Government through the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, is committed to engage in the delivery of its initial Local Housing

Action Plan through this set of actions, developed to target immediate to longer term housing responses. This is an iterative process, and these actions and target outcomes will seek to either

create immediate benefit or to establish foundations that help respond to ongoing housing need.

It is important to note that this Local Housing Action Plan provides an overview of available information as a basis for discussion and decision-making. It should not be viewed in isolation but considered as part of a broad response to supporting housing need across both the Southern Downs region and the State more broadly.

1	Land and Development	Timeline
1.1	Council to continue with the current Land Optimisation Strategy 2023 to determine land suitable for residential development and disposal for residential purposes.	Short
1.2	Council to review existing land holdings, particularly in central Warwick, to identify land that is suitable for development and/or redevelopment to support short and longer-term housing outcomes.	Short

2	Planning	Timeline
2.1	Council to finalise new Planning Scheme that will consider emerging and future housing needs.	Medium
2.2	Council to continue to work with Community Housing Providers to continue current initiatives to provide land and facilitate the development of suitable housing projects that respond to housing needs.	Short
2.3	New Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) identifying infrastructure project and to support growth	Medium

3	Optimisation	Timeline
3.1	Council to expedite the outcomes of its Land Optimisation Strategy with a view to addressing regional housing needs.	Short
3.2	Actively lobby the Queensland Government and State Agencies to expedite regional housing outcomes.	Short
3.3	Liaise with State Agencies to establish government worker accommodation needs in conjunction with Council's employee housing projects.	Short

4	Master planning	Timeline
4.1	Council to continue current master planning strategies to maximise identified sites for residential land development including the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Rosenthal Depot Site, Willi Street, Rosenthal Heights • Glen Road/Willi Street triangle, Rosenthal Heights • Willi Street Park Reserve, Rosenthal Heights • Rosendahl Street Road Reserve, Warwick • Fitzroy and Canning Streets, Warwick • Gordon Lane Units, 35-37 Gordon Lane, Allora • Vacant Land, 33 Anemone Street, Killarney 	Short

5	Supports	Timeline
5.1	Council to consider additional actions to support future flood resilience measures for forced displacement during disaster events.	Short
5.2	Council to support and assist Community Housing Providers to respond to specialised housing needs including disability, crisis, homelessness and domestic violence accommodation. Example – Fitzroy and Canning Street project.	Short
5.3	<p>Council to work in partnership with the State Government to identify social housing need and potential suitable sites where conversion of tenure or change of ownership is required. Potential sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willi Street Park Reserve, Rosenthal Heights. • Banksia Gardens, Boronia Street, Warwick* • Apex Park, 25 Yarrowonga Street, Warwick* • Drill Hall Park, 15-23 Short Street, Stanthorpe* <p style="text-align: center;"> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosendahl Street Road Reserve, Warwick • Pennant Park, 41-45 Fairway Drive, Warwick* • Stonewood Park, 5 Stonewood Crs, Warwick* <p>*Note: Future public consultation would need to be undertaken prior to any decision by Council to proceed.</p>	Short
5.4	Council to apply to freehold available lots for community housing and work with Community Housing Providers to establish affordable or group title housing solutions.	Short

6	People in need	Timeline
6.1	Council to seek opportunities, funding and partnerships to undertake data collection to identify the extent and location of people at risk of homelessness in each community and target responses.	Medium
6.2	Council to engage with Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) on appropriate accommodation options for people with disability in Warwick and Stanthorpe.	Short

7	Construction	Timeline
7.1	Council to investigate and identify opportunities, either through the revised Planning Scheme or Council policy initiatives, mechanisms to meet housing market demand.	Medium
7.2	<p>Council to identify specific initiatives that may be considered to encourage targeted outcomes, such as temporary incentives to stimulate approved developments.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing infrastructure charges, possible barriers or other mechanisms to commencing approved developments in order to accelerate supply, • Consider incentives through infrastructure charges to increase diversity of housing stock, including accessing the \$350m Homes for Queenslanders fund for infill developments. 	Medium

8	People in need	Timeline
8.1	Council to fast-track land development on identified sites, through the Land Optimisation Strategy, for employee housing, utilising current budget allocations.	Short
8.2	Council to investigate opportunities to partner with aged care providers and private builders who specialise in aged care accommodation to encourage investment in the region to cater for an ageing population.	Short

5.3 NEXT STEPS

Council will establish a Local Housing Action Plan Working Group of key representatives from Council, relevant

State agencies, key stakeholders and community organisations, to oversee and progress actions, review findings, report six

monthly progress and further develop the Plan in an open partnership to address and ultimately resolve the housing challenge.



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Southern Downs

A great place to live, work, play and stay.

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