



SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Dear Councillors

Your attendance is requested at the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held in the Council Chambers, Southern Downs Regional Council, 61 Marsh Street, Stanthorpe on **Wednesday, 25 February 2026** at **9:00AM**.

Notice is given of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

Rachel Brophy

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

20 February 2026

Attendance:

10:30am Staff Recognition of Service Awards

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WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2026 Ordinary Council Meeting

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1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**
2. **PRAYER & CONDOLENCES**
3. **ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**
4. **READING AND CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**
- 4.1 **Ordinary Council Meeting - 28 January 2026**

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 28 January 2026 be adopted.

5. ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1 Actions from Council Meeting 28 January 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council receive the report.

REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of Actions resulting from resolutions from the Ordinary Council Meeting held 28 January 2026.

A copy of the Actions Report is attached.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Actions from Ordinary Council Meeting 28 January 2026 [↓](#)



ACTIONS FROM ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 28 JANUARY 2026

MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION OFFICER	ACTION TO DATE	COMPLETED
28/01/2026	5.1	Actions from Council Meeting 17 December 2025	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:51pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:51:29 PM - Noted.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	7.1	Mayoral Minute - Corporate Plan Survey	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:52pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:52:38 PM - Noted.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	7.2	Mayoral Minute - Appreciation to Warwick Art Gallery Director	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:52pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:52:55 PM - Letter of appreciation sent to Karina Devine.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	9.1	Correspondence	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:53pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:53:03 PM - Noted.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	12.1	Chief Executive Officer - Status Report	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:53pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:53:08 PM - Noted.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	12.2	Southern Downs Local Disaster Management Group - Deputy Chairperson Nomination	Simonelli, Pia	30 Jan 2026 4:59am Bell, Michael - Completion Completed by Bell, Michael on behalf of Simonelli, Pia (action officer) on 30 January 2026 at 4:59:52 AM - Noted, with letters drafted and sent to confirm appointments.	30/01/2026
28/01/2026	13.1	Financial Services - Financial Report as at 31 December 2025	Betts, Melissa	29 Jan 2026 3:00pm Betts, Melissa - Completion Completed by Betts, Melissa (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 3:00:36 PM - December 2025 Finance Report Noted	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	13.2	Operational Plan 2025/26 - Second Quarter Update	Keir, Dianna	02 Feb 2026 8:44am Keir, Dianna - Completion Completed by Keir, Dianna (action officer) on 02 February 2026 at 8:44:18 AM - Council resolution noted.	2/02/2026
28/01/2026	13.3	Renewal of Tenure - Expiry up to 31 December 2026	Glode, Patrina	10 Feb 2026 4:50pm Glode, Patrina - Completion Completed by Glode, Patrina (action officer) on 10 February 2026 at 4:50:16 PM - Lease Drafted.	10/02/2026



ACTIONS FROM ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 28 JANUARY 2026

MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION OFFICER	ACTION TO DATE	COMPLETED
28/01/2026	13.4	Lease Renewal - Warwick Cowboys Junior Rugby League - Lot 46 on ML1315 and Lot 47 on W134623	Glode, Patrina	10 Feb 2026 4:50pm Glode, Patrina - Completion Completed by Glode, Patrina (action officer) on 10 February 2026 at 4:50:27 PM - Leases being drafted.	10/02/2026
28/01/2026	15.1	Reconfiguring a Lot: Adrienne L Doherty - 7 Cullen Street, Warwick	Hay, Mitchell	11 Feb 2026 7:56am Verney, Prue - Completion Completed by Verney, Prue on behalf of Hay, Mitchell (action officer) on 11 February 2026 at 7:56:52 AM - Refusal Decision Notice issued.	11/02/2026
28/01/2026	15.2	Pest Management Advisory Committee Meeting	Collett, Nicole	11 Feb 2026 7:57am Verney, Prue - Completion Completed by Verney, Prue on behalf of Collett, Nicole (action officer) on 11 February 2026 at 7:57:37 AM - Noted for Minutes of next Pest Management Advisory Committee Meeting.	11/02/2026
28/01/2026		Procedural Motion - Meeting Adjournment	Brophy, Rachel	29 Jan 2026 2:53pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 29 January 2026 at 2:53:22 PM - Noted.	29/01/2026
28/01/2026	17.1	Review Committee	Frost, Dean	12 Feb 2026 4:07pm Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Frost, Dean (action officer) on 12 February 2026 at 4:07:01 PM - Noted - arrangements for review commenced.	12/02/2026

6. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

7. MAYORAL MINUTE

Nil

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 Notice of Motion - Thanks for Firefighting Effort at Karara

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Notice of Motion – To Be Moved by Cr Bartley

THAT Council move a motion of thanks to everybody who assisted in the firefighting effort during the recent fire event at Karara.

Report

Cr Bartley submitted the attached Notice of Motion (**Attachment 1**) requesting that Council acknowledge and thank everyone who assisted in the firefighting effort during the recent fire event at Karara.

Cr Bartley's background information state that the intent of the Notice of Motion was to recognise the collaboration of the community in their approach to a potential disaster.

Council is asked to consider the Motion.

Officer's Comments

The Manager Community Resilience advised that the Karara fires ran from Friday, 6 February through until Tuesday, 10 February 2026. The fires burned up to people's property boundaries, burning across approximately 400ha (see below).



The fire was only prevented from directly affecting people's homes through the collective efforts of the local community, Rural Fire Service, Queensland Fire Department, Queensland Police Service, and Council.

From a Council perspective, Council assisted with disaster management oversight, heavy plant/labour and communication support.

Post fires, Council has transitioned to recovery, now working with the community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Notice of Motion [↓](#)



Notice of Motion by Councillors

Councillor: Bartley

Date: 18/02/2026

Motion:

THAT

Council move a motion of Thanks to everybody who assisted in the Fire Fighting effort during the recent fire event at Karara.

Relevant Background Information

This is motion is to recognise the Collaboration of the community in their approach to a potential disaster.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. J. Jacoby", written over a horizontal line.

1) Notices of Motions shall be lodged in the approved form with the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate two (2) calendar days prior to the closure of the business paper agenda for the meeting of Council at which the Notices of Motion are to be considered.

2) Councillors shall ensure, where it is intended that employees of the Council be asked to carry out some specific defined action that a Notice of Motion is written in such a way that, if carried, the motion carries clear and unambiguous direction.

- Start with the word "That" f
- Use the third person and avoid the use of the first person f
- Clearly indicate the intention of the Council f
- Avoid statements that are ambiguous f
- Aim for clarity of expression f
- Be carefully constructed and if necessary, set out in clauses that can be clearly identified by letters or numbers f
- Indicate proposed action or reflect agreed views on a particular issue f
- Don't re-introduce a resolution which has already been rejected

9. READING AND CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Correspondence

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT the report of the Chief Executive Officer in relation to Correspondence be received.

REPORT

- 1. Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation** advising that Council's application for funding for Lithium-ion Battery Collection and Storage Services Expansion project of \$58,703 (excl GST) had been successful under the Local Government Battery Collection Program.

Action: Referred to General Manager Communities, Planning & Environmental Services.

- 2. Mayor Hamilton to James Lister MP** seeking clarity in relation to the 60km/hr and 80km/hr zones on the Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway, despite no active roadworks ongoing on this stretch of the highway (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 3. James Lister MP** in response to correspondence from the Mayor seeking clarification on the speed limits on the Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 4. Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training** providing a response to the Mayor's letter to the Minister for Education and the Arts regarding the eligibility of students to undertake a VET in Schools program or a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship concurrently (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 5. Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation** inviting Council to submit an application under the renewed grant funding program, Fighting Illegal Dumping Partnership program. The program is aimed at bringing together the State Government and local Councils to tackle the ongoing problem of illegal dumping across the State (copy attached).

Action: Referred to the Acting General Manager Communities, Planning and Environmental Services

6. **Mayor Hamilton to the Federal Treasurer** sharing Council's priority projects for water security and supporting growth in agriculture for the 2026-2027 Federal Budget (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

7. **Mayor Hamilton to the State Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership** sharing Council's priority projects for water security, roads and supporting growth in agriculture for the 2026-2027 State Budget (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

8. **Mayor Hamilton to Minister for Health and Ambulance Services** acknowledging the recent advice from Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service in relation to the assessment undertaken of the Warwick Hospital helipad, and the commencement of planning for future health infrastructure options for the Warwick Hospital. The Mayor reiterated community concerns and sentiment with the current helipad arrangements and the need for possible options to be considered to allow a helicopter landing site adjacent to the Warwick Hospital (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

9. **Mayor Hamilton to Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service** acknowledging the recent advice in relation to the assessment undertaken of the Warwick Hospital helipad, and the commencement of planning for future health infrastructure options for the Warwick Hospital. The Mayor reiterated community concerns and sentiment with the current helipad arrangements and the need for possible options to be considered to allow a helicopter landing site adjacent to the Warwick Hospital (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Correspondence from Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation [↓](#)
2. Correspondence from Mayor Hamilton to James Lister MP [↓](#)
3. Correspondence from James Lister MP [↓](#)
4. Correspondence from Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training [↓](#)
5. Correspondence from Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation [↓](#)
6. Correspondence from Mayor Hamilton to the Federal Treasurer [↓](#)
7. Correspondence from Mayor Hamilton to the State Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership [↓](#)
8. Correspondence from Mayor Hamilton to Minister for Health and Ambulance Services [↓](#)
9. Correspondence from Mayor Hamilton to Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service [↓](#)

Minister for the Environment
and Tourism and Minister for
Science and Innovation

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7300
Email environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Application No: BCP05
Our reference: CTS 20273/25

15 OCT 2025

Councillor Melissa Hamilton
Mayor
Southern Downs Regional Council
PO Box 26
WARWICK QLD 4370

Dear Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa".

I am pleased to inform you that Southern Downs Regional Council's (SDRC) application for funding under the Local Government Battery Collection Program for the following project has been successful:

- Lithium-ion Battery Collection and Storage Services Expansion.

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department) is pleased to offer SDRC funding of up to \$58,703 (GST excl) towards your eligible project costs.

Please treat this notification as confidential and withhold any media or public announcements until the successful applicants have been announced by the department. Once an announcement has been made, I encourage SDRC to actively promote your success in securing this funding.

Once again, congratulations on your successful application and I look forward to learning about the progress and outcomes of the project.

If your officers require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, they may contact the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling, Environment and Heritage Policy and Programs of the department by email at owrrprograms@des.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Powell".

Andrew Powell MP
Minister for the Environment and Tourism
Minister for Science and Innovation

Office of the Mayor



15 January 2026

Mr James Lister MP
Member for Southern Downs
PO Box 444
STANTHORPE QLD 4380

Email: southern.downs@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear James

I am writing to seek clarity in relation to the 60km/hour and 80km/hour zones on the Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway. Despite no active roadworks ongoing on this stretch of highway the lower speed signs remain in place.

This is an important freight route, and as the recent discussions around lower speed limits on rural roads showed, our regional communities expect that our highways will allow travel at 100km/hour. Many of our residents who have had to travel to Brisbane over the Christmas and new year period have expressed their frustration with the continued limits given no apparent rectification works are being undertaken.

Can you please confirm the Department's intended timeframe for the limited speed limits, so that we can communicate this information to our constituents.

I thank you again for your support in making the Southern Downs a safe and liveable region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Melissa Hamilton'.

Melissa Hamilton
Mayor

 sdr.c.qld.gov.au  1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372)  mail@sdr.c.qld.gov.au

 PO Box 26, Warwick QLD 4370  ABN 59 786 792 651



JAMES LISTER MP

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

STANTHORPE ELECTORATE OFFICE: - 9 VICTORIA STREET, STANTHORPE 4380 TELEPHONE: - 07 4524 7700 - 1800 811 827
WARWICK ELECTORATE OFFICE: 56 KING STREET, WARWICK 4370 TELEPHONE: (07) 46618070
E-MAIL – SOUTHERN.DOWNS@PARLIAMENT.QLD.GOV.AU
ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: - P.O. Box 444 STANTHORPE 4380

Mayor
Ms Melissa Hamilton
Southern Downs Regional Council
PO Box 26
Warwick QLD 4380
EMAIL: mail@sdrcl.qld.gov.au

Dear Mayor

Melissa,

Thank you for writing to me seeking clarification on the speed limits on the Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway.

I have emailed the Regional Director, Department of Transport and Main Roads concerning this matter earlier this month, however as we await this reply, please see below advice from him from November last year.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) understands that reduced speed limits can be frustrating for drivers and may cause inconvenience. The current reduced speed zones on the Cunningham Highway, however, are necessary to reduce the risk of accidents and vehicle damage while our crews work to monitor and respond to pavement issues.

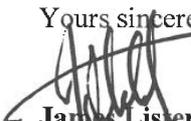
Following several significant wet weather events in recent years, pavement conditions on the highway have become prone to rapid changes and deterioration. Safety measures such as temporary 'rough surface' signage and reduced speed zones in areas where pavement deterioration is a higher risk, have been implemented.

TMR is actively monitoring the highway conditions and programming maintenance works to maintain the road in a safe, trafficable condition. In the interim, the department appreciates motorists' patience and understanding, and notes that compliance with the reduced speeds will minimise the likelihood and severity of incidents arising.

Roadworks are currently underway on a four-kilometre section of Cunningham Highway, between Tregony and Maryvale. Funded under the Targeted Road Safety Program, these works include pavement strengthening as well as road widening to install a wide centre line treatment and audio tactile line markings, increasing shoulder width and guardrail installation.

When an updated response is provided, I will write again.

Yours sincerely


James Lister MP
Member for Southern Downs
23 January 2026

P.S. Melissa, I understand and share in the community's weariness at the ongoing roadworks between Warwick and Cunningham Gap. As you know, it is necessary to undertake a large amount of work to restore our state roads following the withdrawal of funding for proper and durable maintenance and upgrades from QTRIP during the decade of the previous government.

This work is being done at the fastest pace that industry and project management capacity will allow. Depending on the advice of the department, it may well be that the maintenance of reduced speed limits on roads known to be vulnerable to pavement damage during rain periods is necessary in order maintain progress on the restoration of the highway network.

Dept ref: TF25/3069; D26/10
MO ref: FTET/2025-2795

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Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7560
Email ftet@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.qld.gov.au

22 JAN 2026

Ms Melissa Hamilton
Mayor
Southern Downs Regional Council
Email: mail@sdr.cild.gov.au

Dear Mayor

I refer to your letter dated 11 November 2025 to the Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP, Minister for Education and the Arts regarding the eligibility of students to undertake a VET in Schools (VETiS) program or a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (SAT) concurrently. As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your correspondence has been forwarded to me for consideration.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide clarification in response to your enquiry. Please be advised that VET in Schools 2026 (VETiS 2026) is a continuation of VETiS 2025 with the core elements of the program remaining unchanged. This includes ensuring students have access to one Department of Trade, Employment and Training funded qualification at any given time, maximising access to free and low-cost training for all Queenslanders.

Students may, however, continue to enrol in a Department funded qualification or SAT while also undertaking a qualification offered by their school or through fee for service arrangements. This flexibility allows schools and families to tailor training options to meet individual student needs. For your convenience, I have attached a summary of eligibility for VETiS 2026, which may assist when discussing this matter with members of your community. This information is also available online at <https://dtet.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded/vetis/2026#eligibility>.

In addition to formal qualifications, students can gain valuable industry experience through initiatives such as work experience organised through their school, participation in the Gateway to Industry Schools program or involvement in the Career Taster Pilot.

The Career Taster Pilot will be launched in 2026 by TAFE Queensland and CQUniversity, with a focus on supporting regional students and those without access to programs like the Gateway to Industry Schools Program.

It is important to note that school students cannot separately undertake a Department funded part-time apprenticeship or traineeship. This policy supports that schools are involved in the decision-making process for a school student to undertake a funded SAT and ensures that students do not exhaust their entitlement to other government-subsidised training opportunities while still at school.

To ensure students benefit fully from the government's investment in their training, it is crucial that their qualification choices align with both the program's objectives and their individual career goals. Schools and other stakeholders are encouraged to consult their education sector peak agency or collaborate with local schools for further guidance and ideas on tailoring training pathways to meet student needs.

Further information about VETiS and related policies is available online at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded/vetis>.

If you require further assistance, please contact Ms Teresa Guiney, Director, Skills Investment, Department of Trade, Employment and Training, on telephone 3524 3492 or via email at teresa.guiney@dtet.qld.gov.au.

Thank you for your interest in skilling pathways for secondary school students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ros Bates', is positioned above the printed name.

Ros Bates MP
Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training

Enc: Summary of VETiS 2026 eligibility

Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation

**DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND**



**Queensland
Government**

Our reference: CTS 18855/25

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7300
Email environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

28 JAN 2026

Councillor Melissa Hamilton
Mayor
Southern Downs Regional Council
PO Box 26
WARWICK QLD 4370

Dear Mayor

The Fighting Illegal Dumping Partnership Program (FIDPP) brings together the Queensland Government and local councils to tackle the ongoing problem of illegal dumping across the State. To date, council partners have delivered strong results, with more than 42,000 cases investigated, over 2,500 fines issued valued at \$4.5 million, and more than 80 million litres of illegally dumped waste removed from the environment. That is the equivalent of around 333,000 wheelie bins cleaned up and out of our communities. FIDPP will continue this work and deliver stronger outcomes across Queensland.

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department) helped participating councils increase capability by providing training and access to resources, facilitating forums, and establishing an ongoing community of practice for illegal dumping compliance practitioners. This collaborative approach between local and state governments has proven to be highly effective and, in recognition of the commitment of councils, FIDPP invites an extension of these arrangements for up to three years to both existing and new partners.

I would like to invite Southern Downs Regional Council to submit an application for participation in the renewed grant funding program.

More information on the renewed FIDPP is available on the department's website at www.qld.gov.au/environment/circular-economy-waste-reduction/litter-illegal-dumping/grants-funding.

If your officers require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, they may contact the Grants Administration team of the department on telephone (07) 3330 6360 or by email at grantsadministration@detsi.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Powell MP
Minister for the Environment and Tourism
Minister for Science and Innovation

cc Ms Rachel Brophy
Chief Executive Officer

Office of the Mayor



30 January 2026

Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Treasurer
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: jim.chalmers.mp@aph.gov.au
CC: Minister.Collins@aff.gov.au
senator.watt@aph.gov.au
kristy.mcbain.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Treasurer

2026-27 Pre-Budget submissions – Southern Downs Regional Council priorities

I thank you for the opportunity to share our views regarding priorities for the 2026-27 Federal Budget. Our Council is extremely appreciative of the support and assistance provided by the Australian Government from previous budgets to support a range of initiatives for Queensland and the Southern Downs region, including the Warwick Saleyards redevelopment and Disaster Recovery funding.

About our region

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Our budget priorities - water security and supporting growth in agriculture

To support our region's projected growth, Council has focused on two (2) key packages needed from FY27.

1. Once in a lifetime opportunity to drought proof the Southern Downs
2. Beefing up our livestock industry

These two (2) packages seek Federal government investment and, in the drought-proofing package, a joint approach with the Queensland Government to access the National Water Grid Fund. Our Council has had discussions with the State Government to seek their support for advocacy and funding.

Water security for the Southern Downs is the number one priority for our Council. As a region vulnerable to drought where Stanthorpe's water sources were fully depleted in 2019-2021, and being in a high-risk bushfire zone, long-term reliable water security is critical for our region. The three (3) initiatives included as part of the drought-proofing package are the first priorities that will need to be delivered as part of a staged funding approach to deliver generational water infrastructure now and into the future. Last year I had the pleasure of meeting with Senator Watt around our water security needs, and he was supportive of our projects meeting the funding requirements through the National Water Grid Fund. We hope that the Albanese Government will be the one to finally deliver water security for the Southern Downs.

The second package is a sun shelter for the Warwick Saleyards facility. This enhancement will assist Council meet its legal obligations with regards to animal welfare as required in state and federal frameworks and contribute to ensuring the long-term future for traditional primary industries that have been a key pillar in our nation's enduring economic prosperity.

We recognise that the packages require a phased delivery approach and therefore, phased funding approach over consecutive years – we seek the Australian Government's partnership to commit funding from FY27.

I appreciate your consideration of our funding requests and look forward to continuing our partnership with the Federal Government to deliver great outcomes for the Southern Downs region.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Hamilton
Mayor



ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT-PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 1 - Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Stanthorpe urgently requires a long-term, reliable urban water supply solution to safeguard residents, businesses, and the region's tourism economy, as identified in the Queensland government's Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) requests the Australian Government co-fund the detailed business case for the Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline, contributing 50% of project costs (with the Queensland Government funding the balance). The estimated cost of the business case is \$6 million.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 1 - Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline

3. WHY IT MATTERS

The Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline is the key piece of infrastructure to connect all Council water resources, to realise the vision of 'drought-proofing' the Southern Downs.

During the 2019–21 drought, water carting to Stanthorpe cost the Queensland Government \$18 million, alongside significant environmental and logistical challenges.

Uncertainty of supply placed heavy psychological strain on residents and undermined confidence in the region's future.

The Granite Belt's reputation as a premium food and wine destination was damaged, with visitor numbers impacted.

With the region located in a high-risk bushfire zone, a lack of secure water supply affects our ability to respond to bushfire emergencies.

Without a reliable long-term water solution, the region will be unable to meet demand for future population growth and visitation anticipated ahead of the 2032 Olympics.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

Missed opportunity: As the key infrastructure to connect Southern Downs' water resources, inaction will result in delays in realising a connection grid to drought-proof the region.

Community resilience: Ongoing risk of emergency water carting in future droughts.

Economic impact: Loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.

Social impact: Stress on families, reduced liveability, and population decline.

Reputational risk: Federal and State Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan - water is critical for liveable cities and healthy environments and is a key economic enabler specifically *recommendation 6.1: secure a long-term water supply for urban, rural, environmental and cultural users.*

Water Infrastructure for Sustainable and Efficient Regions (WSIER) funding initiative.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Advance the \$6million detailed business case for the Warwick to Stanthorpe pipeline, as recommended by the Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment.

Business case will provide costed design, environmental and heritage assessment, and delivery options.

Council supports a co-funding model between Australian and Queensland Governments. Council has approached the Queensland Government for their support and advocacy to the federal government via the National Water Grid Fund.

The pipeline is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local producers and tourism operators – backing water security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- Federal and State Government – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Provides long-term water security for approx. 10,000 Stanthorpe and surrounds residents. Access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic human right.
- Protects the tourism and allied sectors from collapse in drought years.
- Enhances visitor confidence and supports Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.
- Reduces future emergency response costs (avoiding another \$18M+ carting bill) and associated risks.
- Improves our ability to respond to bushfire emergencies - enhanced community safety.

9. CONTACT

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FY27 Federal
Government
Pre-Budget
Submission

ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT- PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 2 - Connolly Dam Safety Upgrades

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Connolly Dam (located 15km south of Warwick, Queensland) is in urgent need of safety upgrades required by the State Regulator – it was rated as the most unsafe dam in Queensland in 2025, by the Regulator. As the Southern Downs' only emergency water supply, these upgrades are needed to ensure a long-term, reliable urban water supply solution to safeguard residents, businesses, and the region's tourism economy.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

SDRC requires a phased funding approach to fulfill the safety upgrades required by the State Regulator. Whilst no funding is sought in this year's budget submission (2026-27), funding will be required from 2027-28 to undertake a detailed concept design.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 2 - Connolly Dam Safety Upgrades

3. WHY IT MATTERS

Connolly Dam is the Southern Downs' only emergency water supply. During the 2019–21 drought, many communities relied on this water source with the nearby town of Stanthorpe requiring emergency water carting costing the Queensland Government \$18 million, alongside significant environmental and logistical challenges.

Connolly Dam, a State-regulated referable dam, has been identified by the State Regulator as one of Queensland's most unsafe dams due to its age and increased downstream population risk.

The draft As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) risk profile increased the estimated people at risk from 136 to 550 and raised the dam's consequence category, with potential for severe consequences.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

Community safety: Places our community at risk.

Legal impact: Non-compliance is in breach of *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

Economic impact: Without a secure emergency water supply, it could lead to loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.

Reputational risk: Federal and State Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security and safety.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan - water is critical for liveable cities and healthy environments and is a key economic enabler specifically *recommendation 6.1: secure a long-term water supply for urban, rural, environmental and cultural users*.

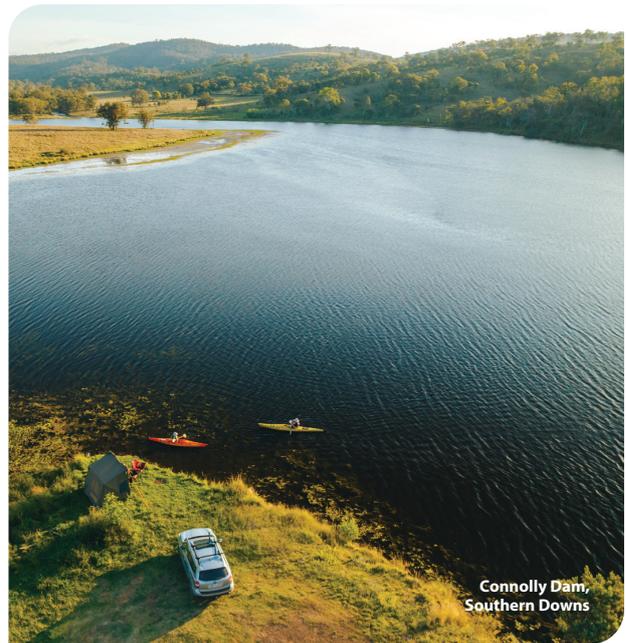
Water Infrastructure for Sustainable and Efficient Regions (WSIER) funding initiative.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

To date, SDRC has spent approximately \$1 million on a scoping exercise to understand the level of investment required. Stage 2 will require a detailed design which will require funding in the 2027-28 financial year.

Council supports a co-funding model between Australian and Queensland Governments. Council has approached the Queensland Government for their support and advocacy to the federal government via the National Water Grid Fund.

The Connolly Dam safety upgrades is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs.



7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local producers, manufacturers and tourism operators – backing water security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- Federal and State Governments – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Enhanced safety and wellbeing for the Southern Downs community.
- Southern Downs residents (approx. 37,000) have access to an emergency water supply source in times of future drought.
- Protects the tourism and allied sectors from collapse in drought years.
- Enhances visitor confidence and supports Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.

9. CONTACT

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FY27 Federal
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INCREASING IRRIGATED WATER EFFICIENCY IN THE GRANITE BELT

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 3 – On-farm Dam Evaporation Covers

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Horticultural producers in the Granite Belt region of Southern Downs are increasingly constrained by limited and highly variable irrigation water availability under existing water plans. Climate variability, extended drought periods, and high evaporation rates from on-farm water storages significantly reduce effective water supply, directly impacting agricultural productivity, investment confidence, and regional economic resilience.

The Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment (RWA) identified evaporation losses from farm dams as a critical inefficiency in the region's water system and recommended evaporation reduction measures—specifically floating covers or shade structures.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council seeks Australian Government funding of approximately \$5 million in the FY27 Budget to support a pilot program installing floating evaporation covers on up to 10 on-farm water storages in the Granite Belt region.

The funding would cover capital costs only and demonstrate the cost-effectiveness and productivity benefits of evaporation reduction technology for irrigated horticulture in regional Australia.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 3 – On-farm Dam Evaporation Covers

3. WHY IT MATTERS

The Granite Belt is a nationally significant horticultural and wine-producing region, contributing over \$100 million annually to the regional economy.

Reliable, high-quality irrigation water is essential to sustain perennial horticulture, maintain crop yields, and support value-adding agribusiness.

Evaporation losses during drought periods can remove a substantial proportion of stored irrigation water, undermining farm viability at the point of greatest need.

The proposed pilot directly addresses water efficiency and climate adaptation without requiring new dams, new allocations, or regulatory reform.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

Economic risk: Reduced agricultural output, farm contraction, and loss of regional employment in one of Southern Queensland's key food-producing regions.

Investment risk: Ongoing uncertainty discourages reinvestment in high-value horticulture and agri-processing.

Climate resilience risk: Failure to act leaves irrigators exposed to increasing climate variability with no practical mitigation pathway.

Policy risk: Missed opportunity to trial scalable, low-impact water efficiency measures recommended by regional water planning processes.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

This proposal aligns strongly with Australian Government priorities, including:

- **National Water Initiative and climate resilience objectives** – improving water efficiency and drought preparedness without increasing extraction.
- **Future Made in Australia / regional economic resilience** – protecting domestic food production and regional supply chains.
- **Agriculture and food security priorities** – supporting productivity, innovation, and resilience in high-value horticulture.
- **Regional development** – strengthening regional economies and sustaining employment in drought-prone areas.

The project also supports broader Commonwealth objectives around climate adaptation, water stewardship, and evidence-based infrastructure investment.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

The Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment identified that either shade cloth or floating covers were most suitable for reducing evaporation based on the type and usage of water sources in the Granite Belt region.

It is estimated if half of these storages were covered, up to 4,500ML of evaporation could be saved annually.

Implement a pilot program of floating dam evaporation covers, consistent with recommendations from the Regional Water Assessment.

Install covers on up to 10 on-farm water storages, selected in partnership with local producers and the Granite Belt Growers Association.

Estimated capital cost of approximately \$500,000–\$540,000 per storage, with total funding of around \$5 million.

The pilot will generate robust data on water savings, productivity impacts, and cost-benefit performance to inform future national scaling.

Importantly, the proposal:

- Does not alter existing water allocations or water plan settings.
- Does not increase total water extraction from the system.
- Maximises the productivity of water already legally held by irrigators.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – project sponsor and regional advocate.
- Granite Belt Growers Association – strong industry backing and producer participation.
- Local horticultural producers – direct beneficiaries and delivery partners.
- Regional community – demonstrated support through engagement and media coverage recognising the importance of water security to regional jobs and prosperity.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Protects a \$100M+ horticulture and wine sector critical to regional employment and export potential.
- Improves drought resilience and water security for irrigation-dependent businesses.
- Supports local jobs across farming, logistics, agri-processing, and tourism.
- Provides a nationally replicable model for improving agricultural water efficiency in drought-prone regions.
- Delivers strong return on investment without environmental or regulatory disruption.

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FY27 Federal
Government
Pre-Budget
Submission



BEEFING UP OUR LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

Warwick Saleyards Sun Shelter

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Council, as a Saleyards operator, has a legal duty of care to meet animals' needs in an appropriate way and to minimise risk of harm from extreme weather conditions, such as heat or cold stress. The Warwick Saleyards does not currently have any shelter and due to budget constraints, Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) has delayed provision of a hard roof cover over the new selling pens.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Council is seeking funding provision for \$5 million to install a sun shelter at the Warwick Saleyards facility over the selling pens.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Warwick Saleyards Sun Shelter

3. WHY IT MATTERS

There is a growing body of research which supports the benefits of providing shade for improving animal welfare and productivity. Specifically:

- Shade lowers respiration rate, panting score and stress hormones in cattle enclosures
- Shade alleviates de-hydration of cattle
- Both *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* cattle can respond to shade
- Shade alleviates mortality, fear and distress during heat wave conditions¹

In addition to improving animal welfare outcomes, a sun shelter would enable all-weather operations, reduce environmental degradation and improve worker outcomes and buyer experience.

The Warwick Saleyards is the sole sheep saleyards in Queensland.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

Legal risk: Council could be breaching State legislation that is imposed under national legal frameworks, specifically the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Saleyards*.

Reputational risk: Council facilities do not reflect 'best practice', as demonstrated in other Saleyards in Queensland which have roofing.

Economic risk: may lose business to other Saleyards that adopt better practices, thereby increasing operational costs burdens to Council.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Aligns with key deliverables and strategic intent for the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, specifically:

- *Delivering Ag2030* – supporting growth into the future for the agricultural industry
- *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and National Statement on Animal Welfare*

1 MLA R&D Update – Animal welfare benefits of shade, Meat & Livestock Australia [MLA flyer template](#)

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

During Stages 1 and 2 of the Warwick Saleyards Redevelopment projects, SDRC installed the support posts for the roof, during construction of the new selling pens. The next step is to construct the hard roof with estimates at approximately \$5 million.

Unfortunately, the hard roof has been out of scope for the Saleyards Redevelopment project, which is currently into Stage 4 and due to be completed by June 2026.

\$5million investment from the Australian government would ensure the sun shelter is delivered in the 2026/27 year.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Primary producers who rely on this local facility to make income. Council have worked closely with industry professionals, vendors, agents and officers to carefully understand the facility, its operations, where service standards can be improved and how to modernise the facility.
- State and Federal Government – have assisted with previous funding for staged re-development.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Provides a local and modern facility to community and primary producers – saving them having to travel significant distance.
- Protects our \$286M agriculture industry and reputation as a highly regarded agricultural production region.
- Ensures the Warwick Saleyards can remain competitive with other Saleyards, where the Saleyards can continue as Queensland's only sheep saleyard.

9. CONTACT

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Office of the Mayor



6 February 2026

David Janetzki MP
Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership
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southern.downs@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Treasurer

Queensland 2026-27 Budget stakeholder submissions – Southern Downs Regional Council priorities

I thank you for the opportunity to share our views regarding priorities for the 2026-27 Queensland Budget. Our Council is extremely appreciative of the support and assistance provided by the Queensland Government from the 2025-26 budget to support a range of initiatives for the Southern Downs region including WillowTree 37 (Women's Support Centre), Allora Community Precinct redevelopment, Warwick Saleyards upgrades and the Warwick Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Centre filtration system replacement.

There is still much work to do for our growing region. When compared to other similar-sized local government areas in Queensland (Tier 4), our Council receives lower levels of revenue from Rates, yet has higher outputs in terms of servicing for roads, waste and water. Furthermore, the region's population is forecast to rise by 11 percent over the next two decades.

Just before Christmas 2025, Council delivered to the Deputy Premier our draft Planning Scheme. A culmination of extensive community engagement, research and analysis and the foundation of our Growth Strategy, to address population growth and, to ensure industry and commerce continue to thrive and grow, creating jobs and adding to the Gross State Product.

To support our growth, Council has focused on three (3) key packages needed from FY27.

1. Once in a lifetime opportunity to drought proof the Southern Downs
2. Roads that keep the Southern Downs community safe and prosperous
3. Supporting growth in Southern Downs' keystone industry of Agriculture

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These three (3) packages seek Queensland government investment and, in the drought-proofing package, an approach to the Federal Government to access the National Water Grid Fund.

These initiatives align with the core portfolio values outlined in the respective Ministerial charters and supports the Queensland Government's objectives for the community, specifically:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for population growth
- Ensure the long-term future for traditional primary industries that have been a key pillar in our State's enduring economic prosperity
- Properly maintain road standards and safety through considered ongoing maintenance
- Create a long-term vision for tourism in Queensland leveraging the current and future growth opportunities aligned to events in Queensland
- A better lifestyle through a stronger economy, and
- A plan for Queensland's future.

We recognise that the packages require a phased delivery approach and therefore, phased funding approach over consecutive years – we seek the Crisafulli government's partnership to commit funding from FY27. I note that there are specific infrastructure requirements which are critical from a safety perspective and these should be prioritised.

I appreciate your consideration of our funding requests and look forward to continuing our partnership with the State Government to deliver great outcomes for Queensland and the Southern Downs region.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Hamilton
Mayor



ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT-PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 1 - Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Stanthorpe urgently requires a long-term, reliable urban water supply solution to safeguard residents, businesses, and the region's tourism economy, as identified in the Queensland Government's Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) requests the Queensland Government co-fund the detailed business case for the Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline, contributing 50% of project costs (with the Australian Government funding the balance). The estimated cost of the business case is \$6 million.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 1 - Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline

3. WHY IT MATTERS

- The Warwick to Stanthorpe Pipeline is the key piece of infrastructure to connect all Council water resources, to realise the vision of 'drought-proofing' the Southern Downs.
- During the 2019–21 drought, water carting to Stanthorpe cost the Queensland Government \$18 million, alongside significant environmental and logistical challenges.
- Uncertainty of supply placed heavy psychological strain on residents and undermined confidence in the region's future.
- The Granite Belt's reputation as a premium food and wine destination was damaged, with visitor numbers impacted.
- With the region located in a high-risk bushfire zone, a lack of secure water supply affects our ability to respond to bushfire emergencies.
- Without a reliable long-term water solution, the region will be unable to meet demand for future population growth and visitation anticipated ahead of the 2032 Olympics.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Missed opportunity:** As the key infrastructure to connect Southern Downs' water resources, inaction will result in delays in realizing a connection grid to drought-proof the region.
- **Community resilience:** Ongoing risk of emergency water carting in future droughts.
- **Economic impact:** Loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.
- **Social impact:** Stress on families, reduced liveability, and population decline.
- **Reputational risk:** State and Federal Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Relates to the core portfolio values for Minister for Local Government and Water, outlined in the Ministerial Charter:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for further population growth.

Further, it is consistent with:

- Queensland Water Strategy Themes: Secure, safe, sustainable and innovative water management.
- National Water Grid Investment Framework: Community, economic and environmental benefits
- Regional Water Assessment Recommendations: Build resilience for urban and agricultural water systems.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

- Advance the \$6 million detailed business case for the Warwick to Stanthorpe pipeline, as recommended by the Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment.
- Business case will provide costed design, environmental and heritage assessment, and delivery options.
- Council supports a co-funding model between Queensland and Australian Governments. Council is seeking the support of the Queensland Government for their advocacy to the federal government via the National Water Grid Fund.
- The pipeline is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs, using our own water.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local producers and tourism operators – backing water security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- State and Federal Government – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Provides long-term water security for approx. 10,000 Stanthorpe and surrounds residents. Access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic human right.
- Protects the tourism and allied sectors from collapse in drought years.
- Enhances visitor confidence and supports Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.
- Reduces future emergency response costs (avoiding another \$18M+ carting bill) and associated risks.
- Improves our ability to respond to bushfire emergencies - enhanced community safety.

9. CONTACT

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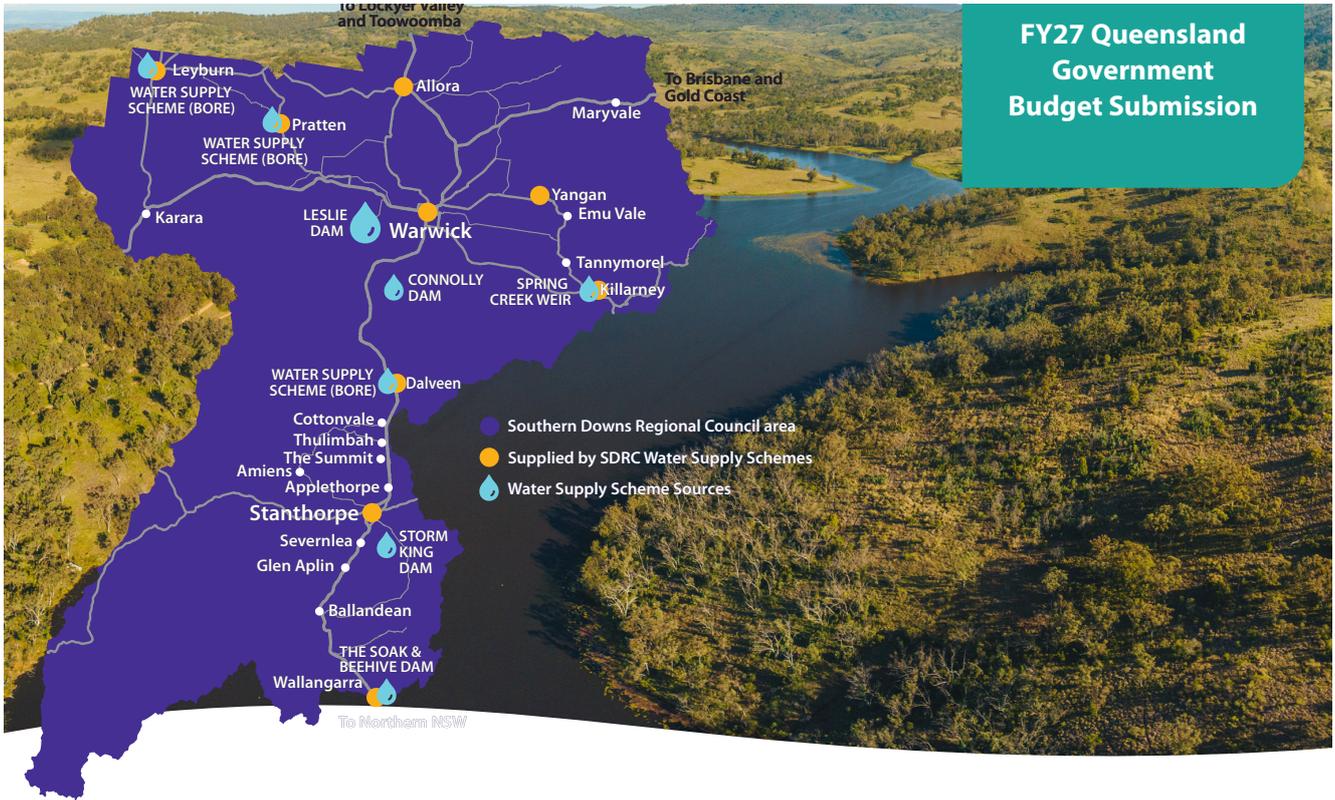


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1300 697 372





ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT-PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 2 - Connolly Dam Safety Upgrades

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Connolly Dam (located 15km south of Warwick, Queensland) is in urgent need of safety upgrades required by the State Regulator – it was rated as the most unsafe dam in Queensland in 2025, by the Regulator. As the Southern Downs’ only emergency water supply, these upgrades are needed to ensure a long-term, reliable urban water supply solution to safeguard residents, businesses, and the region’s tourism economy.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) requires a phased funding approach to fulfill the safety upgrades required by the State Regulator. Whilst no funding is sought in this year’s budget submission (2026-27), funding will be required from 2027-28 to undertake a detailed concept design.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 2 - Connolly Dam Safety Upgrades

3. WHY IT MATTERS

Connolly Dam is the Southern Downs' only emergency water supply. During the 2019–21 drought, many communities relied on this water source with the nearby town of Stanthorpe requiring emergency water carting costing the Queensland Government \$18 million, alongside significant environmental and logistical challenges.

Connolly Dam, a State-regulated referable dam, has been identified by the State Regulator as one of Queensland's most unsafe dams due to its age and increased downstream population risk.

The draft As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) risk profile increased the estimated people at risk from 136 to 550 and raised the dam's consequence category, with potential for severe consequences.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Community safety:** Places our community at risk.
- **Legal impact:** Non-compliance is in breach of *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.
- **Economic impact:** Without a secure emergency water supply, it could lead to loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.
- **Reputational risk:** State and federal Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security and safety.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Relates to the core portfolio values for Minister for Local Government and Water, outlined in the Ministerial Charter:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for further population growth.

Further, it is consistent with:

- Queensland Water Strategy Themes: Secure, safe, sustainable and innovative water management.
- National Water Grid Investment Framework: Community, economic and environmental benefits
- Regional Water Assessment Recommendations: Build resilience for urban and agricultural water systems.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

To date, SDRC has spent approximately \$1 million on a scoping exercise to understand the level of investment required. Stage 2 will require a detailed design which will require funding in the 2027-28 financial year.

Council supports a co-funding model between Queensland and Australian Governments. Council is seeking the support of the Queensland Government for their advocacy to the federal government via the National Water Grid Fund.

The Connolly Dam safety upgrades is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local producers, manufacturers and tourism operators – backing water security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- State and Federal Governments – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Enhanced safety and wellbeing for the Southern Downs community.
- Southern Downs residents (approx. 37,000) have access to an emergency water supply source in times of future drought.
- Protects the tourism and allied sectors from collapse in drought years.
- Enhances visitor confidence and supports Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.

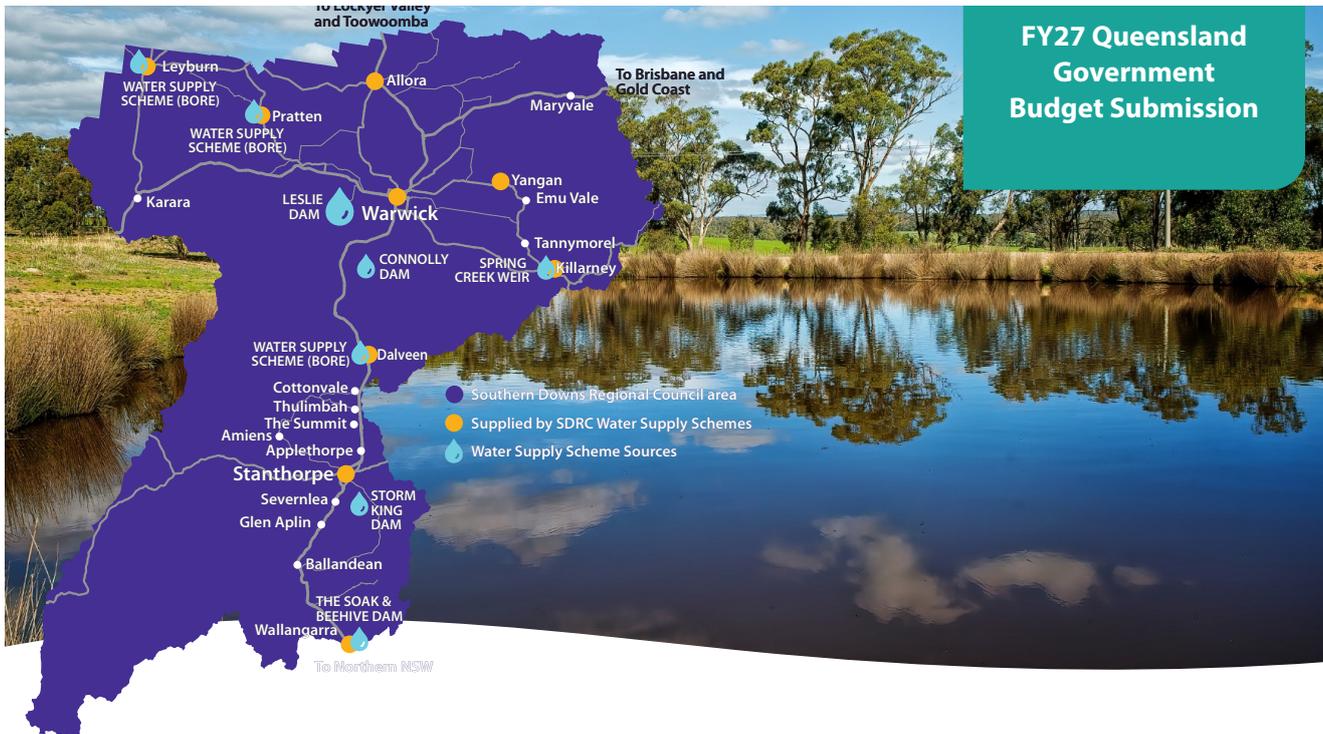
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INCREASING IRRIGATED WATER EFFICIENCY IN THE GRANITE BELT

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 3 – On-farm dam evaporation covers

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Horticultural producers in the Granite Belt region of Southern Downs are increasingly constrained by limited and highly variable irrigation water availability under existing water plans. Climate variability, extended drought periods, and high evaporation rates from on-farm water storages significantly reduce effective water supply, directly impacting agricultural productivity, investment confidence, and regional economic resilience.

The Southern and Darling Downs Regional Water Assessment (RWA) identified evaporation losses from farm dams as a critical inefficiency in the region's water system and recommended evaporation reduction measures—specifically floating covers or shade structures.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) seeks Queensland Government funding of approximately \$5 million in the FY27 Budget to support a pilot program installing floating evaporation covers on up to 10 on-farm water storages in the Granite Belt region.

The funding would cover capital costs only and demonstrate the cost-effectiveness and productivity benefits of evaporation reduction technology for irrigated horticulture in regional Australia.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 3 – On-farm Dam Evaporation Covers

3. WHY IT MATTERS

- The Granite Belt is a nationally significant horticultural and wine-producing region, contributing over \$100 million annually to the regional economy.
- Reliable, high-quality irrigation water is essential to sustain perennial horticulture, maintain crop yields, and support value-adding agribusiness.
- Evaporation losses during drought periods can remove a substantial proportion of stored irrigation water, undermining farm viability at the point of greatest need.
- The proposed pilot directly addresses water efficiency and climate adaptation without requiring new dams, new allocations, or regulatory reform.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Economic risk:** Reduced agricultural output, farm contraction, and loss of regional employment in one of Southern Queensland's key food-producing regions.
- **Investment risk:** Ongoing uncertainty discourages reinvestment in high-value horticulture and agri-processing.
- **Climate resilience risk:** Failure to act leaves irrigators exposed to increasing climate variability with no practical mitigation pathway.
- **Policy risk:** Missed opportunity to trial scalable, low-impact water efficiency measures recommended by regional water planning processes.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Relates to the core portfolio values for Minister for Local Government and Water, outlined in the Ministerial Charter:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for further population growth.

Further, it is consistent with:

- Queensland Water Strategy Themes: Secure, safe, sustainable and innovative water management.
- National Water Grid Investment Framework: Community, economic and environmental benefits
- Regional Water Assessment Recommendations: Build resilience for urban and agricultural water systems.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

- The RWA identified that either shade cloth or floating covers were most suitable for reducing evaporation based on the type and usage of water sources in the Granite Belt region. It is estimated

that if half of these storages were covered, up to 4,500ML of evaporation could be saved annually.

- Implement a pilot program of floating dam evaporation covers, consistent with recommendations from the RWA.
- Install covers on up to 10 on-farm water storages, selected in partnership with local producers and the Granite Belt Growers Association.
- Estimated capital cost of approximately \$500,000–\$540,000 per storage, with total funding of around \$5 million.
- The pilot will generate robust data on water savings, productivity impacts, and cost-benefit performance to inform future national scaling.

Importantly, the proposal:

- Does not alter existing water allocations or water plan settings.
- Does not increase total water extraction from the system.
- Maximises the productivity of water already legally held by irrigators.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – project sponsor and regional advocate.
- Granite Belt Growers Association – strong industry backing and producer participation.
- Local horticultural producers – direct beneficiaries and delivery partners.
- Regional community – demonstrated support through engagement and media coverage recognising the importance of water security to regional jobs and prosperity.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Protects a \$100M+ horticulture and wine sector critical to regional employment and export potential.
- Improves drought resilience and water security for irrigation-dependent businesses.
- Supports local jobs across farming, logistics, agri-processing, and tourism.
- Provides a nationally replicable model for improving agricultural water efficiency in drought-prone regions.
- Delivers strong return on investment without environmental or regulatory disruption.

9. CONTACT

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1300 697 372





ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT-PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 4 - Waste Water Treatment Plants

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Originally commissioned in the 1960's by the State Government, both the Warwick and Stanthorpe Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) have reached end of life and have ageing infrastructure. Council needs to undertake significant upgrades now and over the coming years to increase operating capacity and meet future population growth.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) is seeking funding from the State Government of \$300,000 to \$400,000 to undertake a detailed study to understand the level of investment required to completely upgrade the Warwick WWTP.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 4 - Waste Water Treatment Plants

SDRC is also undertaking a detailed design to understand the cost involved to replace the Stanthorpe WWTP. Once that study is complete and estimated costs are known, Council would seek State Government support with funding in a staged approach from the 2027-28 financial year.

3. WHY IT MATTERS

- Future-proofs essential infrastructure for population and industry growth, safeguards waterways and agricultural land.
- Modernisation will ensure compliance with environmental standards, reduce discharge risks during storm events and expand recycled water capacity to 100% Class A – supporting drought resilience and sustainable water re-use across the Southern Downs region.
- Enables Council to deliver reliable, climate-resilient wastewater services.
- The WWTP upgrades are two pieces of infrastructure needed to connect all Council water resources, to realise the vision of 'drought-proofing' the Southern Downs.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Infrastructure failure:** Without intervention, both WWTPs in the Southern Downs will not function appropriately to cater for the increase in population growth – affecting some 23,000 residents.
- **Economic impact:** Loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.
- **Social impact:** Stress on families, reduced liveability, and population decline.
- **Reputational risk:** State and Federal Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Relates to the core portfolio values for Minister for Local Government and Water, outlined in the Ministerial Charter:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for further population growth.

Further, it is consistent with:

- Queensland Water Strategy Themes: Secure, safe, sustainable and innovative water management.
- National Water Grid Investment Framework: Community, economic and environmental benefits
- Regional Water Assessment Recommendations: Build resilience for urban and agricultural water systems.

A funding assessment of Council's wastewater infrastructure was recently completed by external consultants. Warwick and

Stanthorpe WWTPs were conditionally recommended with strong alignment with national and state water security priorities, noting that completion of condition assessment works and business case development would further support their case.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

To date, Council has focused on progressively upgrading core treatment and storage assets to extend service life, improve water quality and ensure environmental stewardship.

For the Warwick WWTP, Council would like to undertake a study to understand the works and level of investment required to do a complete upgrade of the WWTP (staged construction cost estimates and timing). The estimated cost of this study is \$300,000 to \$400,000.

For Stanthorpe WWTP, SDRC is currently undertaking a detailed design to understand the cost involved to replace the WWTP, with preliminary estimates placing this figure around \$30-\$50m. Once the study is complete, Council would seek State Government support with funding in a staged approach from the 2027-28 financial year.

Upgrading both WWTPs is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local industry and business – backing water quality and security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- State and Federal Government – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Stimulates local jobs and economic activity through design and construction.
- Positions the region as a leader in circular water management.
- Supports population growth forecasts of 10.9% to 2046¹.
- Supports business investment and expansion in the region.

9. CONTACT

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¹ Home | Southern Downs Regional Council | Population forecast



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1300 697 372





ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DROUGHT-PROOF THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 5 – Warwick Water Treatment Plant

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Originally commissioned in 1973 by the State Government, the Warwick Water Treatment Plant (WTP) does not meet contemporary water quality standards and requires significant investment to ensure reliable public health performance and increased capacity to meet future population growth.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) is seeking the Queensland Government’s commitment to a phased approach to funding the necessary upgrades that need to occur for the Warwick WTP, with immediate priority given to funding construction of a new reservoir (approximately \$11.6 million) and distribution centre (approximately \$9 million) for the 2026-27 financial year.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Water Package, Item 5 – Warwick Water Treatment Plant

3. WHY IT MATTERS

- Investment in the Warwick WTP will ensure long-term security, safety and sustainability of the Southern Downs regions' drinking water supply.
- Modernisation will deliver compliance with current public health and water quality standards, reduce operational risks, and strengthen resilience to drought and natural disasters.
- Supports regional growth by enabling capacity for future residential, commercial and industrial expansion.
- Represents a proactive commitment to regional liveability, economic development and environmental sustainability.
- The WTP upgrade is one piece of infrastructure needed to connect all Council water resources, to realise the vision of 'drought-proofing' the Southern Downs.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Infrastructure failure:** Without intervention, the Warwick WTP will not be able to appropriately cater for the increase in population growth (nearly 11% to 2046)¹ – affecting some 17,000 residents.
- **Impacted community safety and wellbeing:** due to not meeting water quality standards.
- **Economic impact:** Loss of investment confidence in the region's keystone industries of agriculture and tourism.
- **Social impact:** Stress on families, reduced liveability, and population decline.
- **Reputational risk:** State and Federal Governments perceived as reactive rather than proactive on regional water security.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Relates to the core portfolio values for Minister for Local Government and Water, outlined in the Ministerial Charter:

- Focus on delivering generational water infrastructure across Queensland that will secure supply and foster economic growth
- Address future water requirements for further population growth.

Further, it is consistent with:

- Queensland Water Strategy Themes: Secure, safe, sustainable and innovative water management.
- National Water Grid Investment Framework: Community, economic and environmental benefits
- Regional Water Assessment Recommendations: Build resilience for urban and agricultural water systems.

A funding assessment of Council's water infrastructure was recently completed by external consultants. It recommended that the Warwick WTP demonstrated strong alignment with national and state water security priorities, and with further strengthening of the

benefits case would be competitive under the National Water Grid and State infrastructure programs.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

To date, Council has focused on progressively upgrading core treatment and storage assets to extend service life, improve water quality and ensure environmental stewardship.

Council has now identified the projects and costings that need to occur over the next 2-3 years to prepare for drought resilience, meet water quality standards and cater for significant growth in region. At a total estimated cost of \$51 million, without funding support, Council has no choice but to delay or defer these necessary upgrades.

Immediate priority should be given to funding construction of a new reservoir (approximately \$11.6 million) and distribution centre (approximately \$9 million) for the 2026-27 financial year, with the remaining projects to be delivered as part of a staged funding approach.

Upgrading the Warwick WTP is one component of a proposed resilience network of connected water sources that would represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to drought-proof the Southern Downs.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Local industry and business – backing water quality and security.
- Community – consistently supportive (documented through media and engagement feedback).
- State and Federal Government – potential partners in funding.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Enhanced safety and wellbeing for the Southern Downs community.
- Stimulates local jobs and economic activity through design and construction.
- Safeguards water reliability for key employers and essential services.
- Supports population growth forecasts of 10.9% to 2046.
- Supports business investment and expansion in the region.
- Supports growth in our keystone industries of tourism and agriculture, thereby supporting Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.

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¹ Home | Southern Downs Regional Council | Population forecast



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FY27 Queensland
Government
Budget Submission

SOUTHERN DOWNS ROADS – KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE AND PROSPEROUS

Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 1 – Accommodation Creek Bridge

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

The Accommodation Creek Bridge crossing on the New England Highway (approximately 20km south of Stanthorpe) poses a very serious safety risk to our community. A commitment was made by the Queensland Government to address this crossing in the 2018-19 QTRIP, however no further progress updates have been received on this project, with no works scheduled in the 2025-26 QTRIP.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Council requests that the Queensland Government re-instate the Accommodation Creek Bridge crossing works project into the 2026-27 QTRIP.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.



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Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 1 – Accommodation Creek Bridge

3. WHY IT MATTERS

Our community members have the right to safe and accessible roads. The narrow bridge crossing at Accommodation Creek curves as it crosses the creek and is particularly dangerous for heavy vehicles that pass each other. This section of road plays a major role in traffic incidents and Council has heard anecdotal evidence of heavy vehicle drivers who have no choice but to use two-way radio communications to coordinate their approach to the bridge. The speed limit approaching the crossing has had to be reduced from 100km to 80km/hour.

As a region that relies on agriculture and tourism as our key industries, the New England Highway acts as a major state corridor connecting both freight and visitors from interstate to Queensland. Expected future demand will only increase in the lead up to the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. There are also economic impacts when freight and visitors are unable to access our region.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Safety risk:** Increasing number of traffic accidents resulting in serious injury or death
- **Economic risk:** essential freight services and tourists unable to access the region due to inadequate roads or road closures caused by disasters
- **Reputation risk:** reduced confidence in local, state and federal governments by failing to adequately service problematic roads.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Funding for this initiative aligns with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads' core portfolio values (as per Ministerial Charter):

- Closely monitor major projects so they are delivered on time and on budget.
- Properly maintain road standards and safety through considered ongoing maintenance.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

A commitment was made by the Queensland Government to address this crossing in the 2018-19 to 2021-22 QTRIP - specifically, to "identify the preferred solution for the Accommodation Creek Crossing project" at an indicative total cost of \$2 million.

This was progressed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads in 2020/21 with a proposed new bridge and an improved horizontal alignment at Lyra near Accommodation Creek. However, no further progress updates have been received on this project and there are no works scheduled in the 2025-26 to 2028-29 QTRIP.



Urgent consideration now needs to be given to complete the proposed upgrades of this major highway and Council would like to see it included into the 2026-27 QTRIP.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Our community members who rely on safe and accessible roads to go about their daily lives.
- Businesses and producers who rely on tourism and freight to keep their business running.
- State and Federal Government – to support with funding for state and federal roads.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Protects our \$286M agriculture and \$248M tourism industries.
- Ensures Queenslanders have continued access to agricultural commodities (such as meat, fruit and vegetables) from our region all year round.
- Enhanced community safety due to reduced road traffic accidents and hospitalisations.
- Reduces the burden on emergency services and first responders.
- Positions Queensland as a world-class tourism destination ahead of the 2032 Olympic Games.

9. CONTACT

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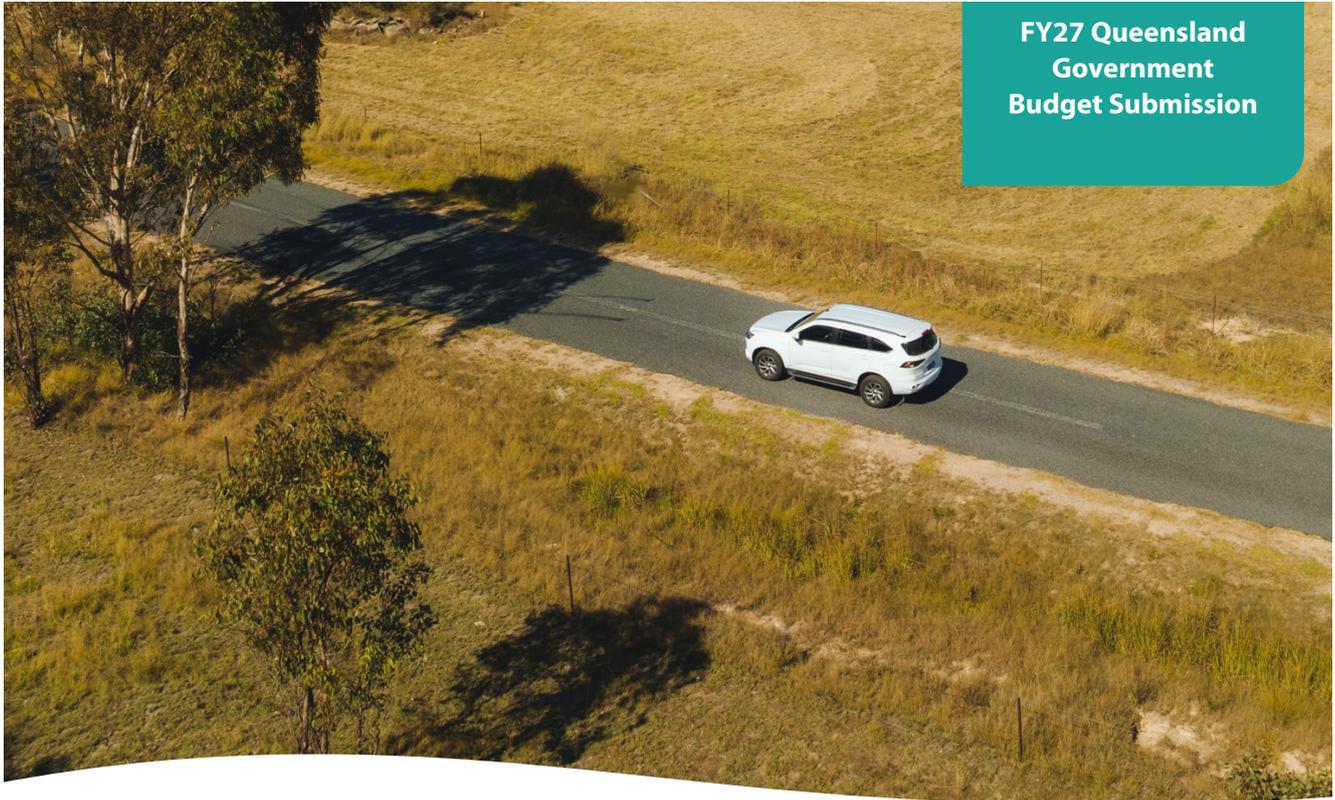


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FY27 Queensland
Government
Budget Submission

SOUTHERN DOWNS ROADS – KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE AND PROSPEROUS

Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 2 – Old Stanthorpe Road

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Old Stanthorpe Road plays a vital role in regional connectivity, serving as a link between Warwick and Dalveen, and provides an essential alternative route if the New England Highway becomes temporarily unavailable. However, the gravel section of this road has been the site of multiple serious accidents and is in critical need of road safety improvements.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Council is seeking funding provision for \$7M to seal 5.434km of gravel road on Old Stanthorpe Road.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.

Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 2 – Old Stanthorpe Road

3. WHY IT MATTERS

Our community members have the right to safe and accessible roads. Old Stanthorpe Road connects the communities of Morgan Park, Wildash, Cherry Gully and Dalveen, fostering stronger regional ties and ensures continued access for both residents, the broader travelling public and commercial heavy vehicles who typically rely on the highway. This alternative route becomes especially important during emergencies or disruptions, facilitating the smooth flow of traffic and maintaining vital connections for the surrounding communities.

Intervention is required now if we are to meet the expected future demand with potential renewable energy projects, tourism and industry in the lead up to the 2032 Olympics and to mitigate against natural disasters.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Safety risk:** Increasing number of traffic accidents resulting in serious injury or death.
- **Economic risk:** essential freight services and tourists unable to access the region due to inadequate roads or road closures caused by disasters.
- **Reputation risk:** reduced confidence in local, state and federal governments by failing to adequately service problematic roads.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Funding for this initiative aligns with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads' core portfolio values (as per Ministerial Charter):

- Closely monitor major projects so they are delivered on time and on budget.
- Properly maintain road standards and safety through considered ongoing maintenance.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Council would like to seal 5.434km of gravel road to a width of 6m on a 7m wide pavement to seal the missing link between existing sealed sections. This includes associated cross-road drainage culverts, widening to facilitate safe travel, and support long-term adequate drainage to improve resilience of this asset to future flood events.

A previous SDRC funding application to do these works under Country Roads Connect grant program was unsuccessful and therefore Council is seeking support from the Queensland Government to have this addressed in the 2026-27 budget.



7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Our community members who rely on safe and accessible roads to go about their daily lives.
- Businesses and producers who rely on visitor movements and freight to keep their business running.
- State and Federal Government – to support with funding for state and federal roads.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Enhanced community safety due to reduced road traffic accidents and hospitalisations.
- Improves road reliability and emergency service access in severe weather.
- Will encourage greater use of the route by cyclists promoting sustainable transportation and enhancing the overall accessibility and liveability of the area.
- Ensures Queenslanders have continued access to agricultural commodities (such as meat, fruit and vegetables) from our region all year round.
- Enhances visitor confidence and supports Queensland's domestic and international tourism goals ahead of 2032 Olympics.

9. CONTACT

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1300 697 372



SOUTHERN DOWNS ROADS – KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE AND PROSPEROUS

Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 3 – OO Madsen Bridge

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

The OO Madsen Bridge crosses the Condamine River and is the main access point into Warwick from the New England/Cunningham Highway. However, the bridge is prone to flooding and cuts off access to Warwick during periods of intense rainfall, presenting challenges for residents wishing to access essential services such as hospitals.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Council is seeking a commitment from the Queensland Government to fund the planning, design and ultimately upgrade of the OO Madsen Bridge and for this project to be included in the QTRIP 2026-27.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.



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Southern Downs Roads Package, Item 3 – OO Madsen Bridge

3. WHY IT MATTERS

Our community members have the right to safe and accessible roads. During periods of intense rainfall, access to the highway or Warwick hospital via OO Madsen Bridge can be completely cut off to some residents.

As a region that relies on agriculture and tourism as our key industries, there are also economic impacts when freight and visitors are unable to access our region.

The New England Highway is often used a principal supply route during natural disasters, and therefore upgrading this bridge is critical from both a traffic safety perspective and for disaster resilience and supply into South-east Queensland.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Safety risk:** delay in transporting medical emergencies for treatment outside of Warwick. Does not meet Emergency and Disaster Management 'best practice'
- **Economic risk:** essential freight services and tourists unable to access the region due to inadequate roads or road closures caused by disasters
- **Reputation risk:** reduced confidence in local, state and federal governments by failing to adequately service problematic roads.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Funding for this initiative aligns with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads' core portfolio values (as per Ministerial Charter):

- Closely monitor major projects so they are delivered on time and on budget.
- Properly maintain road standards and safety through considered ongoing maintenance.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Council has undertaken a flood study for Warwick, which includes the OO Madsen Bridge. The study found that to meet Emergency and Disaster Management accessibility requirements, the bridge needs to be raised by 0.5m over nearly 1km. The estimated project value for this is \$50-\$100 million.

As a State-controlled road and National Highway, this bridge will need to be upgraded by the Queensland Government. SDRC requires the State Government to fund the planning, design and ultimately upgrade of the O.O. Madsen Bridge, and seeks inclusion in the scheduled works for the 2026-27 QTRIP.



7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Our community members who rely on safe and accessible roads to go about their daily lives.
- Businesses and producers who rely on tourism and freight to keep their business running.
- State and Federal Government – to support with funding for state and federal roads.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Meeting emergency evacuation expectations to ensure patients receive emergency medical treatment
- Improves road reliability and emergency service access in severe weather.
- Ensures Queenslanders have continued access to agricultural commodities (such as meat, fruit and vegetables) from our region all year round.

9. CONTACT

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FY27 Queensland
Government
Budget Submission

BEEFING UP OUR LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

Warwick Saleyards Sun Shelter

1. ISSUE SUMMARY

Council, as a Saleyards operator, has a legal duty of care to meet animals' needs in an appropriate way and to minimise risk of harm from extreme weather conditions, such as heat or cold stress. The Warwick Saleyards does not currently have any shelter and due to budget constraints, Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) has delayed provision of a hard roof cover over the new selling pens.

2. GOVERNMENT ASK

Council is seeking funding provision for \$5 million to install a sun shelter at the Warwick Saleyards facility over the selling pens.

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DOWNS

Southern Downs Regional Council is a Queensland local government area with a population of approximately 37,000 situated 90 minutes from Brisbane in the thriving Southern Queensland corridor. This prime location with ample space features an exceptional blend of natural beauty, has a strong agricultural base and is a popular tourist destination. The main townships include Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora with several surrounding rural villages offering a relaxed lifestyle choice.



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Warwick Saleyards Sun Shelter

3. WHY IT MATTERS

There is a growing body of research which supports the benefits of providing shade for improving animal welfare and productivity. Specifically:

- Shade lowers respiration rate, panting score and stress hormones in cattle enclosures
- Shade alleviates de-hydration of cattle
- Both *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* cattle can respond to shade
- Shade alleviates mortality, fear and distress during heat wave conditions¹

In addition to improving animal welfare outcomes, a sun shelter would enable all-weather operations, reduce environmental degradation and improve worker outcomes and buyer experience.

The Warwick Saleyards is the sole sheep saleyards in Queensland.

4. RISKS OF INACTION

- **Legal risk:** Council could be breaching State legislation, specifically the Queensland *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* and the *Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2023* that is imposed under national legal frameworks.
- **Reputational risk:** Council facilities do not reflect 'best practice', as demonstrated in other Saleyards in Queensland which have roofing.
- **Economic risk:** may lose business to other Saleyards that adopt better practices, thereby increasing operational costs burdens to Council.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Funding for this initiative supports the Queensland Government's *Prosper 2050 Ag Blueprint* targets and aligns with the core portfolio values outlined in the Minister for Primary Industries Ministerial Charter:

- Ensure the long-term future for traditional primary industries that have been a key pillar in our State's enduring economic prosperity.

6. PROPOSED SOLUTION

During Stages 1 and 2 of the Warwick Saleyards Redevelopment projects, SDRC installed the support posts for the roof, during construction of the new selling pens. The next step is to construct the hard roof with estimates at approximately \$5 million.

Unfortunately, the hard roof has been out of scope for the Saleyards Redevelopment project, which is currently into Stage 4 and due to be completed by June 2026.

\$5 million investment from the Queensland government would ensure the sun shelter is delivered in the 2026/27 year.

7. STAKEHOLDERS & SUPPORT

- Southern Downs Regional Council – advocating strongly.
- Primary producers who rely on this local facility to make income. Council have worked closely with industry professionals, vendors, agents and officers to carefully understand the facility, its operations, where service standards can be improved and how to modernise the facility.
- State and Federal Government – have assisted with previous funding for staged re-development.

8. COMMUNITY & REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Provides a local and modern facility to community and primary producers – saving them having to travel significant distance.
- Protects our \$286M agriculture industry and reputation as a highly regarded agricultural production region.
- Ensures the Warwick Saleyards can remain competitive with other Saleyards, where the Saleyards can continue as Queensland's only sheep saleyard.

9. CONTACT

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¹ MLA R&D Update – Animal welfare benefits of shade, Meat & Livestock Australia MLA flyer template

Office of the Mayor



19 February 2026

Hon Tim Nicholls MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Email: health@ministerial.qld.gov.au
CC: Southern.Downs@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister Nicholls

I refer to my previous correspondence dated 3 November 2025 regarding the Warwick Hospital helipad closure, and an update that I received from Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHS) on 20 January 2026 in relation to the assessment of the helipad.

I would also like to acknowledge the recent announcement from DDHS to commence planning for future health infrastructure options for Warwick Hospital as welcome news for our community. This is an important step towards strengthening healthcare for the Southern Downs region, however it reflects long-term investment over several years and the issue of the Warwick Hospital helipad needs to be separated from this review and immediately addressed.

Like any regional hospital, the Warwick Hospital plays a critical role in the health and welfare of our community, which for many years has been underpinned by aviation assistance. This airlift capability has meant that our community has been able to access an elevated level of acute medical care, in times of need.

While I understand that there are major problems with the current location at the Warwick Hospital Helicopter Landing Site (HLS), necessitating an alternate solution, our community must continue to be able to access timely acute medical services, similar to those provided in the Southeast corner of the State.

To achieve this equity, the Southern Downs community must have access to an HLS on site, at or adjacent to the Warwick Hospital. While we have been told that patient care is not being compromised by emergency helicopters landing at Warwick Aerodrome, the conversations that I have had with the community indicate that this is not an acceptable arrangement. Medical teams must be transported into town by ambulance and patients then returned to the aircraft — a process taking more than 40 minutes. This also involves an ambulance being taken out of normal service, leaving the wider community more vulnerable. It is difficult to believe that such delays do not place lives at greater risk.

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There is potentially a suitable location across from the hospital at the upper end of Victoria Park. The approach avoids nearby homes, making it a practical option worth immediate consideration.

This issue is one of great concern to the Warwick community, and I continue to speak to many residents who are unhappy with the delay by Queensland Health and the State Government to put in place a temporary solution that addresses the anxiety that the community has about timely airlifts.

I look forward to working in partnership with the State Government on this matter and receiving updates on the progress of both a temporary solution close to Warwick Hospital and a permanent solution for the Warwick Hospital on-site HLS.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Hamilton
Mayor

cc. Mr James Lister MP

Office of the Mayor



19 February 2026

Annette Scott PSM
Health Service Chief Executive
Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service
PO Box 405
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Email: ddhs-hsce@health.qld.gov.au

Dear Annette

Thank you for your letter dated 20 January 2026, providing an update on the work that Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHS) have undertaken in relation to the assessment of the Warwick Hospital helipad. I also welcome the recent announcement from DDHS to commence planning for future health infrastructure options for Warwick Hospital. This announcement is an important step towards strengthening healthcare for the Southern Downs region, however it reflects long-term investment over several years and the issue of the Warwick Hospital helipad needs to be separated from this review and immediately addressed.

Like any regional hospital, the Warwick Hospital plays a critical role in the health and welfare of our community, which for many years has been underpinned by aviation assistance. This airlift capability has meant that our community has been able to access an elevated level of acute medical care, in times of need.

While I understand that there are major problems with the current location at the Warwick Hospital Helicopter Landing Site (HLS), necessitating an alternate solution, our community must continue to be able to access timely acute medical services, similar to those provided in the Southeast corner of the State.

To achieve this equity, the Southern Downs community must have access to an HLS on site, at or adjacent to the Warwick Hospital. While we have been told that patient care is not being compromised by emergency helicopters landing at Warwick Aerodrome, the conversations that I have had with the community indicate that this is not an acceptable arrangement. Medical teams must be transported into town by ambulance and patients then returned to the aircraft — a process taking more than 40 minutes. This also involves an ambulance being taken out of normal service, leaving the wider community more vulnerable. It is difficult to believe that such delays do not place lives at greater risk.

There is potentially a suitable location across from the hospital at the upper end of Victoria Park. The approach avoids nearby homes, making it a practical option worth immediate consideration.

This issue is one of great concern to the Warwick community, and I continue to speak to many residents who are unhappy with the delay by Queensland Health and the State Government to put in place a temporary solution that addresses the anxiety that the community has about timely airlifts.

Annette, once again, I thank you for taking the time to provide me with an update on this important issue for our community, and I look forward to continuing to receive updates on the progress of both a temporary solution close to Warwick Hospital and a permanent solution for the Warwick Hospital on-site HLS.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Hamilton
Mayor

10. RECEPTION AND READING OF PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

10.1 Petition - Request for the construction of the unformed section of O'Maras Road, between Graysons Siding Road and Claydons Road

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Manager Governance	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Pursuant to Standing Order 1.2, suspend Standing Order 6.2 for the sole purpose of receiving the Petition, with all other Standing Orders to remain in effect.
2. Receive the Petition and note the matter has been referred to the General Manager Infrastructure, Assets and Projects for investigation.

REPORT

Council has received a Petition requesting the construction of the unformed section of O'Maras Road, between Graysons Siding Road and Claydons Road. A copy of the Petition is attached as **Attachment 1**.

In accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) sections of the Petition have been redacted for privacy reasons.

It is noted that the Petition does not comply with Section 6.1 of Council's Standing Orders as it does not include the postcode of all petitioners.

However, the template provided to the Principal Petitioner by Council allowed for the inclusion of each petitioner's address, but not specifically the postcode. This oversight has been rectified on the publicly available petition template.

Council's Standing Order 1.2 provides that Council's Standing Orders may be suspended by resolution of any meeting of the local government, except those sections that are mandatory under the model meeting procedures.

The Petition has been referred to the General Manager Infrastructure, Assets and Projects for investigation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Petition [↓](#)

Petition to Southern Downs Regional Council

If you have any specific enquiries regarding fees or how to complete this form, please contact Council's Governance Department.

Please complete this petition in BLOCK LETTERS. If any further signatures are required, a copy of this page must be used. Pages of signatures without the information provided on this form will not be accepted. Photocopies will not be accepted.

Principal Petitioner's Details	Full Name(s) of Principal Petitioner: <u>RICKIE SAMUEL Williams</u>		
	Address: [REDACTED]		
	Phone: [REDACTED]	Fax: <u> </u>	
	Contact Phone: [REDACTED]	Email Address: <u> </u>	
	Signature: [REDACTED]		

Petition Request	<p>We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Council to consider:</p> <p><u>request for the construction of the unformed section of O'Mara's Rd, between Graysons siding to Claydons Rd.</u></p>
-------------------------	--

	DATE	PRINT NAME	PRINT ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
Petitioners (Please complete in full)	<u>1/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<u>1/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<u>26/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<u>26/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<u>27/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<u>27/11/25</u>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
 WARWICK BRANCH
 RECEIVED
 17 DEC 2025

Comments

Deliver To: The Chief Executive Officer, Southern Downs Regional Council, PO Box 26, Warwick, Qld, 4370

Petition Request We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Council to consider:
 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNFORMED SECTION OF O'MARA'S ROAD BETWEEN GRAYSONS SIDING ROAD TO CLAYDONS ROAD.

Petitioners (Please complete in full)	DATE	PRINT NAME	PRINT ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
		30/10/25		
	31/10/25			
	6/11/25			
	6/11/25			
	12/11/23			
	12/11/23			
	12/11/25			
	12-11-2025			
	12-11-25			
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	18/11/25			
	18/11/25			
	23-11-25			
	23-11-25			
	26-11-25			
	26-11-25			
	26-11-25			



Petition Request We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Council to consider:
 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNFORMED SECTION OF O'MARA'S ROAD BETWEEN GRAYSONS SIDING ROAD TO CLAYDONS ROAD

Petitioners (Please complete in full)	DATE	PRINT NAME	PRINT ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
		26/11/25		
	26-11-25			
	26-11-25			
	26-11-25			
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	28/11/25			
	28/11/25			



Petition Request
 We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Council to consider:
 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNFORMED SECTION OF O'MARA'S ROAD BETWEEN GRAYSONS SIDING ROAD TO CLAYDONS ROAD.

Petitioners (Please complete in full)	DATE	PRINT NAME	PRINT ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
		30/10/25	[REDACTED]	
	30/10/25			
	31.10.25			
	31/10/25			
	31/10/25			
	12/11/25			
	15/11/25			
	15/11/25			
	15/11/25			
	15/11/25			
	18/11/25			
	22/11/25			

11. PORTFOLIO REPORTS

11.1 Portfolio Report - Mayor Hamilton - Prosperous Communities

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Research and Advocacy Support Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council's Prosperous Communities Portfolio Report be received.

REPORT

Mayor Hamilton has submitted a Portfolio Report providing an update on Advocacy – Ministerial Visits.

Attached is a copy of the Portfolio Report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Prosperous Communities Portfolio Report [↓](#)



PORTFOLIO REPORT

Mayor Melissa Hamilton

Prosperous Communities: Economic Development, Regional Advocacy, Intergovernmental Relations

PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES – JANUARY 2026

ADVOCACY – MINISTERIAL VISITS

Show season sees many State and Federal representatives visit the region. In January we had the 150th Stanthorpe Show, and attendees included:

- The Hon. Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Local Government, Water, Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers
- The Hon. David Littleproud MP, Member for Maranoa and Leader of the Nationals
- James Lister MP, Member for Southern Downs

There were a number of Councillors in attendance throughout the day, including Cr Wantling, Cr Deane, Cr Richters and Cr McDonald. I had the opportunity to discuss our pre-budget submissions to both the Queensland and Australian governments. In particular we discussed the need for funding for a roof for the Warwick Saleyards to support our agricultural and transport industries. This was particularly relevant as the Warwick Saleyards are Queensland’s only sheep saleyards, and the Hon. David Littleproud MP opened the Sheep and Wool Museum as part of the 150th celebrations, proudly sponsored by Council.

MONTHLY REPORT

External meetings, Council sessions, delegations and forums attended by the Mayor during the month of January 2026:

DATE	WHO/WHERE	DETAILS
13 January 2026	Radio Interview Graeme Haycraft, TenFM Constituent meeting	Stanthorpe
14 January 2026	Council Information Session (all day)	Stanthorpe
15 January 2026	Radio Interview 4WK 4 constituent meetings	Phone



19 January 2026	Attend presentation of defibrillator to Freestone Memorial Hall Constituent meeting	Warwick
22 January 2026	Radio Interview 4WK	Phone
23 January 2026	Meeting with Mayor Bronwyn Petrie	Tenterfield
26 January 2026	Australia Day Ceremony & Awards	Allora
27 January 2026	Radio Interview 4WK Constituent meeting	Phone Stanthorpe
28 January 2026	Ordinary Council Meeting Meeting QLD Health TRACC Program representative	Warwick
29 January 2026	Councillor Strategic Session Radio Interview 4WK Local Art Prize Opening Stanthorpe Art Gallery	Stanthorpe Phone Stanthorpe
30 January 2026	Official Opening of 2026 Stanthorpe Show	Stanthorpe



12. EXECUTIVE SERVICES REPORTS

12.1 Chief Executive Officer - Status Report

Document Information

 Southern Downs <small>REGIONAL COUNCIL</small>	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council note the Chief Executive Officer's Status Report.

REPORT

1. Questions on Notice

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held 28 January 2026 the following Questions on Notice were raised by Councillors.

Officers' advice in relation to those questions is outlined below:

Councillor	Agenda Item	Question on Notice	Response
Cr Wantling	13.2 Operational Plan 2025/2026 – Second Quarter Review – Report	The Performance Overview graph percentages total 108% - could an updated table and graph be provided.	The figures have been corrected and updated data was provided to Councillors.
Cr Windle	13.2 Operational Plan 2025/2026 – Second Quarter Review – Our Prosperity:	Is there any update from stakeholders on affordable housing	Officers recently met with representatives of Regional Housing and Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development. The discussion related to proposed housing projects within the region, and potential State and Federal grant funding. The meeting was positive. Following this, arrangements are being made for Regional Housing to present their proposal to the ELT in early March.
Cr Wantling	13.2 Operational Plan 2025/2026 – Second Quarter Review –	Can Councillors receive details of the successful applicants for the Community Grants Program?	The Community Grants Program for the current financial year has been fully expended. Councillors were

	Community Grants		provided with a list of recipients.
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2. Other Business

Nil

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

12.2 Warwick District Disaster Management Group - Council Nomination

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Disaster Management Coordinator	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	ECM Function No/s:	

Recommendation

THAT Council in accordance with s. 24 (1) of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and s. 5 (1) (c) (ii) and s. 5 (2) of the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* nominate a member and deputy member to the Warwick District Disaster Management Group (“DDMG”).

REPORT

Background

Section 24 of the Act provides that a Regulation, in this case, the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* (“the Regulation”), may provide for the appointment of members to the district group.

Section 5 of the Regulation defines membership of a district group as follows:

(1) For section 24(1) of the Act, the following persons are members of a district group—

(a) the persons appointed as chairperson and deputy chairperson of the district group under section 6;

(b) the person appointed as the executive officer of the district group under section 27 of the Act;

(c) a person appointed by—

(i) if there is 1 local government only in the disaster district for the district group—the local government; or

(ii) if there are 2 or more local governments in the disaster district and none of the local governments unite under section 31 of the Act—each local government; or

(iii) if there are 2 or more local governments in the disaster district and all the local governments unite under section 31 of the Act—each combined local government; or

(iv) if there are 3 or more local governments in the disaster district and not all the local governments unite under section 31 of the Act—

(A) each local government that does not unite; and

(B) each combined local government;

(d) a number of persons, each of whom represents a department, or a Hospital and Health Service, the police commissioner considers appropriate to be represented on the group, having regard to effective disaster management for the disaster district;

(e) any other person appointed by the police commissioner whom the commissioner considers appropriate to be a member of the district group, having regard to effective disaster management for the disaster district.”

Section 5, (2) of the Regulation goes on further to say, “Under subsection (1)(c)(ii), (iii) and (iv), each local government or combined local government is to appoint a separate person.”

Report

The DDMG plays a critical role in ensuring that disaster management and disaster operations in the district are consistent with the Queensland Disaster Management Committee’s (“QDMC”) strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State, with the Warwick DDMG looking to confirm the local government nomination.

Conclusion/Summary

Following the requirements of the Act and Regulation, the Council is now looking to confirm the nomination of the member and deputy member to the Warwick District Disaster Management Group (“DDMG”).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Legislative – s. 5 (2) of the *Disaster Management Regulation 2014* states that a local government is to have someone from the local government appointed to the district group. By not nominating, Council will not be meeting the requirements of the legislation, including having a representative at the table.

Opportunity

The nomination will ensure Council has a seat at the DDMG table.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Department of Community Resilience
Councillor Information Session 11 February 2026

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Disaster Management Act 2003
Disaster Management Regulation 2014

Corporate Plan

Goal 2 Our Places

Outcome: 2.1 Public places and open spaces are safe, well maintained and liveable.

Objective: 2.1.1 Partner with relevant agencies to ensure community safety and resilience in relation to disaster management of bushfires, floods and other natural disasters.

Policy / Strategy

Nil

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

12.3 Community Engagement Policy PL-CS059

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Senior Community Engagement Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council adopts the Community Engagement Policy PL-CS059.

REPORT

Report

Community Engagement is a way of included the views of the community in the planning and decision-making process of Council. Meaningful and effective engagement allows Council to draw on wider sources of information, perspectives and possibly solutions.

Southern Downs Regional Council is reviewing the Community Engagement Policy PL-CS059 (the Policy) in line with governance requirements, and to support SDRC's Corporate goal that *communities trust us to engage with them and advocate on their behalf*.

In accordance with Section 11 of the Policy. it is due to be renewed by December 2026.

Revision History:

- Policy Adopted: 20 December 2011
- Previous revision dates:
 - 18 May 2017
 - 28 August 2020
 - 27 January 2021
 - 18 December 2024

SDRC has seen a significant uplift in the community engagement activities during 2026. For example, during 2026, SDRC engaged with the community regarding the Draft Planning Scheme. This saw approx. 880 members of community taking part in this engagement, actively discussing issues and providing feedback to Council.

All engagement activities should be conducted in line with the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2). Developed by the International Association for Public Participation, the IAP2 is used widely by Local and State Government's across Australia. Adopting this policy will ensure that Council's engagement activities are in line with the IPA2.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Nil

Opportunity

Update Council's Community Engagement Policy in line with modern practice, terminology and methodology.

Embed modern engagement practices throughout SDRC.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

The Policy update was reviewed / workshopped:

1. Executive Leadership Team: 17 January 2026
2. Council Information Session: 4 February 2026

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Nil

Corporate Plan

Goal 1 Our People

Outcome: 1.1 Communities trust us to engage with them and advocate on their behalf.

Objective: 1.1.2 Implement effective and genuine community consultation processes that enable participation, engagement and collaboration.

Policy / Strategy

Community Engagement Strategy – PL-CS059

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Engagement Policy PL-CS059 [↓](#)

Community Engagement Policy

PL-CS059

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

POLICY NUMBER	PL-CS059
DIRECTORATE:	Executive
SECTION:	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	Director Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement
DATE ADOPTED:	20 December 2011
DATE TO BE REVIEWED:	18 December 2026
DATE REVIEWED:	[INSERT]
APPROVED BY:	

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
18/05/2017	1	Policy Review
28/08/2020	2	Policy Review
27/01/2021	3	Review – amendments to sections 1-3; 5-7 and new Annexure A Guide
18/12/2024	4	Policy Review
[DATE]	5	Policy Review [DETAILS]

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1 Purpose

Community engagement is a way of including the views of the community in our planning and decision-making processes. Meaningful and effective community engagement has benefits for Council and community. It allows Council to draw on wider sources of information, perspectives and possible solutions. This in turn results in better outcomes for Council and the community alike.

Engaging with the community is about facilitating two-way conversation, ensuring an effective approach to communicating information, and allowing community members to ask questions of Council and gain a deeper understanding of decisions. Early engagement promotes stakeholder buy-in and can encourage shifts in community sentiment through effective, better targeted approaches to communicating complex information.

This policy establishes Southern Downs Regional Council's (SDRC) commitment and guidelines to meaningful, inclusive and transparent community and stakeholder engagement. It ensures that engagement is embedded across Council planning and service delivery, so that decisions reflect the values, needs and aspirations of the Southern Downs community. It reinforces Council's role in nurturing an open, democratic relationship with the community and reflects Council's broader obligations under state legislation.

2 Vision

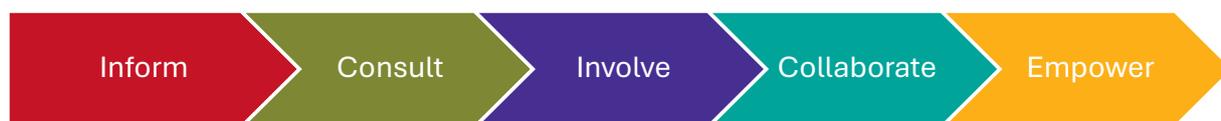
Council's vision for community engagement is to build trust and better outcomes through early, genuine and inclusive engagement processes that strengthen local democracy and help shape a region that remains a great place to live, work, play and stay. Council's community engagement framework champions a customer-centric mindset, ensuring that every person is seen, heard, valued and respected in the decision-making process.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers engaging on behalf of Council with the Southern Downs community or stakeholders. It encompasses engagement on all types of projects, policies, initiatives, programs and services.

4 Engagement Framework

Council will use the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum to determine the appropriate level of engagement for each initiative:



LEVEL	GOAL	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC
Inform	Provide balanced information.	We will keep you informed.
Consult	Seek feedback on options or decisions.	We will listen and consider your input.
Involve	Work with you to ensure input is reflected in decisions.	We will work with you throughout.
Collaborate	Partner in each aspect of the decision.	We will incorporate your advice and input.
Empower	Delegate decision-making to the community.	We will implement what you decide.



4.1 Levels of Engagement

4.1.1 Inform

At the **inform** level, engagement tools provide information to the community and create conduits where the public can ask questions and seek more information. Engagement is always a two-way relationship that facilitates conversation.

Information to the community should include:

- **WHAT** is happening - the change or upcoming works.
- **WHY** it is happening - the need, benefit, or requirement of a change, as well as the history of the decision or project.
- **WHEN** it is happening - the timeframe of implementation (including phases for bigger projects).
- **WHO** will be impacted by the change – which sections of the community are likely to be impacted.
- **HOW** it will affect the community - what can the community expect to see from this change and how are they likely to be impacted
- **HOW** do stakeholders find out more – if the community would like to know more about the project or decision, where do they go and who can they contact; always include a web address, phone number and email address on external communications.

Examples of engagement tools: dedicated email address and phone number (or internal triaging process set up to use Council's generic contact information), dedicated webpage, stakeholder meetings, on-site signage, static displays, pop-up stalls and information sessions, works and project notices, social media content, media releases, etc.

4.1.2 Consult

Consulting involves an exchange of information between Council and the community. At the consult level, engagement methods are focused on informing and allowing community members the opportunity to express their opinions and give feedback on a particular issue or proposal. It is essential that this exchange is genuine and that opportunity and merit for change exists based on the relevance and achievability of the feedback received.

Examples of engagement tools: surveys, focus groups, pop-up stalls and information sessions, quick polls, submission portals, etc.

4.1.3 Involve

At the **involve** level, engagement is about consulting the public at certain intervals of a project (generally at major milestones) and seeking input to ensure the solution is fit for purpose and aligns with community expectation. The community is involved from planning and design through to implementation.

An example of this is if Council proposes a new bikeway. Council may: (1) run focus groups with special interest groups to identify the best route solutions; (2) formulate a design and run community consultation on the concept design; (3) incorporate community feedback into the detailed design and inform the community about the project.

Examples of engagement tools: surveys, focus groups and workshops, pop-up stalls and information sessions, submission portals, round tables, reference groups and committees etc.



4.1.4 Collaborate

At the **collaborate** level, a project includes a high level of involvement from the community to make decisions. This level of community engagement encourages community members to be involved in identifying solutions to local issues, and their input and work is directly reflected in outcomes.

Examples of engagement tools: community reference groups, advisory committees, community panels and forums.

4.1.5 Empower

The **empower** level places the final decision-making power in the hands of the community, from initiation to completion. Council provides the funds and facilitates discussion but does not decide the outcome. Council may have representation within the decision-making body but has an equal vote to all other members.

Examples of engagement tools: citizen juries, ballots, and delegated decision-making.

The level of engagement will depend on the circumstances of the issue or project.

4.2 Determining the Need and Appropriate Level of Engagement

When determining the need, and appropriate level and methodology of engagement, the following items will be considered:

- **Community interest and level of impact:** is a project or decision likely to generate strong community interest and impact or is it a business decision?
- **Who is likely to be interested or impacted:** is the project or decision relevant to the broader community or only specific groups?
- **The technical nature of the project or required solution** (e.g. road design): is it appropriate and safe for the outcome to be influenced or changed?
- **The requirement and limitations of a decision:** what is the remit for change - is the decision bound by laws or policies, or addressing a complex matter which requires sensitivity and expert guidance?
- **Division of community benefit and impact** (e.g. mandatory land resumptions): is a decision likely to benefit some whilst directly impacting others, or is consultation on a decision likely to cause community divide?
- **Engagement fatigue:** when was the community last engaged and to what extent, or are there other planned engagements in the near future that should be prioritised? – avoid over engaging.

5 When We Engage

Council will initiate engagement:

- When required by legislation (e.g. Planning Act 2016, Local Government Act 2009),
- when significant community impact is expected,
- for strategic plans, large impactful infrastructure proposals, and service changes,
- when the community raises concerns requiring input,
- when developing or reviewing key policies, initiatives or laws that are likely to have wide-reaching community impacts, when appropriate.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Council:** Sets policy direction and champions community involvement.
- **CEO and Executive Leadership:** Ensures resourcing, consistency and quality.
- **Staff and Project Managers:** Include engagement in project planning, resourcing, and evaluation.
- **Engagement Team:** Provides strategic advice and support, and directly manages high-level, strategic engagements. Maintains an Engagement Repository of all Council engagement.
- **Councillors:** Represent community views and promote engagement.

All employees and representatives of Council must uphold the values of integrity, respect, and inclusivity in their interactions with the community.

7 Policy Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- a) **Inclusive:** Engagement will actively seek diverse community input and ensure equitable access.
- b) **Purposeful:** Every engagement will have a clear purpose and defined scope.
- c) **Timely:** Engagement will begin early and allow adequate time for community input.
- d) **Transparent:** Council will be clear about what can and cannot be influenced, and actively communicate the engagement purpose and timeframe.
- e) **Respectful:** All engagement will foster respectful dialogue and cultural safety.
- f) **Informed:** Council will share relevant information in accessible formats.
- g) **Accountable:** Feedback will be considered in decisions, and outcomes communicated.
- h) **Continuous Improvement:** Evaluation will be used to learn and refine future engagement.

These principles are underpinned by Council's organisational values:

- **Integrity and Service:** We are ethical, honest and consistent in all that we do, and we work with a customer-first mindset.
- **Respect and Accountability:** We respect the individual, the environment and the community, and take ownership of our roles.
- **Working Together and Learning:** We collaborate effectively and are always learning to deliver better outcomes.

7.1 Accessibility, Inclusion and Cultural Safety

Council is committed to creating equitable access to engagement opportunities by:

- a) Engaging in ways that are suitable, desirable and accessible to all community members, to remove barriers from participation in important conversations.
- b) Offering engagement in multiple formats, languages (when deemed necessary or beneficial) and levels of literacy.



- c) Ensuring accessibility for people with disability in accordance with the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992** and **Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)**.
- d) Upholding anti-discrimination principles in line with the **Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)**.
- e) Providing culturally safe engagement practices, particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- f) Respecting the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across the Southern Downs, acknowledging their elders past and present, and incorporating cultural protocols into our engagement planning.
- g) Ensuring children, youth, seniors, culturally and linguistically diverse people and vulnerable groups are reached in ways that meet their needs.
- h) Always protecting participant privacy and dignity.

7.2 Customer-Centric Mindset and Response Timeframes

Council is committed to a customer-first culture. As part of all engagement efforts:

- a) All enquiries and submissions will be acknowledged within **2 business days**.
- b) A detailed response to general enquiries will be provided within **10 business days**. More complex matters may require additional time to address; in these cases, within **10 business days** an interim response will be provided which gives all readily known answers to questions and outlines the expected timeframe for a complete response. This includes, for example, responses to formal submissions where further assessment is required.
- c) Each customer will be treated with dignity and respect.
- d) We will ensure every community member feels heard, seen and supported.
- e) Community input will be genuinely considered and integrated wherever possible.

8 Methods, Evaluation and Reporting

8.1 Engagement Methods

Prior to undertaking any significant form of engagement on an activity, Council and/or its officers will identify:

- The purpose of the engagement and what it aims to achieve (goals and objectives).
- Who are the key stakeholders interested, impacted, or influencing the project.
- How the key stakeholders are identified and engaged.
- The appropriate level of engagement.
- What engagement tools will be used.
- A timeline of engagement activities and methods.
- Evaluation methods.

Council will tailor engagement methods using a mix of traditional and digital tools, including:

- Open communication conduits (i.e. phone and email).
- Online surveys and platforms (e.g. MySDRC App, Have Your Say).
- Social media, local radio and print media.
- Unaddressed mail drops.
- Print collateral and corflute signage.

- Workshops and focus groups.
- Information sessions and pop-ups.
- Advisory panels and reference groups.
- Any other relevant tool

8.2 Closing the Loop

Council will ensure to close the loop and report back to participants and the broader community on:

- What was heard,
- how input influenced decisions,
- the outcome or decision.

Where appropriate, Council will publish engagement outcomes and reports on **Have Your Say Southern Downs** and other communication platforms to ensure transparency and accessibility.

8.3 Reporting, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Council will ensure accurate record keeping and reporting about engagement efforts, outcomes and effectiveness.

Engagement activities are to be assessed on:

- Participation rates and sample representativeness.
- Community satisfaction.
- Alignment of feedback to engagement purpose and goal.
- Integration of feedback into outcomes.
- Timeliness, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness.
- Internal reflections and process improvement.

Evaluation will inform future engagement planning and will be shared with Council and executive leadership.

9 Definitions

TERM	MEANING
Collateral	Designed printed or digital materials used to visually communicate information to the community. Including but not limited to digital graphics, social media content, flyers, posters, information sheets, signage and other promotional or educational materials.
Communication	The process through which a message is passed from a person or group of people external or internal to Southern Downs Regional Council.
Communication conduits	The channels and platforms used to distribute information and receive feedback from the public. Including but not limited to social media, websites, email, phone, print media, and in-person communication.
Community	Individuals and organisations that have a stake or interest in the Southern Downs region. Council recognises that all community members have the right to access and participate in community engagement activities regardless of their abilities, age, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, and geographic location.



Community engagement	Any process in which Council engages the community to inform about a decision, seek feedback, or involve the community in decision making.
Community impact	The actual or potential effect of a Council project, service, policy, or decision on individuals, groups, or the broader community, including social, economic, environmental, and wellbeing outcomes.
Community workshop	A collaborative and facilitated session involving Council and community participants to share information, explore issues, develop ideas, and work toward informed and shared outcomes.
Customer-first	An approach that places customers and stakeholders at the centre of Council operations, ensuring their needs, experiences, and perspectives are prioritised, respected, and considered in decision making and service delivery.
Effective community engagement	Any engagement activity that upholds the principles of this policy in line with the goal of the activity. Effective community engagement does not necessitate agreement from all stakeholders, nor requires every Council decision to be open to comment or influence. Council is responsible for making decisions that adhere to legislative requirements and that best represent the current and future needs of residents and the region. It is about proactive transparency, accountability, and clear communication.
Engagement and communication tools	The tangible, produced tools and items used to communicate information, generate awareness, or encourage participation and conversation. Including but not limited to social media content, unaddressed mail, mailing lists, information sheets, FAQs, online platforms, and interactive in-person elements such as walkable maps and signage.
Engagement fatigue	A state in which individuals or communities become disengaged or less willing to participate due to the frequency, volume, or perceived repetitiveness of engagement activities, resulting in reduced interest, trust, or response rates.
Engagement methods	The planned approaches and techniques used to undertake engagement, outlining how Council will engage with the community and how engagement and communication tools will be applied to achieve the purpose and objectives of the activity.
Engagement repository	A centralised record and calendar of current, past, and planned community engagement activities, including but not limited to relevant project documentation, strategies, outcomes and reports, timelines, approval tracking, stakeholder correspondence etc.
Focus group	A facilitated session with a selected group of participants convened to explore views, test ideas, products or solutions, and provide targeted feedback on specific matters.
Information session	An open, staffed public drop-in event providing access to relevant collateral and educational materials, with opportunities for community members to speak directly with Council staff, Councillors, and where relevant, external subject matter experts.
Pop-up session	A temporary information or engagement stall established in a public place or event to provide information and capture feedback in locations where stakeholders are already present.
Project	A planned undertaking that builds, enhances and maintains Council assets or enhances Council services to achieve a desired outcome, within a defined scope and funding allowance.
Reference group / Advisory committee	A group established in relation to a specific matter to provide advice, local knowledge, and feedback to inform Council’s considerations and decision-making processes.

10 Legislative and Strategic Alignment

This policy aligns with:



1. Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)
2. Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)
3. Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
4. Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)
5. Planning Act 2016 (Qld)
6. SDRC Corporate Plan 2021–2026
7. SDRC Communications and Engagement Strategy
8. SDRC Customer Service Charter
9. SDRC Reconciliation Action Plan (if applicable)

11 Review and Governance

This policy will be reviewed at a minimum every four years or earlier as required to remain current with legislation and best practice. The Director Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement is responsible for its implementation and review.

12 Related Documents

1. SDRC Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

13. CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS

13.1 Financial Services - Financial Report as at 31 January 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Management Accountant	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council receive and note the Financial Performance Report as at 31 January 2026.

REPORT

Background

The Finance Team have prepared the Financial Performance Report for January 2026.

Report

Income Statement

Revenue

YTD operational revenue of \$63.3 is \$2.5M more than budget with the following increases:

- Grants & Subsidies are currently \$0.8M more than budget due to the receipt of emergency funding not originally budgeted and the timing of the receipt of waste grants.
- \$0.6M in additional road maintenance (RMPC) works undertaken on behalf of Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). This is an increase in revenue due to the volume and type of work required by TMR under this contract.
- \$0.5M increase in fees and charges due to additional \$0.2M in waste disposal fees and \$0.2M in Connection Fees.
- \$0.6M in interest revenue due to a larger cash balance than originally budgeted.

Expenses

YTD operational expenses of \$69.7M are currently \$3.8M more than budget and mainly are because of timing issues. The key increases in expenses are:

- \$1.2M in Material and Services because of additional work undertaken for TMR and works related to unbudgeted emergency works. These costs have been funded by either TMR or grants. Invoices for these works will be sent out in due course.
- An increase in annual leave, long service and sick leave taken, which resulted in on-cost recoveries being lower than expected, due to the Christmas/New Year period which will even out throughout the remainder of the financial year.
- \$0.3M in additional internal Plant Hire Charges due to the inclusion of additional costs not previously budgeted for under internal plant hire.

Capital Grants, Contributions and Donations

Revenue from capital grants is \$1.4M more than budget, at \$10.5M due to property being donated to Council (contributed asset) as part of development obligations.

Balance Sheet

Cash and Loans

As at 31 January 2026, Council had \$73.3M in cash at bank and investments, of which approximately \$47 is unrestricted cash. The total of outstanding loans, both the current and non-current, is \$9.3M, this is \$5.6M less than budget due to the assumption at the time the budget was approved that Council would draw down the entire \$4M loan immediately to fund the WIRAC Roof Replacement Works. Only \$500k of works was budgeted to be completed by the end of the year.

Capital Works in Progress

Capital works expenditure as at 31 January 2026 was \$26.8M which is 38.4% of the approved capital works budget of \$69.8M. There is a further \$18.2M in committed costs, meaning \$45M has been spent or committed, representing 64.5% of the adopted budget. In comparison to last year, at this stage Council had spent or committed 41.2% of the budget.

Financial Sustainability Ratios

The financial sustainability ratios are measures designed to assess the financial capacity, operating performance, liquidity, asset management and debt servicing capacity of Council. They are designed to provide a comprehensive view of the financial sustainability of the council and to support its long-term viability. During the year the ratios are presented at a single point in time, the annual report shows these as a five year annual average to show how Council is travelling in the longer term.

As at 31 January 2026, Council was meeting or exceeding the targets as set by the Department of Local Government.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Finance Team is monitoring movement in interest rates closely as changes can impact Council's interest revenue. Similarly, staff are currently undertaking and planning for future asset revaluation and indexation for Transport and Storm Water assets as per the Audit and Risk Committee Position Paper dated 26 June 2025.

Opportunity

Finance continues to work with the General Manager of Infrastructure, Assets and Projects, Manager of Assets, Spatial and Projects and the relevant project managers on project variances and milestone alignment in project delivery to improve cash flow forecasting and monthly reporting.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Nil

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012

Corporate Plan

Goal 4 Our Performance

Outcome: 4.4 Council has embedded risk management, good governance, transparency and accountability into what we do.

Objective: 4.4.2 Ensure our long-term financial sustainability is a pillar of our decision making.
 4.4.3 Our asset management is smart, effective and efficient with robust project selection pathways.

Policy / Strategy

Operational Plan 2025/26

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

1. January 2026 Finance Report [↓](#)



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Performance Report

January 2026

Southern Downs Regional Council Income Statement January 2026

	Phased 2026 YTD Actual \$	Phased 2026 YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	YTD Variance %	Note	Annual 2026 Budget \$	Annual 2026 Forecast \$
Revenue from ordinary activities							
General Rates	22,724,594	22,552,388	172,206	0.8%		45,105,550	45,105,550
Rural fire brigade levy	142,498	141,785	713	0.5%		283,570	283,570
Utility Rates and Charges	17,784,307	18,287,419	(503,112)	(2.8%)	1	36,564,838	36,564,838
Less Discounts	(1,327,175)	(1,332,586)	5,410	(0.4%)		(2,665,171)	(2,665,171)
Rates on Council properties	(433,334)	(420,650)	(12,684)	3.0%		(880,294)	(880,294)
	38,890,889	39,228,356	(337,467)	(0.86%)		78,408,493	78,408,493
Fees and Charges	5,972,186	5,484,463	487,723	8.9%	2	8,817,955	8,817,955
Interest	2,656,632	2,057,979	598,654	29.1%	3	3,531,824	3,531,824
Contract & Sales Revenue	1,561,614	956,907	604,708	63.2%	4	2,264,716	2,264,716
Rent and Other Income	815,480	784,868	30,612	3.9%		1,320,766	1,320,766
Government Grants and Subsidies	5,793,160	4,999,255	793,904	15.9%	5	11,595,126	11,595,126
Internal Revenue	7,653,163	7,326,870	326,293	4.5%		12,560,348	12,560,348
Total Operating Revenue	63,343,124	60,838,698	2,504,426	4.1%		118,499,229	118,499,229
Expenses from ordinary activities							
Employee Costs	20,029,991	18,794,356	1,235,636	6.6%	6	32,126,684	32,126,684
Materials and Services	27,333,025	25,644,671	1,688,354	6.6%	7	47,852,158	47,852,158
Depreciation and Amortisation	15,313,988	14,666,852	647,136	4.4%		26,643,546	26,643,546
Plant Hire	3,158,885	2,935,061	223,823	7.6%	8	5,078,440	5,078,440
Finance Costs	371,344	340,306	31,038	9.1%		863,319	863,319
Internal Charges	3,489,448	3,489,446	2	0.0%		5,981,908	5,981,908
Total Operating Expenses	69,696,680	65,870,692	3,825,988	5.8%		118,546,055	118,546,055
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before capital items	(6,353,556)	(5,031,995)	(1,321,562)	26.26%		(46,827)	(46,827)
Other Capital Amounts							
Capital Grants, Contributions and Donations	10,514,810	9,071,409	1,443,400	15.9%	9	14,029,433	14,029,433
Other capital income and (expenses)	(119,019)	645,750	(764,769)	(118.4%)	10	(4,271,000)	(4,271,000)
Net Result Surplus/(Deficit)	4,042,234	4,685,164	(642,930)	(13.7%)		9,711,606	9,711,606

Note 1: Utility charges under budget due to water consumption less than anticipated by (\$703K)

Note 2: Fees and Charges above budget due to Waste Disposal Fees \$171K, Application and Connection Fees \$265K and Cattle Sales Fees \$84K

Note 3: Interest earned higher than budgeted due to cash rate increases with RBA, and good investment opportunities with banks

Note 4: Recoverable Works higher than budgeted due to receipt of RMPC funding not aligning with budget phasing and additional works completed

Note 5: Grants and Subsidies higher than budget due to grants receipt of Emergency Funding not in current budget, and Waste Grants received earlier than budgeted

Note 6: Employee costs higher than budgeted due to the increase in annual leave, long service and sick leave payments, this in turn has resulted in lower oncost recoveries

Note 7: Materials and Services over budget mainly under Infrastructure, due to repair works of flood damage being categorised as operational

Note 8: Internal Plant Hire charges review resulted in an increase, due to ensuring all plant items are charged plant hire fees

Note 9: Capital Grants currently above budget due to donated assets not accounted for in budget

Note 10: Other Capital Income and (expenses) under budget due to disposal of fleet

Southern Downs Regional Council Balance Sheet

January 2026

	Phased 2025 YTD Actual \$	Annual 2025 Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	YTD Variance %
Current Assets				
Cash assets & Investments	73,256,832	87,589,000	(14,332,168)	(16.4%)
Receivables	6,232,383	11,872,000	(5,639,617)	(47.5%)
Assets held for sale	-	160,000	(160,000)	(100.0%)
Inventories	1,179,927	1,138,000	41,927	3.7%
	80,669,143	100,759,000	(20,089,857)	-19.9%
Non-Current Assets				
Investment Property	363,900	364,000	(100)	(0.0%)
Property, plant and equipment	1,003,950,151	1,027,804,000	(23,853,849)	(2.3%)
Other Financial Assets	126,379	136,000	(9,621)	(7.1%)
Capital works in progress	40,133,759	15,000,000	25,133,759	167.6%
Intangible Assets	76,898	88,000	(11,102)	(12.6%)
	1,044,651,086	1,043,392,000	1,259,086	0.1%
TOTAL ASSETS	1,125,320,228	1,144,151,000	(18,830,772)	(1.6%)
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and other payables	8,600,224	15,318,000	(6,717,776)	(43.9%)
Provisions	8,785,582	9,119,000	(333,418)	(3.7%)
Interest bearing liabilities	2,098,379	2,367,000	(268,621)	(11.3%)
	19,484,185	26,804,000	(7,319,815)	(27.3%)
Non-Current Liabilities				
Interest bearing liabilities	7,239,125	12,615,000	(5,375,875)	(42.6%)
Provisions	15,519,969	15,155,000	364,969	2.4%
Other Payables	1,680,467	1,671,000	9,467	0.6%
	24,439,560	29,441,000	(5,001,440)	(17.0%)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	43,923,746	56,245,000	(12,321,254)	(21.9%)
NET COMMUNITY ASSETS	1,081,396,483	1,087,906,000	(6,509,517)	(0.6%)
Community Equity				
Asset Revaluation Reserve	382,365,600	377,790,000	4,575,600	1.2%
Retained surplus	699,030,883	710,116,000	(11,085,117)	(1.6%)
TOTAL COMMUNITY EQUITY	1,081,396,483	1,087,906,000	(6,509,517)	(0.6%)

Southern Downs Regional Council

Cash Flow Statement

January 2026

	Phased 2026 YTD Actual \$	Phased 2026 YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	YTD Variance %	Annual 2026 Budget \$
Cashflows from operating activities					
Receipts from customers	54,679,609	45,669,726	9,009,884	19.7%	90,268,000
Payments to suppliers and employees	(63,079,088)	(52,418,027)	(10,661,061)	20.3%	(82,769,000)
Investment and interest revenue received	2,656,632	2,057,979	598,654	29.1%	3,531,000
Rental Income	815,480	784,868	30,612	3.9%	632,000
Non-capital grants and contributions	5,793,160	4,999,255	793,904	15.9%	11,495,000
Borrowing costs	-	-	-	0.0%	(576,000)
Other cashflows from operating activities	-	-	-	0.0%	-
Net Cash Operating Activities	865,793	1,093,800	(228,008)	88.9%	22,581,000
Cashflows from Investing Activities					
Sale of property, plant and equipment	(119,019)	937,417	(1,056,436)	(112.7%)	1,607,000
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	10,514,810	9,071,409	1,443,400	15.9%	14,183,000
Net investment maturities	-	-	-	0.0%	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(26,790,690)	(43,661,000)	16,870,310	(38.6%)	(43,668,000)
Other cashflows from investing activities	-	-	-	0.0%	128,000
Net Cash Investing Activities	(16,394,899)	(33,652,174)	17,257,275	(135.4%)	(27,750,000)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities					
Proceeds from/repayment of borrowings and advances	506,834	336,833	170,001	50.5%	4,479,000
Net Cash Financing Activities	506,834	336,833	170,001	50.5%	4,479,000
Net increase in cash and cash and equivalent held	(15,022,272)	(32,221,540)	17,199,268	(53.4%)	(690,000)
Cash at beginning of period	88,279,104	63,816,000	24,463,104	38.3%	88,279,104
Cash at end of period	73,256,832	31,594,460	41,662,372	131.9%	87,589,104

Cash at end of period is significantly higher (\$39m) than budget primarily due to cash balance at the beginning of the year being \$24m above what was forecast in the budget together with \$16m in less capital spend than budgeted.

Southern Downs Regional Council Sustainability Ratios January 2026

	Key Ratios	Calculation	Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Target Ratio	On Target?	Overview
Financial Capacity	Council Controlled Revenue Ratio	((Net Rates, Levies and Charges + Fees and Charges) / Total Operating Revenue) (%)	82.50%	81.34%	N/A	✓	Council-controlled revenue is an indicator of a Council's financial flexibility, ability to influence its operating income, and capacity to respond to unexpected financial shocks.
	Population Growth Ratio	(Prior year estimated population / previous year estimated population) - 1	0.60%	0.28%	N/A	✓	Population growth is a key driver to a Council's operating income, service needs, and infrastructure requirements into the future.
Operating Performance	Operating Surplus Ratio	(Net Operating Surplus / Total Operating Revenue) (%)	(0.04%)	6.4%	> 0%	✓	The operating surplus ratio is an indicator of the extent to which operating revenues raised cover operational expenses only or are available for capital funding purposes.
	Operating Cash Ratio	(Net Operating Surplus + Depreciation + Finance Costs) / Total Operating Revenue (%)	25.70%	14.73%	> 0%	✓	The operating cash ratio indicates that a Council is generating surplus cash from its core operations, which suggests that Council has the ability to self-fund its capital expenditure requirements.
Liquidity	Unrestricted Cash Expense Cover Ratio	(Total Cash and Equivalents + Current Investments + Available Ongoing QTC Working Capital Facility Limit - Externally Restricted Cash) / Total Operating Expenditure - Depreciation and Amortisation - Finance Costs) x 12	7	10	Greater than 4 months	✓	The unrestricted cash expense cover ratio is an indicator of the unconstrained liquidity available to a Council to meet ongoing and emergent financial demands, which is a key component to solvency. It represents the number of months a Council can continue operating based on currently monthly expenses.
Asset Management	Asset Sustainability Ratio	(Capital Expenditure on the Replacement of Assets (renewals) / Depreciation Expense)	105.7%	175.0%	> 80%	✓	This is an approximation of the extent to which the infrastructure assets managed by the Council are being replaced as these reach the end of their useful lives.
	Asset Consumption Ratio	Written Down Replacement Cost of Depreciable Infrastructure Assets / Current Replacement Cost of Depreciable Infrastructure Assets	65.2%	63.1%	> 60%	✓	The asset consumption ratio approximates the extent to which Council's infrastructure assets have been consumed compared to what it would cost to build a new asset with the same benefit to the community.
	Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	Total of Planned Capital Expenditure on Infrastructure Asset Renewals over 10 Years / Total Required Capital Expenditure on Infrastructure Asset Renewals over 10 Years	99.9%	99.9%	N/A	✓	The asset renewal funding ratio measures the ability of a Council to fund its projected infrastructure asset renewal/replacement in the future.
Debt Servicing Capacity	Debt Leverage Ratio	(Book Value of Debt / (Total Operating Revenue - Total Operating Expenditure + Depreciation and Amortisation))	0.56	1.04	Tier 4 = 0 - 3 times	✓	This is an indicator of Council's ability to repay its existing debt. It measures the relative size of the Council's debt to its operating performance.

Comments on Ratio Results

When looking at ratios it is important to understand that they represent a snapshot in time and some ratios are more annualised targets.

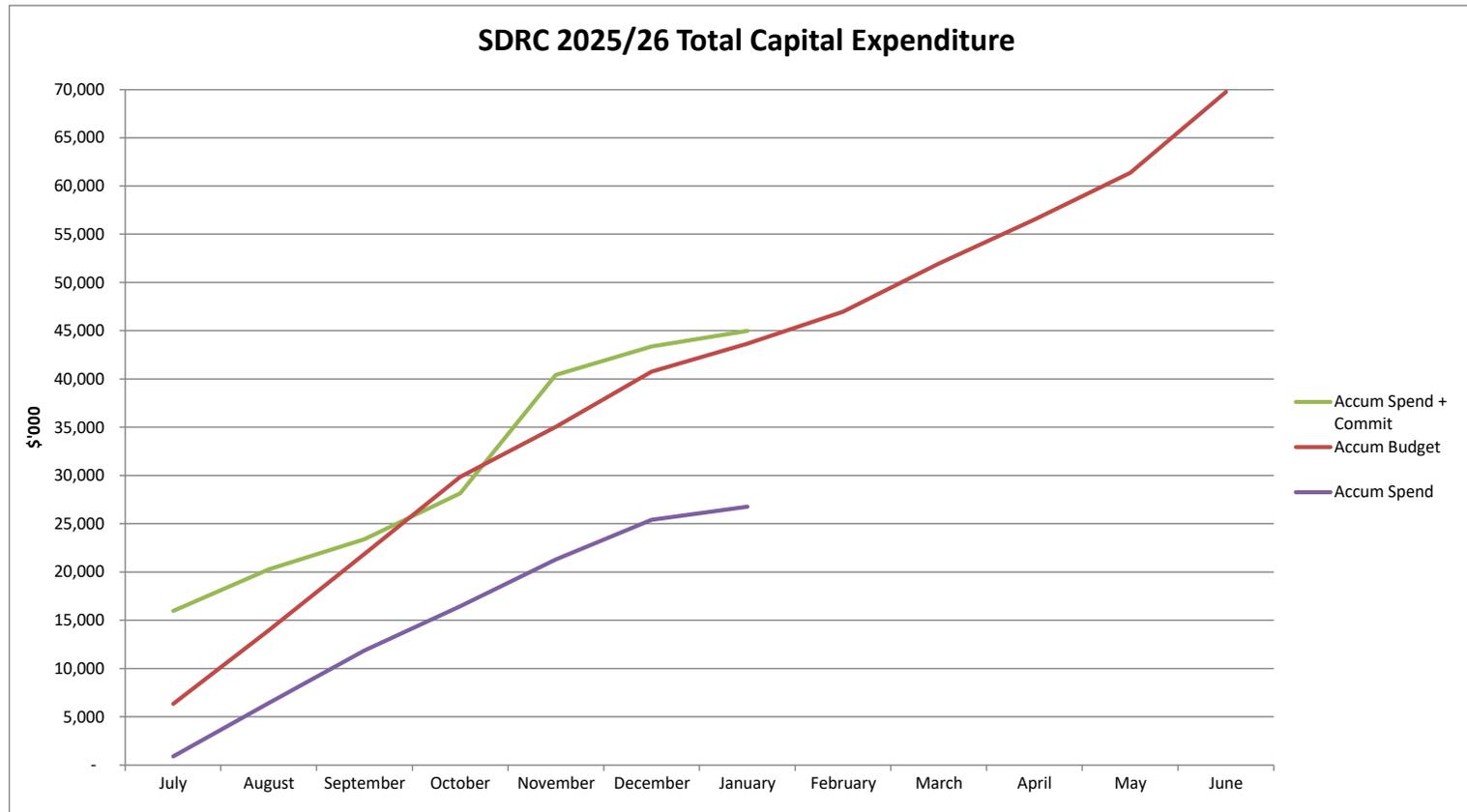
* Operating Surplus Ratio: The ratio is currently above target range implying increased surplus from either additional revenue or lower costs. This ratio is expected to bounce around during the year especially in Q1 to Q3 due to timing of both revenue and expenditure during the year. Currently still on target to meet the budget target which sits below the range.

Southern Downs Regional Council
Capital Works Projects by Asset Class

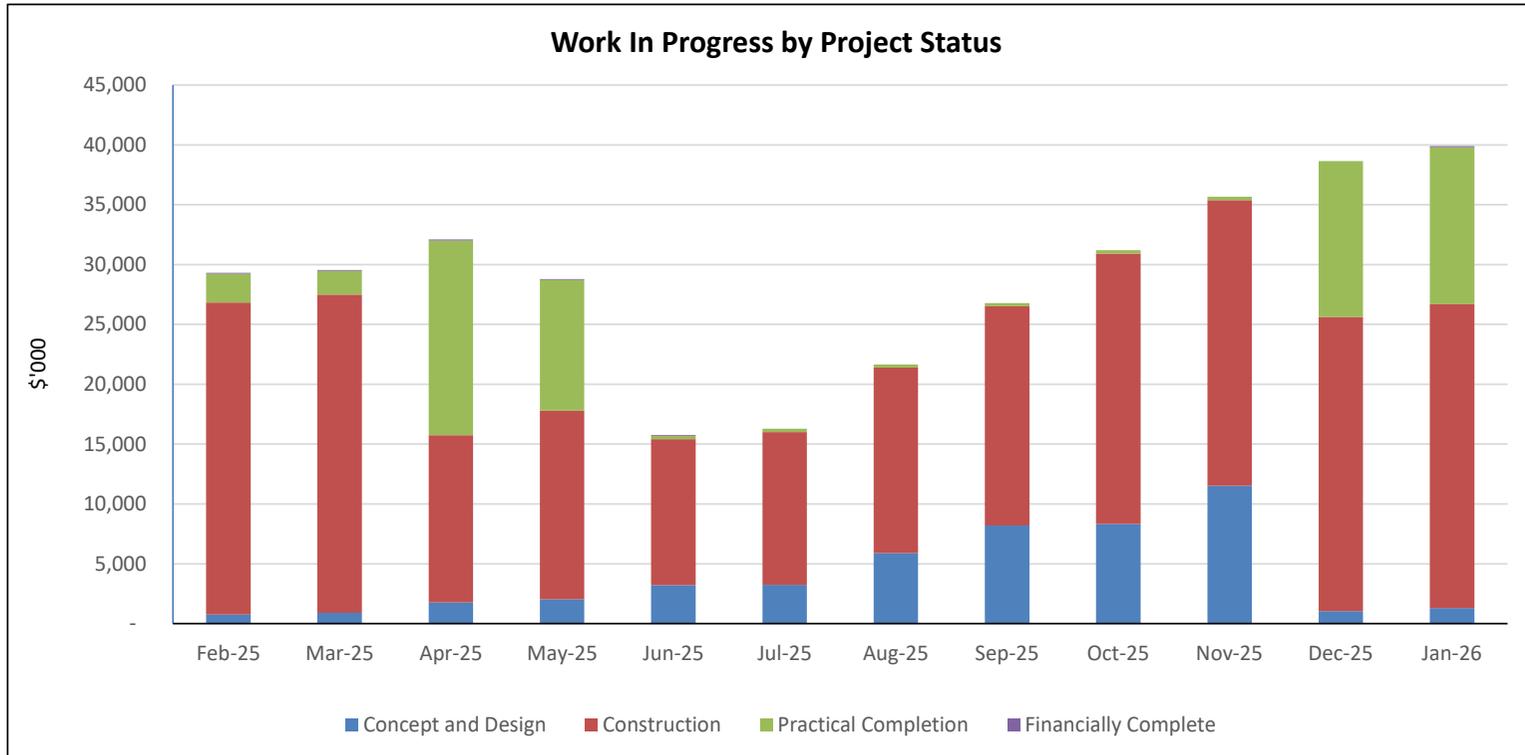
As At 31 January 2026

	Budget	YTD Expenditure	% Spent	Committed	Spent and Committed	% Spent and Committed
Land	-	-	-	800	800	-
Buildings	4,189,910	935,830	22.3%	1,686,223	2,622,052	62.6%
Plant & Equipment	8,803,097	1,478,795	16.8%	4,327,670	5,806,465	66.0%
Roads, Drains & Bridges	24,331,341	12,090,163	49.7%	3,018,855	15,109,018	62.1%
Water	12,368,022	3,566,479	28.8%	4,031,581	7,598,059	61.4%
Sewerage	7,718,918	649,354	8.4%	4,774,787	5,424,140	70.3%
Other Assets	12,357,040	8,070,070	65.3%	365,781	8,435,851	68.3%
Total	69,768,328	26,790,690	38.4%	18,205,696	44,996,386	64.5%

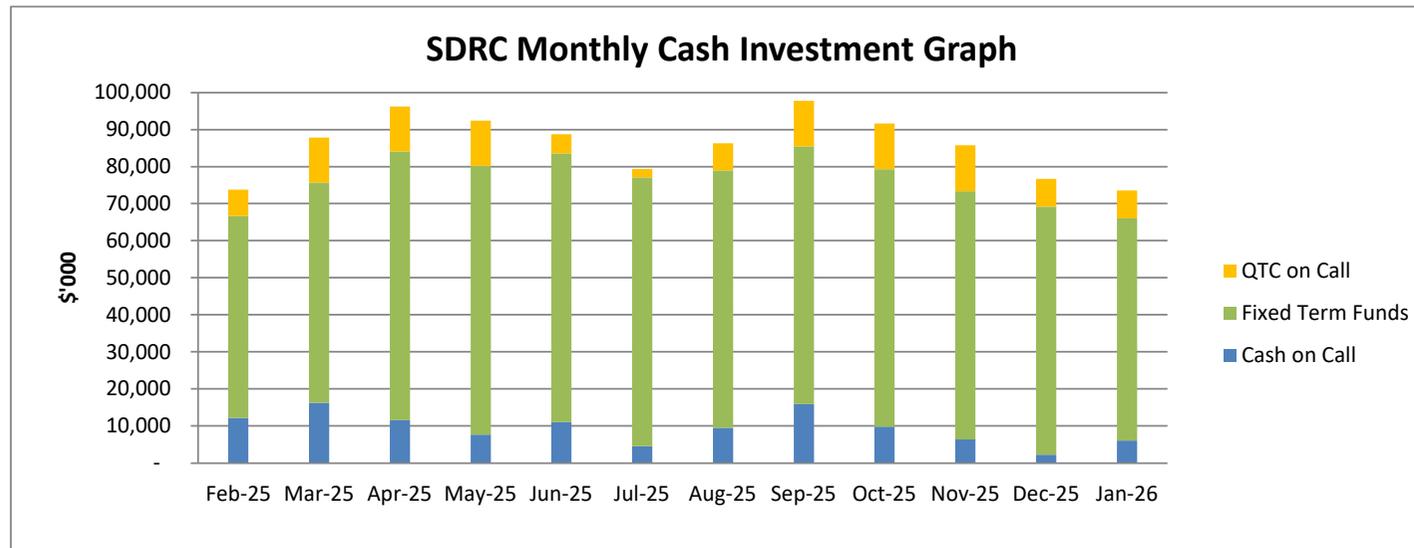
Southern Downs Regional Council
 Capital Expenditure
 As At 31 January 2026



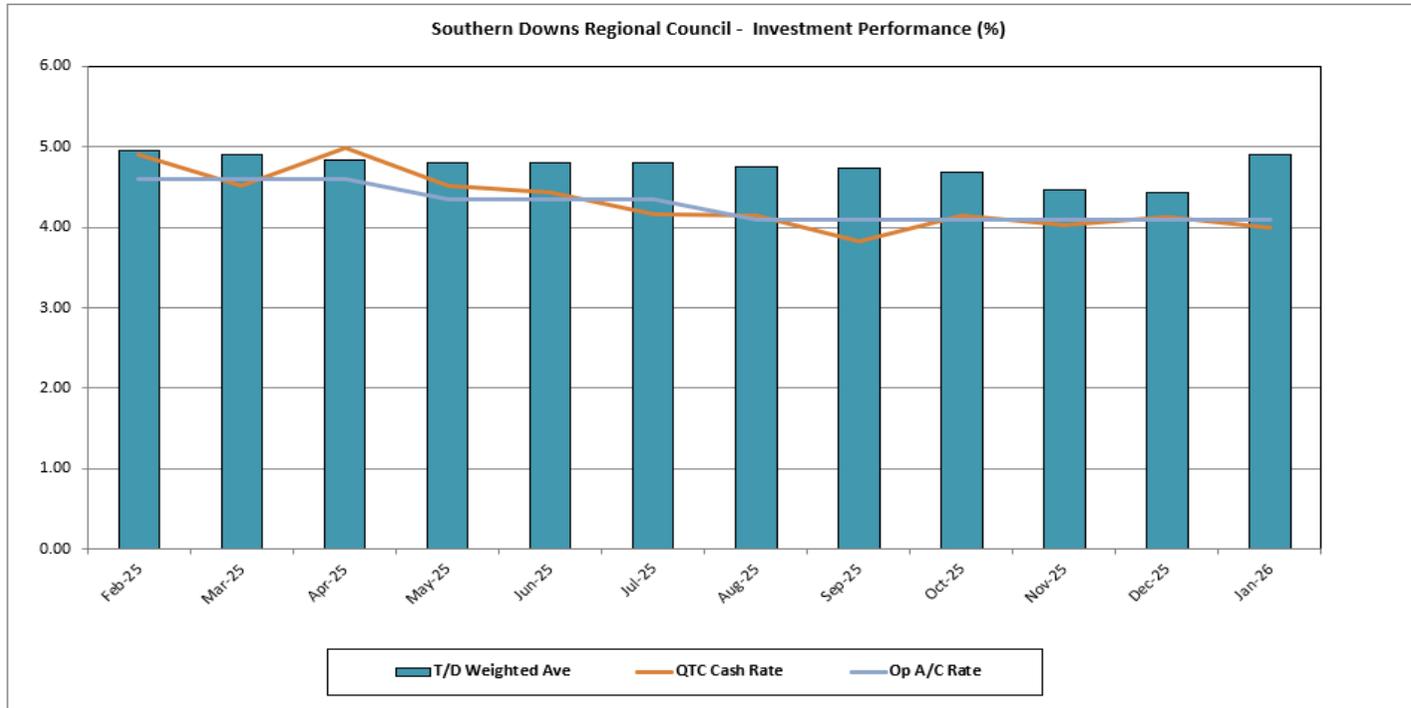
**Southern Downs Regional Council
 Work in Progress (WIP) Status Report
 As At 31 January 2026**



**Southern Downs Regional Council
 Total Monthly Cash Investment Register
 As At 31 January 2026**



Southern Downs Regional Council
Investment Performance
As At 31 January 2026



**Southern Downs Regional Council
 Borrowings Report
 As At 31 January 2026**

QTC Loan Account	Balance	Payout Date
CBD Redevelopment Stage 2	282,092	Mar-28
Market Square Pump Station	131,643	Mar-28
General	952,608	Mar-28
General 2009	451,080	Mar-28
General 2009/10	68,549	Mar-28
General 2010/11	1,034,771	Mar-28
General 2011/12	2,345,325	Jun-32
General 2012/13	1,365,521	Dec-32
Warwick Sewerage Treatment Plant	75,425	Jun-26
Allora Water Main	2,630,490	Mar-34
Total Loan Balance	<u>9,337,504</u>	

13.2 Conversion of a State issued term lease over Lot 92 on BNT 538 to Freehold.

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Land Management Officer	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council, provides no objection for the conversion of the State term lease to freehold land at Lot 92 on BNT 538.

REPORT

Background

Council has been advised by the Department Resources of an application received for conversion of Term Lease over Lot 92 on BNT 538. The current use of the lease land is Grazing.

Report

The current lessees are the applicants for the conversion and are also the owners of adjoining land around this parcel of land.

Council officers considered the request to convert the land to freehold. Any future uses of the site would need to consider the question of access to the site, noting the lack of a proper formed road. This could be addressed through the Development Application process. Officers noted the temporary road closure at the south of the lot but observed the question of a permanent road closure is separate.

There is a road reserve containing an unformed, access track that passed through the subject land. The access track is not maintained by Council. That road reserve has been temporarily closed, and the applicant has been issued a permit to occupy that road reserve. The closure of that road reserve has been the subject of recent activism by the community, who are seeking to have it reopened.

This request to convert the land to freehold is separate from the road reserve question, but there are clear links in that conversion to freehold would likely strengthen any future request from the applicant to permanently close the road.

Conclusion/Summary

Once the land is freehold the applicant will have a chance to purchase this from the State. This gives the applicant the opportunity to amalgamate this land with other parcels of their land.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Council has only been requested to provide their feedback with the final decision being handled by the State.

Opportunity

Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Council Information Session Presentation 11 February 2026

External Consultation

Department of Resources

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Regulation 2012
Land Act 1994

Corporate Plan

Goal 4 Our Performance

Outcome: 4.1 Our customers want to do business with us.

Objective: 4.1.1 Deliver contemporary customer service experiences that align with the expectations of our customers and the community

Policy / Strategy

Nil

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken. In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the Human Rights Policy PL-CS093 and the Queensland Human Rights Act 2019. It is considered that the subject matter does not conflict with any human rights issues and supports the fundamental rights listed in Councils Human Rights Policy PL-CS093.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

13.3 Application for Permanent Road Closure - Adjacent to Lot 1 on RP815366 and Lot 3 on SP340870 - Off Washpool Road, Rosenthal Heights

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Land Management Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council, pursuant to Section 99(1) of the *Land Act 1994*, advise the Department of Resources that Council does not object to the application for a permanent road closure over part of the Road Reserve adjacent to Lot 1 on RP815366 and Lot 3 on SP340870, subject to these parcels being amalgamated with the adjoining Lots in the proposed development.

REPORT

Background

Council has received a request for views in relation to an application for permanent road closure over the road reserve adjacent to Lot 1 on RP815366 and Lot 3 on SP340870, situated off Washpool Road at Rosenthal Heights. As shown in Attachment 1.

The applicant is the owner of both adjoining lots, being Lot 1 on RP815366 and Lot 3 on SP340870. An applicant is required to seek comments from Council on Part C – Form LA30 – Statement in relation to an application under the *Land Act 1994* over State land to accompany an application to the Department of Resources.

Report

There is a current subdivision planned for the adjoining parcels of land and if given the approval to buy this from the State, the applicant intends to incorporate it into the flow of the site plan for the development. The main concern raised during internal consultation was regarding the stormwater drainage at this site. This can be addressed as part of a new development application and the site design and plan for the subdivision.

Conclusion/Summary

- Council is requested to advise whether it has a view regarding the permanent closure of the road reserve described above.
- The road reserve is not used as a road or access track.
- The road reserve adjoins land that is subject to a development application and the applicant, if successful, will incorporate the land into an amended development application.
- Council officers raised concerns regarding drainage, but it is considered that these concerns can be managed through conditions on the amended development application.

- Officers recommend not objecting to the application to permanently close the road reserve adjacent to Lot 1 on RP815366 and Lot 3 on SP340870, located off the Washpool Road at Rosenthal Heights, subject to the land being incorporated with the adjoining land subject to the development application.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No further mowing and maintenance costs of the section of the road reserve to Council. There are no financial implications arising from this request. All costs are met by the applicant.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Minimal risks to Council, particularly given the application is decided by the Minister under the *Land Act 1994*.

If the road reserve continues, Council continues to be responsible for maintenance and management of the land, which would otherwise pass to the developer.

Opportunity

This gives the adjoining landowners the opportunity to utilise this space for the benefit of the development of the area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Views were sought from Council's Directorates.
Presented at Councillor Information Session on 17 December 2025.

External Consultation

No external consultation was conducted by Council. The Department of Resources is the decision-maker for the application. Council is deemed an interested party given Council's role as road manager and is not required to consult with landowners.

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Council controls all roads in its local government area pursuant to section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

The application to permanently close a road is decided by the Minister pursuant to section 99(1) of the *Land Act 1994*. Only adjoining landowners or public utility providers can apply to permanently close a road.

Corporate Plan

Goal 3 **Our Prosperity**

Outcome: 3.3 The Southern Downs is a destination of choice for business and visitors.

Objective: 3.3.1 Establish a reputation for working collaboratively with developers to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes.

Goal 4 Our Performance

Outcome: 4.1 Our customers want to do business with us.

Objective: 4.1.1 Deliver contemporary customer service experiences that align with the expectations of our customers and the community

Policy / Strategy

Use of Roads Policy (PL-IS110)

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken. In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the Human Rights Policy PL-CS093 and the Queensland Human Rights Act 2019. It is considered that the subject matter does not conflict with any human rights issues and supports the fundamental rights listed in Councils Human Rights Policy PL-CS093.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 [↓](#)

14. INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSETS AND PROJECTS REPORTS

14.1 26_097 Unsealed Road Maintenance for Flood Rectification contract approval request

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Acting Manager Works	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Following the Tender Evaluation, enter into a contract with BK Civil Group for the Provision of Unsealed Road Maintenance Services for Flood Rectification works in the Southern Downs Region in accordance with the Schedule of Rates for the proposed treatments as provided in the tender, with an estimated value of \$1,052,281.76.
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into any variations to the contract terms as deemed necessary for the duration of the contract and authorise additional works under the contract to meet Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding timelines for reconstruction works.

REPORT

Background

In March 2025, rainfall associated with Cyclone Alfred resulted in widespread damage to roads within the northern zones of the Southern Downs Regional Council area.

Council has been successful in securing Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) funding, from Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA), for the rectification works as a result of damage from this rain event.

DRFA funding for approved works will be eligible for cost reimbursement to Council for works completed prior to 30 June 2027.

Given the widespread nature of the damage, predominantly to Council's Unsealed Road network, it has been determined that Council crews cannot deliver the volume of works required under this program within the timeframe for cost reimbursement, while continuing delivery of Council's own maintenance and works programs.

As a result, a package of works has been offered for tender, such that all works funded under DRFA will be completed within required timeframes by a combination of Council and Contract crews.

Report

Value of Works

The total estimated value of damage assessment claims is approximately \$10.4 million (recommended value). To date, the QRA has approved \$8.6 million of DRFA works. The Project Management team has reviewed the deliverability of the program and allocated a significant portion of the works to Council's day labour crews. These teams have commenced delivery on work packages, commencing in Girraween and Killarney, and it is anticipated they will complete the remaining sealed and unsealed road maintenance works alongside their scheduled maintenance program. A number of floodway rectification works will be procured through external tender.

To ensure delivery of the approved works within DRFA funding guideline and the works are completed before the next storm season, the following packages were included as part of the external contractor delivery

- Maryvale, and
- Emu Vale.

Tender release

A competitive tender process was undertaken during December 2025 and January 2026. A total of 12 submissions were received. A number of the submissions did not meet Council's requirements for methodology, delivery timeframes, traffic management and safety.

Tenders received were evaluated in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy – PL-FS010.

Evaluation Criteria

Each Tender was evaluated against the following criteria as set out in the Tender documents.

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting (%)
Price and Value for Money	50
Methodology/ Capability	25
Experience	20
Local	5

Tender Evaluation Ranking

All the evaluation members scored each submission independently, before score were collated to include the price scores. The scores from the evaluation, having removed non-conforming tenders and those that did not meet Council's requirements for methodology, delivery timeframes, traffic management and safety were as follows:

Rank	Respondent	Score (Non-Price)	Score (Price Incl)
1	Company A	94.0	68.7
2	Company B	87.5	68.3
3	Company C	83.0	67.7
4	Company D	79.5	66.9
5	Company E	82.0	66.5

The contract will take effect from the date of issue of the letter of acceptance.

Conclusion/Summary

The evaluation panel agreed to recommend the award of the Contract to Company A - BK Civil Group with the highest combined score. This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- they have the necessary capability, capacity, and technical expertise to deliver the required works;
- they have recently delivered comparable DRFA flood recovery works packages with verified quality outcomes for Council;
- they have an established local operational presence and supply chain in the region; and
- their submission, when assessed against all weighted evaluation criteria, demonstrated the lowest delivery risk profile for Council and resulted in the highest procurement score.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This contract operates under a Schedule of Rates arrangement, with expenditure determined by the specific works completed in accordance with the contract schedule.

All activities are expected to follow the QRA's, DRFA approved restoration treatments, making them eligible for full reimbursement to Council through the March 2025 Flood Recovery Program.

The total anticipated value of works to be delivered through this contract is estimated at approximately \$1.05 million.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Failing to engage a contractor to support Council in delivering the flood recovery program may place DRFA funding at risk, particularly in relation to meeting the required delivery timeframes.

During delivery, construction challenges or on-site review outcomes may result in additional work being required of the contractor. Council has established processes to identify such issues early and ensure all steps are documented and managed appropriately, maximising Council's ability to seek reimbursement for any eligible additional costs through DRFA flood recovery funding.

Opportunity

By engaging both Council and contracted crews to deliver the March 2025 Flood Event works, Council will be able to meet DRFA funding timelines and maximise the volume of works delivered under the cost-reimbursable program.

In addition, this delivery approach provides Council crews with valuable experience in flood recovery activities including project management, resourcing, delivery processes, and compliance with funding requirements—while maintaining capacity to continue delivering essential community services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

CIS Presentation 11/02/2026

Consultation has been undertaken with members of the Infrastructure Services Department.
Procurement Team

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Environmental Protection Act 1994

Corporate Plan

Goal 2 Our Places

Outcome: 2.1 Public places and open spaces are safe, well maintained and liveable.

Objective: 2.1.1 Partner with relevant agencies to ensure community safety and resilience in relation to disaster management of bushfires, floods and other natural disasters.

Policy / Strategy

SDRC Procurement Policy (PL-FS010)
Work Health and Safety Policy (PL-IS003)
SDRC Code of Conduct Policy (PL-CS052)

Legal

There appears to be no legal issues associated with this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

15. COMMUNITIES, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES REPORTS

15.1 MCU\02009.01 - 396 Keoghs Road, Elbow Valley - Other Change - High Impact Industry (Water bottling facility), over three (3) stages

Document Information

	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Manager Planning and Development	ECM Function No/s: MCU\02009.01

APPLICANT:	Joyful View Garden Real Estate Development Resort Co. Pty Ltd C/- Bennett and Bennett Group
OWNER:	Joyful View Garden Real Estate Development Resort Co. Pty Ltd
ADDRESS:	396 Keoghs Road, Elbow Valley
RPD:	Lot 1000 SP268215
ASSESSMENT AGAINST:	Southern Downs Planning Scheme, v.5
ZONE:	Rural (Granite Hills precinct)
PROPOSAL:	Other Change - High impact industry (Water bottling facility) and Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction)
LEVEL OF ASSESSMENT:	Impact
SUBMITTERS:	32 submissions (25 properly made submissions)
REFERRALS:	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Concurrence Agency) & Ergon Energy (Advice Agency)
CIS DATE:	11 February 2026
FILE NUMBER:	MCU\02009.01

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

THAT the application for Other Change - Material Change of Use for High impact industry (Water bottling facility) and Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) on land at 396 Keoghs Road, Elbow Valley, described as Lot 1000 SP268215, be refused for the following reasons:

1. The development is inconsistent with the rural landscape and character given the scale and nature of the use which presents as an intense industrial development due to the large building footprint, building height, retaining walls and acoustic barriers. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
 - Strategic Outcome 3.3.1 (3)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.9.3.2 (7)
 - Purpose of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcome (a) (iii) of the Rural zone code
 - PO1, PO8 and PO21 of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcomes (a), (b) and (c) of the Industry uses code

- Purpose of the Earthworks code
 - Overall outcome (a) of the Earthworks code
 - PO2 of the Earthworks code
2. The development seeks an increase in ground water extraction to 96ML per year. A lack of information has been provided regarding potential impacts to the aquifer, surrounding agricultural uses and the water resource catchment. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.3.9
 - Strategic Outcome 3.4.1 (4)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.4.3.1 (1) and (2)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.8.1 (7)
 - Purpose of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcomes (a) (ii) and (vi) of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Water resource catchments overlay code
 - PO2 of the Water resource catchments overlay code
3. The development will increase heavy vehicle movements to the local road network, including Keoghs Road, which is of insufficient standard to cater for the new traffic. No information has been provided regarding the impacts to Keoghs Road and the local road network in the ultimate stage of development. The increase in traffic generated on Keoghs Road is not within the capacity of the road, or consistent with the types of traffic and frequency of traffic movement existing on the road. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.9.3.2 (2) and (7)
 - Overall outcome (a) (ii) of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcome (a), (d) and (e) of the Industry uses code
 - PO2 of the Industry uses code
4. The proposed Water bottling facility is of a significant urban scale, given the large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. Therefore, the proposal will conflict with the scenic character and amenity of the area, especially when viewed from the internal access road. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.3.1(3)
 - Overall outcomes (1) and (2)(a)(iii) of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcome (a), (b) and (c) of the Industry uses code
 - PO1 and PO8 of the Rural zone code
 - PO3 of the Industry uses code
5. The Noise Impact Assessment assesses noise impacts on the basis there will be 1 truck per hour because it relies on the Traffic Impact Assessment which assesses traffic associated with Stage 1 only. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposal will have acceptable noise impacts associated with Stages 2 and 3. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.3.1(3)
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcome (a) and (b) of the Industry uses code
 - PO6 of the Rural zone code
 - PO4 of the Industry uses code

6. The Properly Made Submissions received are unresponsive of the development application and reinforce the development's conflicts with the Planning Scheme and potential for unacceptable social impacts to the community.
7. There are no Other Relevant Matters which, on a balanced assessment, lend support to approval of the development.

REPORT

The site is benefitted by a Development Approval for an Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction), in which water would be extracted from the site in accordance with the existing Water License and transported out of region for bottling. The applicant proposes a 'Change Other' to the existing Development Approval to:

1. Increase the amount of water extraction to 96ML/ year from 42ML/ year; and
2. Introduce a High impact industry (Water bottling facility) to bottle the water extracted on-site.

The development site has an area of 1997.16 hectares and is accessed via Keoghs Road (a sealed road). The site is densely vegetated and has frontage to Hopgoods Road (an unsealed road) to the east and the Cherrabah Cherry Gully Road reserve to the north.

The site also contains twenty-three (23) separately titled vacant Rural zoned, rural-residential type lots, which the proposed development is located close to, and several existing and approved land uses, the most prominent being the Cherrabah Resort.

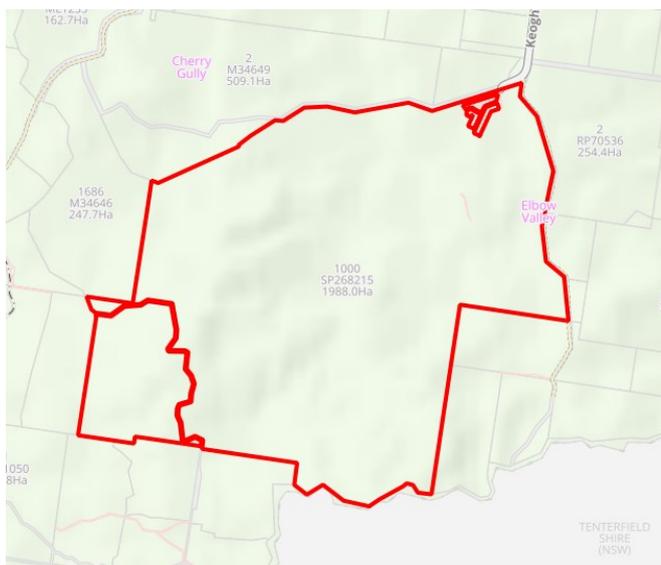


Figure 1: Site locality



Figure 2: Site aerial

Background

The property owner, Joyful View Garden Real Estate Development Resort Co. Pty Ltd, has an existing Water Licence issued by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Reference: 187239), for the purpose of taking of underground water from the site for commercial purposes, providing an entitlement of 96 Megalitres (ML) per water year (1 July to 30 June).

The licences granted by the State Government for taking water at the property are summarised as follows:

- 2008** Water Licence issued for 25ML/year; licence granted based on a water assessment completed by GHD.
- 2010** Amended Water Licence issued for 96ML/year; licence granted based on a water assessment completed by Rockwater (June 2009).
- 2017** Extension to the 2010 Water Licence, pursuant to Section 213 of the *Water Act 2000*, until June 2111.

The conditions of the Water Licence require the licence holder to measure and monitor the water levels within the bores and provide information to the State, pursuant to the *Water Act 2000*. The Minister for Local Government and Water has confirmed that the water license was assessed correctly and remains current (**Attachment 1**).

On 18 December 2019, Council issued a Decision Notice for a Material Change of Use for Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) (Council ref: MCU\02009). The proposal included a 24 metre by 10 metre shed which includes water storage tanks and a water filtration system to store and treat the extracted water. The water would be collected by a water tanker and delivered to a bottling facility on the Gold Coast and also be available for local users for domestic or agricultural purposes. No bottling would occur on site.

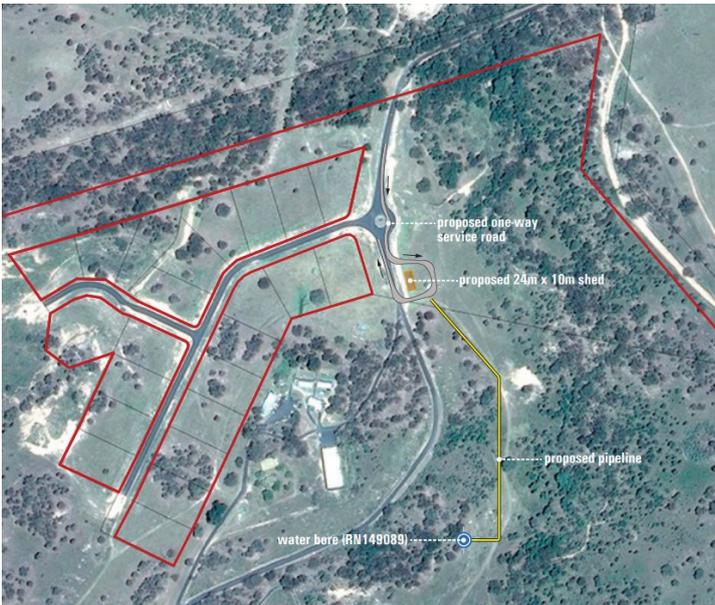


Figure 3: MCU\02009 approved site plan

The applicant provided a Groundwater Abstraction Assessment report that was prepared by Gilbert and Sutherland in October 2019. The report identifies the 'production bores' as including RN149086 and RN149089 identified on Figure 4 below. The report provides data that was collected during various testings on the site and provides recommendations regarding the long-term sustainability of pumping the sub-artesian bore. The reporting identifies that up to 47ML per year could be sustainably extracted from the two production bores.



Figure 4: Production Bore Location

On 2 September 2020, Council issued a Negotiated Decision Notice which amended Conditions 6, 14 and 15, and added Condition 16. This is the Development Approval sought to be changed by this development application. Notably, the amended conditions require upgrades of Keoghs Road in specific locations to achieve a minimum 5.5 metre sealed pavement width, including appropriate drainage to support the traffic generated by the use (Condition 14).

The Negotiated Decision Notice places a limit on the number of vehicles utilising Keoghs Road to 150 vehicles per day and a maximum of ten percent (10%) heavy vehicles which the development cannot exceed (Condition 15). In effect, this limits the number of return water carting trips to 7.5 per day from the site. The limit therefore operates as a cap on the total water that may be carted from the site, assuming that 100% of those heavy vehicle trips are for water cartage and not for another purpose.

The technical report submitted by the applicant for the Negotiated Decision Notice establishes that there would be four return trips per day, equating to 42ML per year, based on each heavy vehicle being able to transport 28,500 litres per trip. Therefore, to carry the full 96ML per year permitted by the Water License, 9 return trips per day would be required, exceeding the current limits of Condition 15.

The Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) Development Approval remains current, as it was also subject to two of the State grant COVID extensions. The application is current until 2 May 2028.

Other Development Approvals on the site which are unrelated to this Development Application include:

- Recreation facility (Cherrabah Resort) – Council ref: MCU\01143 (Development Permit cancelled September 2016)
- Granite mine – Mining lease: ML100128 (current)
- Shooting range – Council ref: MCU\01889.01
- Tourist park – Council ref: MCU\02281 (current, due to lapse October 2027)

Proposal

The proposal seeks to:

1. Increase the amount of water extraction to 96ML/ year from 42ML/ year; and
2. Introduce a High impact industry (Water bottling facility) to bottle the water extracted on-site.

Water will be extracted from bores RN149086 and RN149089, to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96 ML per year). The water will be piped to a new 3,570 square metre warehouse, which is in a similar location to the previously approved water storage and treatment shed (240 square metres). The warehouse will contain a water treatment plant, bottling equipment and ancillary office, to allow for the water to be bottled, packaged and distributed from the site. The water bottles will be delivered to the facility and then blown into the correct shape using high pressure air to create the final bottle shape to be filled with water. There is no plastics manufacturing proposed to occur on site.

The development area is located approximately 175 metres from the Keoghs Road and Hopgoods Road frontages. The development is proposed to occur over three stages. Notably, the warehouse will be built as part of stage one, with no additional increase to the built form as part of the subsequent stages. The stages relate to an increase to the annual production of the water extraction and water bottling facility and vehicle movements. The stages are as follows:

- **Stage 1** – Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) and High impact industry (Water bottling facility) – annual production up to 16,650 tons (16.65 megalitres) of extraction and bottling. This will require access by 6 HRVs per day and a team of 10 employees.
- **Stage 2** - Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) and High impact industry (Water bottling facility) – increase in annual production up to 34,500 tons (34.5 megalitres) of extraction and bottling. This will require access by 11 HRVs per day and a team of 10 employees.
- **Stage 3** - Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) and High impact industry (Water bottling facility) – increase in annual production up to 96,000 tons (96 megalitres) of extraction and bottling. This will require access by 30 HRVs per day and a team of 15 employees.

Further details regarding the proposed development are provided in Table 1 below.

Category	Description
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Category	Description
Access and Parking	<p>The site will be accessed via the internal road of the property. Vehicle movements will be managed through a one-way arrangement around the facility to accommodate HRV movements. No B-Doubles are proposed to service the development. The haulage route is via Keoghs Road, O'Deas Road, Cullendore Road and Warwick-Killarney Road. All roads are bitumen sealed with a minimum 6-metre pavement width, except for Keoghs Road which is sealed, but includes reduced pavement widths.</p> <p>The development includes 23 carparking spaces, including one PWD space, to the front of the facility.</p> <p>A Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the application. Importantly, the assessment only considers Stage 1 of the development (6 HRVs per day). The assessment identified that 18 trips would occur during peak hour periods. On this basis, the applicant identifies that a detailed traffic analysis is not required, and that the previously conditioned road upgrades are suitable.</p> <p>However, Stages 2 and 3 of the development are not considered as part of the assessment, which will require access by at least 30 HRVs per day. It is considered that this would warrant safety and efficiency upgrades to the local road network given the amount of daily heavy vehicle movements. The ultimate traffic impacts have not been quantified in the development application.</p>
Noise	<p>A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the application. The proposal will exceed noise criteria at the two nearest lots (Lots 9 and 10 SP268215), which are currently vacant, but capable of containing residential uses. The assessment recommends the installation of 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers along the northern and western facades of the development to mitigate noise impacts.</p> <p>The full extent of noise impacts, such as those associated with Stages 2 and 3, have not been considered as the Noise Impact Assessment relies on the Traffic Impact Assessment for inputs associated with vehicle movements.</p>
Utilities and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water – captured from the roof and stored in three 50,000 litre rainwater tanks. An additional 20,000 litre tank is recommended to be reserved for firefighting purposes. • Wastewater – an ERA 63 application for a consolidated sewerage treatment plant is being prepared for the site, which the proposal would connect to. Should this not proceed, a new on-site effluent system for up to twenty equivalent persons will be installed for the development. • Electricity – connected to the overhead Ergon Energy electricity network. A pad-mounted transformer is proposed within the front landscaping strip to service the electricity demand generated by the facility.
Earthworks	<p>24,517 cubic metres of fill with retaining walls up to 5.5 metres in height are proposed to establish the facility.</p>
Landscaping	<p>A minimum two (2) metre wide landscaping strip is provided along the frontage of the development area.</p>

Category	Description
Bushfire Management	A Bushfire Hazard Assessment and Management Plan has been submitted which recommends a 9.3 metre wide Asset Protection Zone to the north-east and south-west of the proposal to achieve a maximum 29Kw/m2 fire line intensity exposure and the installation of water tanks for firefighting purposes with a minimum capacity of at least 20,000 litres.
Waste Management	An Operational Waste Management Plan has been submitted as part of the application. Waste will be managed through three (3) x 1,100 litre general waste bins and three (3) x 1,100 litre recycling bins, and collected once-weekly on-site through a private contractor. A typical refuse vehicle size is intended to be utilised to service the bins.

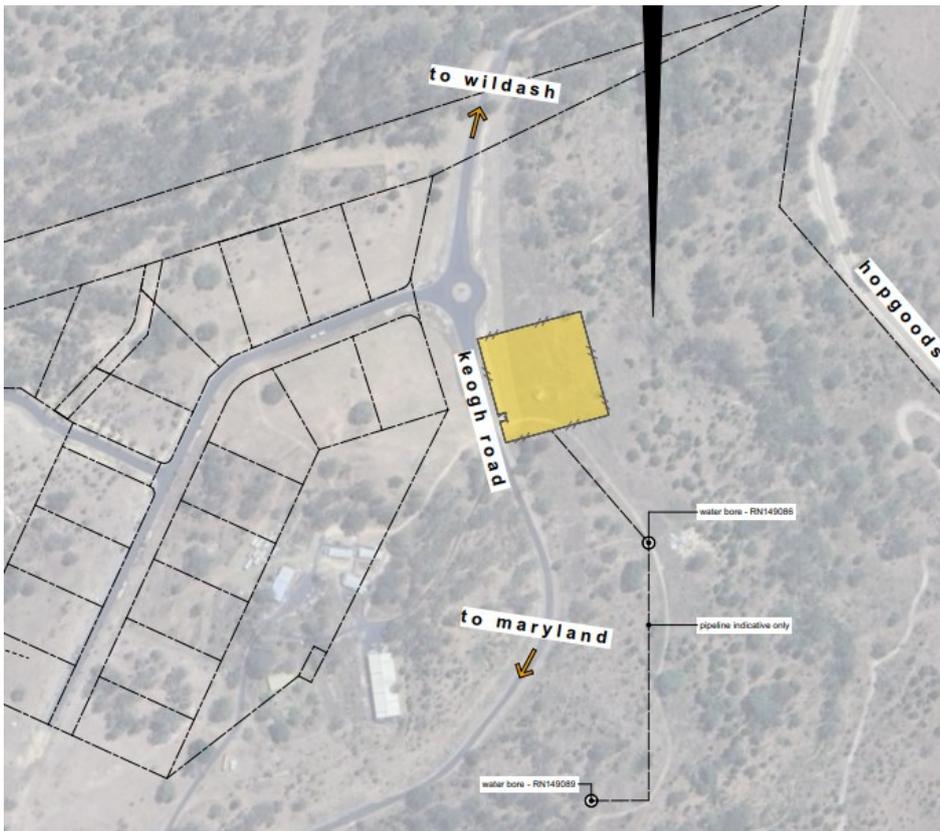


Figure 5: Site plan

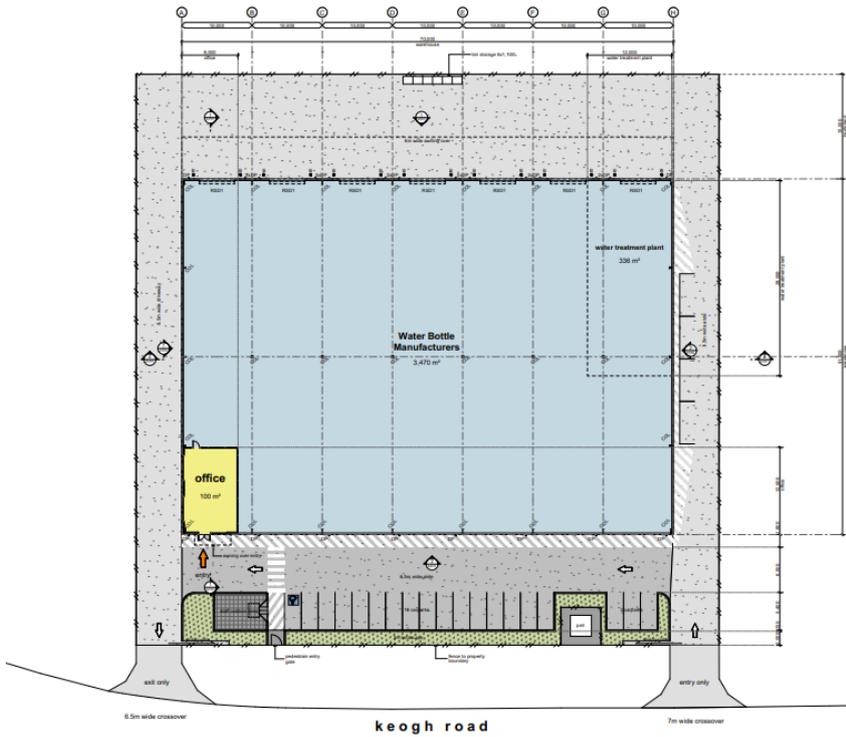


Figure 6: Site plan

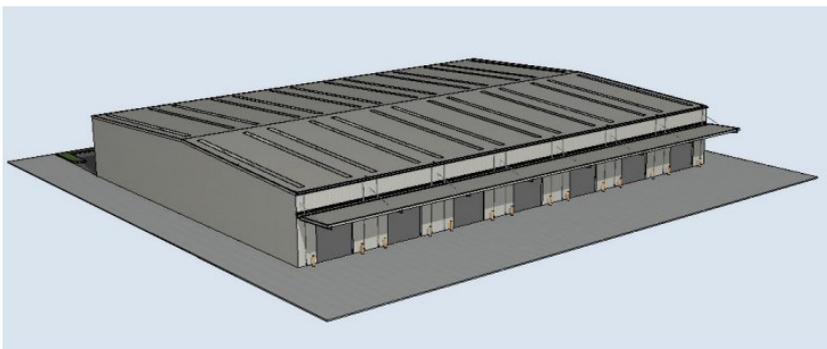


Figure 7: Development perspective – frontage (top) and rear (bottom)

Referral

The application required referral to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning under Schedule 20 of the *Planning Regulation 2017* which relates to impacts on State transport infrastructure. On 14 October 2025, the State Assessment and Referral Agency issued a referral agency response with no requirements.

The application also required referral to Ergon Energy as an Advice Agency as the site is burdened by electricity easements. On 3 October 2025, Ergon Energy issued their referral agency response with conditions.

Public Notification

Public notification for this development was undertaken for 15 business days from 28 November to 19 December 2025. The following actions were undertaken:

- A notice was published in the Warwick Today newspaper on 27 November 2025.
- Notices were placed on the land from 27 November until 19 December 2025.
- A notice was given to the owners of all land adjoining the land on 26 November 2025.

Compliance with the notification process has been achieved. 32 submissions were received during the public notification period, 25 of which are properly made submissions. The matters raised in the submissions are addressed below.

Submissions

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>Inconsistent land use and conflict with the Rural zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed High impact industry (Water bottling facility) is inconsistent with the outcomes intended for the Rural zone 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges that the proposed water bottling plant is not a use anticipated in the Rural zone. It is our view the materials supporting the application addresses the potential impacts of having an industrial use in the rural area.</p> <p>We provide the following justification on why the use is suitable for the rural zone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is an expansion of an approved commercial water extraction use, with a water license issued from the State government. • While classified as an industrial land use it does not involve chemical manufacturing, wastewater discharge, adverse noise, dust or air emissions, or offsite impacts. • The proposal will result in employment opportunities and economic diversity in the locality. • The proposal will have little to no acoustic or visual impacts on surrounding properties. It will appear as a large steel warehouse, similar to the type of sheds seen in rural areas. • The proposal can co-exist with the existing land uses approved on site as confirmed in the submitted acoustic reporting. • The proposal will not result in the fragmentation or loss of good quality agricultural land. The proposal does not prejudice the remainder of the site to be used for rural purposes in the future if desired. <p>The supporting materials provided as part of this application have considered the rural nature of the area in their assessments. Further information on how the development complies with the Planning Scheme is provided below and supporting materials provided to Council.</p> <p>Ultimately the proposal represents an effective and efficient co-location of land uses. Any potential impacts are able to be managed via Council conditions of approval.</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
	<p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>An assessment against the Rural zone code is undertaken as part of this report, which identifies that compliance with the Overall outcomes and Purpose of the code cannot be achieved. This is due to the nature of the use, with a substantial 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls, and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers, which present as an urban industrial development outcome and is inconsistent with the scenic and landscape values of the rural area. This is grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>Visual amenity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of the Water bottling facility will represent a significant intensification of the use • The scale and intensive nature of the use will erode the rural character 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p><u>Height</u></p> <p>The highest point of the building is to be 10 metres which slightly exceeds the maximum height of 8 metres under the scheme. The additional 2 metres is entirely contained within the roof pitch. The minor increase in height does not result in adverse visual impacts to sensitive receivers.</p> <p><u>Site Coverage</u></p> <p>No site cover is prescribed under the Planning Scheme for industrial uses in the Rural zone. Accordingly, the most comparable zone has been used for reference which is the rural residential zone. Where adjoining a site in the rural residential zone industrial uses are to make up no more than 10% of the site. Given the size of the lot the proposal makes up less than 1% site cover and therefore generally complies with the intent of the Planning Scheme.</p> <p><u>Setbacks</u></p> <p>Industrial buildings are to be setback 60 metres from all roads in the Rural zone. The proposed development is setback approximately 200 metres from Hopgoods Road to the east and approximately 150 metres from Keoghs Road to the north. It therefore complies with the relevant Acceptable outcome.</p> <p>While visible from Keoghs Road it is unlikely to be visible from Hopgoods Road or surrounding residential dwellings due to existing mature vegetation. This vegetation will soften any potential visual impact from the road. We note that the closest residential dwelling is located 1.5 kilometres from the site and will not be able to see the proposed building.</p> <p>We are happy to discuss additional landscaping with Council or include a condition to retain existing mature vegetation.</p> <p><u>Design</u></p> <p>The facility itself is wholly located inside the proposed building. The building proposed is that of a steel warehouse building which is designed to be similar to other sheds and warehouses often seen in a rural setting.</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
	<p>Overall, it is unlikely to have an unreasonable visual impact on the area.</p> <p><u>Lighting</u></p> <p>External lighting of the warehouse will be required to comply with the Australian Standards. It is further noted that the development is to operate during traditional working hours of 8am to 5pm as such there will be no evening lighting impacts or flood lights used.</p> <p>Overall, the development is of a scale that is required to service the use and is generally consistent with the relevant built form requirements of the Planning Scheme.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The proposal presents as an urban activity with a 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls, and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. This is inconsistent with the landscape and scenic values of the area and site. It is considered that the use will erode these values. There is no visual amenity impact assessment provided by the applicant to the contrary. This is grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>Noise impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will result in increased traffic noise on local roads • The activities associated with the Water bottling facility will result in increased noise to adjoining properties 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>A Noise Report prepared by Trinity Consulting confirms that the noise of the facility will not impact on the nearby lots or external properties and complies with the noise requirements in the SDRC Planning Scheme being those specified in the Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2008. The report also confirms the Cherrabah Resort will be unimpacted by the noise of the use.</p> <p>External road noise from vehicles on the public road is not an identified assessment benchmark for this application. Notwithstanding this, vehicle movements will occur during traditional business trading hours minimising any impacts during the evening/night.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The Noise Impact Assessment submitted as part of the application recommends the installation of 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers along the northern and western extent of the proposed development.</p> <p>The Noise Impact Assessment assesses noise impacts on the basis there will be 1 truck per hour because it relies on the Traffic Impact Assessment which assesses traffic associated with Stage 1 only. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposal will have acceptable noise impacts associated with Stages 2 and 3.</p> <p>The proposal involves introducing traffic associated with a high impact industry to a rural area, it is appropriate for Council to consider whether the proposal will result in unacceptable noise and amenity impacts to the locality as a result of the new use. The proposal has not assessed</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
	<p>noise and amenity impacts associated with the introduction of industrial traffic to the locality.</p> <p>This is grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>Water conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of ground water in drought situations will adversely affect surrounding agricultural uses • The original water license was for residential development, and not for commercial purposes 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>Water licenses and extraction are legislated by the State government under the <i>Water Act 2000</i>. The applicant is approved to extract water in accordance with the current water license (Ref 187239) issued under the Act. The use associated with extracting the water remains in effect, including the amount to be extracted. The proposed development will remain in accordance with all requirements of the State water licence.</p> <p>It is understood that the community is very concerned regarding the access to ground water, specifically during times of hardship. The <i>Water Act 2000</i> provides the Chief Executive the authority to, by notice limit the amount water that can be taken under water licenses.</p> <p>Finally, we would like to note that the proposed change application will not impact on the ability for the applicant to extract water under the license.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy have issued a Water License with a maximum nominal entitlement of 96 Megalitres (ML) per water year (1 July to 30 June).</p> <p>In relation to the subject material change of use, the amount of water able to be extracted as part of the commercial groundwater extraction is limited in the existing Development Approval by conditions related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the findings of the Gilbert and Sutherland report which supports a maximum of 47ML of extraction per year from the two production bores; and • limits on heavy vehicle movements for water carting which in practical terms limits the volume of water to 42ML per year exported from the site. <p>This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year). No new technical reporting has been submitted to demonstrate that the increase in extraction is sustainable and will avoid impacts to surrounding land uses, including agricultural activities. Accordingly, the proposed increase to the ground water extraction cannot be supported and is recommended for refusal.</p>
<p>Traffic impacts to Keoghs Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keoghs Road is not of a standard suitable for the increase in heavy vehicle traffic. The upgrades conditioned in the previous 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>Bitzios Consulting have undertaken a detailed Traffic Impact Assessment of the proposal and concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access arrangements are considered suitable from a traffic engineering perspective

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>approval are inadequate due to the high volume of trucks expected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Traffic Impact Assessment fails to consider the impacts and risks of vehicle interactions with mining haul trucks utilising the intersection of O'Deas Road and Keoghs Road • Council should not rely on traffic percentage thresholds given the scale of industrial traffic in the rural setting • Council should condition the applicant upgrades Keoghs Road to a 7 metre wide sealed standard • In its current state, cars will not be able to pass heavy vehicles on the sealed part of Keoghs Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking and manoeuvring complies with the SDRC Planning Scheme requirements and Australian Standard 2890. • The amount of vehicle trips per days is considered to have negligible operation impacts on the surrounding road network. • The upgrades recommended in the Cardno Traffic Memorandum are to be upheld. This involves 6 upgrades to crests and bends required along Keoghs Road. These will be conditioned by Council. • No further road upgrades are required based on the assessment. <p>On-going costs of roads is not a matter able to be considered as part of this application. The road is existing, and as noted above the traffic engineering report confirmed that the proposal will have a negligible operational impact on the surrounding road network.</p> <p>Driver behaviour is not a matter able to be considered as part of this application. Drivers coming to and from the site will be subject to State road rules and enforced by police.</p> <p>The development will not be serviced by b-doubles. The access and maneuvering have been designed to be suitable for a heavy rigid vehicle only. Additionally, we note that Keoghs Road is not an identified b-double route.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The Traffic Impact Assessment submitted as part of the application only considers Stage 1 of the development (6 HRVs per day).</p> <p>The increase in traffic from Stages 2 and 3 will comprise of up to 30 HRV movements per day, in addition to employee movements. The currently conditioned limits to Keoghs Road (maximum 150 vehicles and ten percent heavy vehicles) could not support the traffic generated by the proposed development.</p> <p>No technical reporting has been submitted to assess ultimate traffic impacts to Keoghs Road, which presents a safety and efficiency risk to road users due to the insufficient sealed pavement width. As such, the traffic impacts generated by the development have not been substantiated. This is grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>Risk of water contamination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant will make water bottles on the site, which will increase pollution • The Water bottling facility increases the potential for microplastic and PFAS contamination 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>The proposed development does not propose any on-site plastic manufacturing. The bottles will be delivered to the facility as 'preforms' which will then be blown into the correct shape using high pressure air to create the final bottle shape.</p> <p>The proposed development has not been identified as having the potential to cause contamination. Solid waste will be handled on-site in accordance with submitted</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities associated with shooting occurring on the site will contribute to lead contamination The site contains approval for a granite mine, which appears to have lapsed. If mining activities occur, it could result in silica dust entering the creek and water supply. 	<p>reporting by Elephants Foot. It will then be collected by a private waste contractor.</p> <p>Due to the number of staff for the facility wastewater will be managed through an on-site effluent system. This system will be located away from water sources in accordance with the relevant policies as detailed in the submitted reporting prepared by Arris.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>Council has previously reviewed impacts relating to potential lead and mining contamination risks through the existing approval, in which no risk of contamination was found.</p> <p>There is no plastics manufacturing proposed on-site that would warrant concern for microplastic or PFAS contamination as a part of Council's assessment of the Water bottling facility. This is not grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>Threat to local ecology and endangered species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Water bottling facility represents a significantly greater impact to habitats than the previously approved shed The development may trigger EPBC requirements as a Matter of National Environmental Significance The application does not include an Ecological Assessment Report The increased traffic will increase the potential for adverse impacts to fauna due to vehicle strikes 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>The proposed development is in an existing cleared area on the site adjoining the internal road. This area has not been identified by the State or Council as having any matters of ecological importance.</p> <p>We note the applicant is aware of their obligations under the <i>EPBC Act</i> and will undertake the relevant assessments/actions if required.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The proposal is located in a cleared area outside Council's Biodiversity areas overlay and State biodiversity mapping.</p> <p>However, there is biodiversity drainage/MSES regulated watercourse mapped near the proposal site. The application material has not addressed potential impacts to this natural feature.</p>
<p>Unclear hours of operation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hours of operation are not clearly outlined 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>The proposed facility will operate 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday. It is expected that vehicle movements for employees are likely to occur in the hour before and after this.</p> <p>To remove any uncertainty the proposal will not be operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We expect Council to condition the operating hours and any change to this will require an additional application to Council with the appropriate supporting materials.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>As per the applicant's response above, the proposal would operate between the hours of operation of 8am to 5pm on weekdays, and not at all on weekends or public holidays. Employee vehicle movements may also occur in the hour before and after this. This is not grounds for refusal.</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>Potential bushfire risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is impacted by significant bushfire hazard risk 	<p><u>Applicant's response</u></p> <p>The applicant engaged Newground Environmental to provide a Bushfire Hazard Assessment and Management Plan. The report has been prepared with consideration to Australian Standard 3959 and concludes that there is sufficient access/egress locations, water availability and separation from hazardous vegetation to mitigate bushfire risk.</p> <p>The applicant can liaise with the Rural Fire Service on site-specific concerns and procedures as required.</p> <p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>A Bushfire Hazard Assessment has been submitted which has assessed bushfire impacts on the proposed development. The assessment recommends a minimum 9.3 metre wide Asset Protection Zone to the north-east and south-west of the proposal to achieve a maximum 29Kw/m² fire line intensity exposure and the installation of water tanks for firefighting purposes with a minimum capacity of at least 20,000 litres. Additionally, the internal access road and Keoghs Road are identified as a suitable access and evacuation route. A condition could be imposed requiring compliance with the Bushfire Hazard Assessment. This is not grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>The application proposes a significant increase in ground water extraction to supply the Water bottling facility.</p>	<p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The amount of water able to be extracted is limited in the existing approval by conditions related to access and the findings of the Gilbert and Sutherland report which supports a maximum of 47ML of extraction per year from the two production bores. This development application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year).</p> <p>No technical reporting has been submitted to demonstrate that the increase in extraction is sustainable and will avoid impacts to surrounding agricultural uses. Accordingly, the proposed increase to the ground water extraction cannot be supported. This is grounds for refusal.</p>
<p>The Commercial ground water extraction component is inappropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application relies on groundwater assessments that are unable to predict long-term drawdown and acknowledge a depletion risk after prolonged extraction The application relies on monitoring neighbouring bores and wells, which does not guarantee sustainability at a standard that justifies approval 	<p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The Gilbert and Sutherland report from the existing approval supports ground water extraction of 47ML per year. This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the water license (96 ML per year).</p> <p>No technical reporting has been submitted to demonstrate that the increase in extraction is sustainable and will avoid impacts to surrounding agricultural uses. Accordingly, the proposed increase to the ground water extraction cannot be supported. This is grounds for refusal.</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>Social and community impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application does not include a 'social impact assessment' as required by the Queensland Government 'Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefits) And Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2025' No consultation has occurred with the Traditional Owners of the land 	<p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The Queensland Government 'Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefits) And Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2025' only requires social impact assessments for applicable renewable energy projects.</p> <p>However, there may be adverse social and health impacts to the community and individuals'; whose water security could be threatened, or is perceived to be threatened, by unsustainable levels of water extraction. .</p> <p>As the application is Impact assessable, the Traditional Owners of the land could provide a properly made submission to the proposed development. No submissions were received. There are no assessment benchmarks in the Planning Scheme to require consultation with the Traditional Owners of the land.</p>
<p>The previous approval has lapsed</p>	<p><u>Council response</u></p> <p>The existing approval's currency period (for Commercial Ground Water Extraction) commenced on 2 September 2020 through the issue of the Negotiated Decision Notice. The currency period for a Material Change of Use is 6 six years from the day the approval takes effect, which in this case, is the date the Negotiated Decision Notice was issued. Therefore, the approval (for Commercial Ground Water Extraction) remains current, and facilitates the ability for the assessment of this development application.</p>

Assessment against the Planning Scheme

The following provides an assessment of the proposal against the Southern Downs Planning Scheme, including the Strategic framework and the following themes:

- Settlement pattern
- Natural environment
- Infrastructure and resources
- Economic development

3.3 Settlement pattern

3.3.1 Strategic outcomes

(3) The Region includes extensive areas of land used for rural purposes. While the agricultural and grazing values of this land are recognised as a significant economic resource and employment generator of the region, this land is also an important social and environmental resource. The areas that are not used for urban or rural residential purposes contribute to the rural landscape and scenic amenity values as well as cultural identity values and are an important driver for tourism activities. These areas will maintain their economic, social and environmental values by remaining free of urban and rural residential development.

The site is not mapped as Agricultural Land Classification – Class A or B under the State Planning Policy. The proposal does not propose to use the entire site and proposes to site the development in an area that is not ecologically significant, except for the biodiversity drainage. However, the proposed Water bottling facility is of a significant urban scale, given the large 3,570 square metre

building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. Currently, the site is primarily utilised for the Cherrabah Resort, which is a tourism activity. Visitors to the resort will be required to pass the facility to access the resort. Given the urban scale of the proposed Water bottling facility, it is considered the facility will detract from the rural landscape and scenic amenity values that support the tourism activity occurring on the site. The development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

3.3.9 Element – Climate change and environmental hazards

CSIRO has identified that the Southern Downs Region as part of south-east Queensland is likely to become warmer with more hot days and fewer cold nights. Water resources are likely to be stressed due to a decline in annual rainfall and greater evaporation leading to a tendency for less run off into rivers. Droughts are likely to be more frequent and more severe. Fire risk will be higher. Increases in extreme weather events are likely to lead to increased flash flooding.

There is a general consensus that water security will become more important taking into account possible impacts of our changing climate. This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year). No technical reporting has been provided which demonstrates that the increase in water extraction will avoid impacts on the aquifer. The development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

3.4 Natural environment

3.4.1 Strategic outcomes

(4) The waterways that rise in the Southern Downs are of regional and national significance as part of the Murray Darling River system which has its headwaters in the eastern part of the region. The northern river systems flow into the Condamine catchment through the Condamine River Sub-basin and the southern river systems flow into the Border Rivers catchment through the Dumaresq River sub-basin. The catchments are protected.

This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year) from Bores B-RN149089 and 10-RN149086. No technical reporting has been provided which demonstrates that the increase in water extraction will not impact the sustainability of the water supply catchment. Accordingly, the development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

3.4.3 Element – Waterways and wetlands

3.4.3.1 Specific outcomes

(1) Waterways and wetlands are protected from development that could compromise the environmental values of these areas.

(2) Existing and future land uses, development and activities in water supply catchments are undertaken in an ecologically sustainable manner that contributes to maintaining and improving water quality in those catchments, protecting or enhancing the environmental values for waters under the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009.

This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the water license (96ML per year). No technical reporting has been provided which demonstrates that the increase in water extraction will not impact the sustainability of the water supply catchment. Accordingly, the development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

3.8 Infrastructure and resources

3.8.1 Strategic outcomes

(7) Water is managed as a valuable and finite regional resource on a total watercycle basis, balancing the uses of water and its role in the natural, urban and rural environment.

This application seeks to increase the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the water license (96ML per year). No technical reporting has been provided which demonstrates that the increase in water extraction will not impact the sustainability of the aquifer. Accordingly, the development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

3.9 Economic development

3.9.3 Element – Industry

3.9.3.2 Land use strategies

(2) Alternative locations for industries are available subject to satisfactory access provisions and compatible integration into the surrounding area and protection of the environment.

The applicant proposes the site be considered an alternative location for industry given its location in a rural area. The access provisions are not considered suitable as Keoghs Road experiences reduced pavement widths. In cooperation with the traffic generated by Stages 2 and 3 of the development, which could include access by 30 HRVs per day, this could present safety and efficiency issues on the local road network. The development application has not substantiated the impacts or identified if mitigation is possible. The development also does not appear capable of compatible integration into the surrounding rural area. Accordingly, the development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

(7) Development of land for industrial purposes outside the Industry zone may be acceptable particularly where the industry has a rural focus or is dependent on the use of goods produced in the rural area or in the case where the industry services a local catchment. The use of land for industrial purposes is only acceptable if the land has adequate sealed access and is flat, free from flooding and otherwise suitable for industrial development. Where land has these characteristics, development may be supported if the size, scale, location, design and nature of the proposed development are such that the amenity and character of the locality is maintained, the use does not have an adverse impact on the environment and the level of services required by the development, including electrical infrastructure, can be provided.

The proposed industrial development on the site is directly associated with the water extraction from the aquifer nearby. However, the proposed Water bottling facility is of an urban scale, given the large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. Currently, the site is primarily utilised for the Cherrabah Resort, which is a tourism activity. Visitors to the resort will be required to pass the facility to access the resort. Given the urban scale of the proposed Water bottling facility, it is considered the facility will detract from the rural landscape and scenic amenity values that support the tourism activity occurring on the site. Furthermore, no technical reporting has been provided to support the traffic generated by Stages 2 and 3 of the development, which could include 30 HRVs per day. Given the reduced pavement widths on Keoghs Road, this could present safety and efficiency issues. The development application has not substantiated the impacts or identified if mitigation is possible. It has not been demonstrated that there is a need for the high impact industry component of the development to be established on the site. Accordingly, the development conflicts with this Strategic outcome.

Benchmarks applying to the development

The following codes of the Southern Downs Planning Scheme are benchmarks applying to the development:

- 6.2.10 Rural zone code
- 8.2.2 Biodiversity areas overlay code
- 8.2.3 Bushfire hazard overlay code
- 8.2.9 Water resource catchments overlay code
- 9.3.5 Industry uses code
- 9.4.2 Carparking and loading code
- 9.4.4 Landscaping code
- 9.4.5 Outdoor lighting code
- 9.4.6 Physical infrastructure code

The proposed development warrants discussion against the following parts of the Planning Scheme:

Rural zone code

PO1 *The rural or natural environment character of the land is retained. Uses established in the Rural zone do not conflict with rural land uses or the natural, scenic and community values of the area. No development is to proceed within the area defined as the proposed Emu Swamp Dam.*

The proposed water bottling facility is located adjacent to the internal access road of the Cherrabah Resort, which is a tourist activity reliant on the natural and scenic character of the site. The proposed facility is located at the entrance to the site and represents an urban scale with a large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height and 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls. Additionally, large acoustic barriers 2 to 2.4 metres in height are required along the western and northern extents of the development to comply with noise criteria for Stage 1 only. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will conflict with the natural and scenic values of the land, and that compliance with the Performance outcome is not achieved.

AO2 *No acceptable outcome identified.*

Note: One way an applicant may demonstrate compliance with this performance outcome is to provide a buffer that meets the design criteria contained in PO9 of the Landscaping code.

PO2 *Rural activity on land is protected from conflict with other uses that are not rural uses.*

The proposal is sited on a relatively minor portion of the 1,987 hectare property. The facility will maintain a setback of approximately 175 metres from the Keoghs Road and Hopgoods Road frontages and the site contains significant vegetative screening around the property boundaries. Therefore, the potential for conflict between the proposed uses and rural uses on adjoining sites is considered to be minimal. Accordingly, compliance with PO2 is achieved.

PO6 *All uses are located, designed, oriented and constructed to minimise noise, dust, odour or other nuisance from existing lawful uses including rural and industry uses.*

A Noise Impact Assessment has been provided to assess the acoustic impacts of the development. The Noise Impact Assessment does not assess the full extent of impacts associated with the development, including the increased vehicle movements associated with Stages 2 and 3 and impacts from industrial traffic on the local road network. Accordingly, compliance with PO6 is not achieved.

AO8 *In partial fulfilment of this PO –*

- (a) *All new industrial buildings are set back at least 100 m from the Cunningham Highway and New England Highway and 60 m from all other roads.*
- (b) *All other buildings are located at least 20 metres from any sealed road and at least 60 metres from any gravel road.*

PO8 *Development is sensitive and responsive to the scenic amenity of the area. The appearance and siting of buildings, other structures, carparking areas or signage is compatible with the scenic character of the area, particularly when viewed from roads. The development is sensitive to the design of any nearby structures and is respectful and sympathetic to any Local heritage place.*

The proposal is located adjacent to the internal access road of the Cherrabah Resort, which is a tourist activity reliant on the scenic amenity of the area. The proposed facility is located at the entrance to the site and represents an urban scale with a large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height and 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls. Additionally, large acoustic barriers 2 to 2.4 metres in height are required along the western and northern extents of the development to comply with noise criteria for Stage 1 only. Therefore, the proposal will conflict with the scenic character of the area, especially when viewed from the internal access road. Accordingly, compliance with the Performance outcome is not achieved.

PO9 *Land identified as Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Class A and Class B is conserved for rural use in accordance with the State Planning Policy. The productive capacity of the land is protected and maintained.*

The site is not identified as containing ALC Class A and B land, and the proposal only occupies a relatively small part of the site. Accordingly, the productive capacity of the land is protected and maintained.

PO21 *Uses are limited to uses that do not compromise the natural environment character or scenic value of the land, are safe from environmental hazards and are located on sites that have adequate and appropriate access. In particular –*

- (a) The development does not result in the clearing of any remnant vegetation either for site works or protection from hazards;*
- (b) The use is located, designed and constructed so that it is not likely to cause conflict with agricultural practices;*
- (c) The use has low visual impact particularly where located on highways, main roads or tourist routes.*

The facility is located in an area free of vegetation and does not involve site works that impact remnant vegetation.

The proposal seeks to increase the water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year). The Gilbert and Sutherland report only supported sustainable water extraction from the two production bores up to 47ML per year. No additional reporting has been provided to demonstrate that the increase in water extraction will not conflict with surrounding agricultural practices. Accordingly, compliance with PO21 cannot be achieved.

Given the development does not comply with Performance outcomes PO1, PO6, PO8 and PO21, an assessment against the purpose and Overall outcomes is provided below.

(1) *The purpose of the Rural zone code is to:*

- provide for rural uses including cropping, intensive horticulture, intensive animal industries, animal husbandry, animal keeping and other primary production activities*
- provide opportunities for non-rural uses that are compatible with agriculture, the environmental features, and landscape character of the rural area where the uses do not compromise the long-term use of the land for rural purposes*
- protect or manage significant natural resources and processes to maintain the capacity for primary production*

The proposal is for a non-rural use that is of an urban scale with a large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. The development is not in keeping with the landscape character of the rural area, which supports the Cherrabah Resort. Furthermore, an increase in water extraction to the full extent of the Water License is sought (96ML per year), not been substantiated by technical reporting in order to demonstrate the protection of natural resources to maintain the capacity of the zone for primary production. The development conflicts with the purpose of the Rural zone code.

(2) *The overall outcomes sought for the zone code are as follows:*

(a) *Zone outcomes*

(ii) *Land is used for a wide range of agricultural and environmental purposes. Within the rural zone agricultural uses will range in intensity from grazing to permanent plantations, cropping and intensive horticulture and intensive animal industries such as piggeries, poultry farms and feedlots. The location of the various uses depends on the available resources of water and soil, the natural environment and vegetation, access, the existing and future settlement pattern and potential for conflict with existing uses and the size and scale of the use.*

The proposal is not for an agricultural or environmental purpose. The increase sought to the water extraction to the full extent of the Water License (96ML per year) has not been supported by technical reporting to demonstrate there will be no adverse impacts on water resources or agricultural uses occurring on nearby properties. Furthermore, the Traffic Impact Assessment does

not consider Stages 2 and 3 of the proposal, which could result in up to 30 HRVs per day accessing the site via Keoghs Road, which is of inadequate standard and will therefore present safety and efficiency issues. Accordingly, compliance with Overall outcome (a)(ii) is not achieved.

(iii) The integrity of the rural landscape is protected. This includes agricultural and grazing land as well as land that may be constrained for agriculture and grazing that has a more natural environmental character. The landscape character and its associated visual and scenic amenity is protected by ensuring that development is sensitive and responsive to the scenic amenity of the area, vegetation cover is maintained in significant areas, and signage is controlled.

The proposal will disrupt the landscape character and scenic amenity of the area, which supports the Cherrabah Resort, given the urban scale of the development including a large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. Accordingly, compliance with (a)(iii) is not achieved.

(vi) Water quality and the ecological and hydrological processes of waterways and wetlands are protected by limiting intensification of development and infrastructure within the identified floodplain and existing and proposed dam catchment areas and the protection of riparian areas as a result of buffers, erosion and sediment control, stormwater management and protection of flow regimes. No development is to proceed within the area defined for the proposed Emu Swamp Dam.

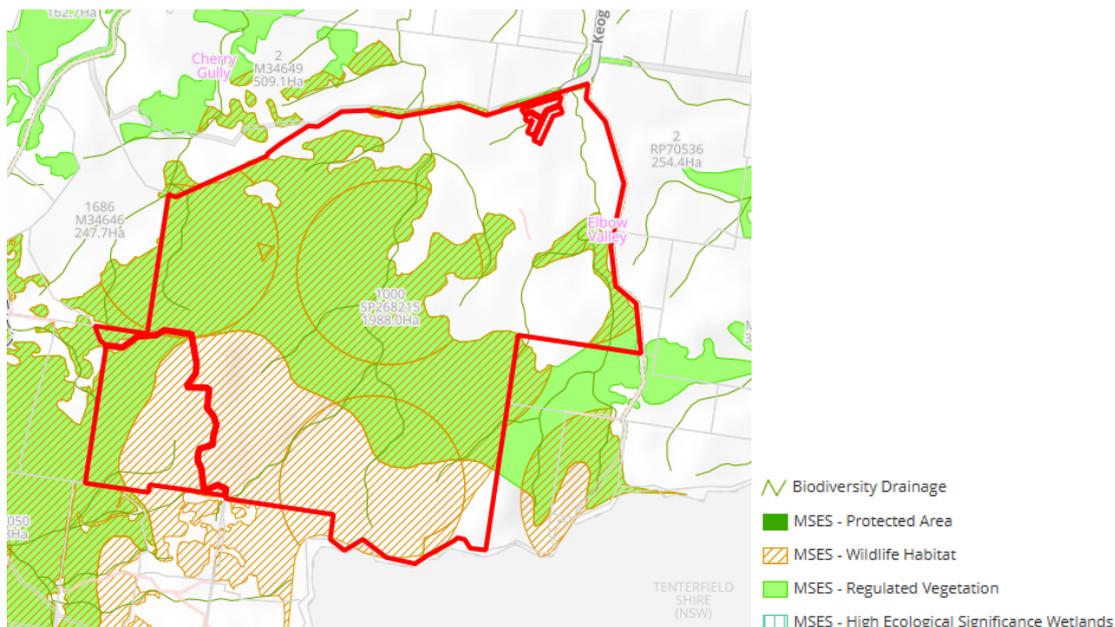
The proposal seeks an increase in water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year). No additional technical reporting has been submitted to demonstrate that the increase in water extraction will not adversely impact the ecological and hydrological processes of the aquifer. Accordingly, compliance with (a)(vi) is not achieved.

Evidently, compliance with the Rural zone code is not achieved due to non-compliances with the Purpose and Overall outcomes of the code.

Biodiversity areas overlay code

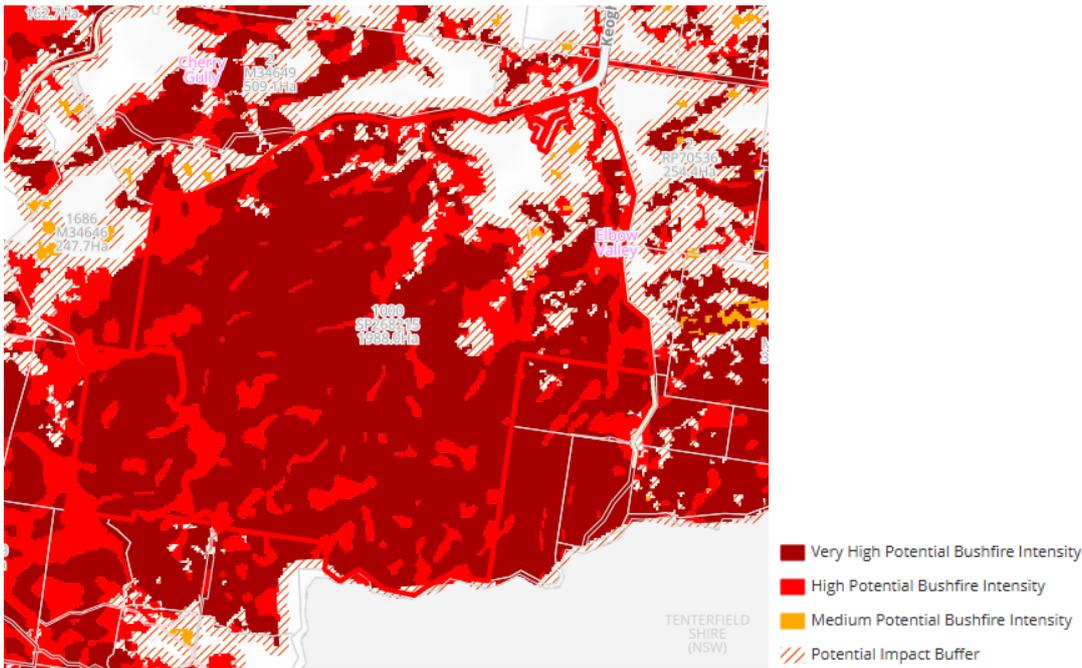
The location of the proposal is not within the Biodiversity areas overlay. However, there is biodiversity drainage/MSES regulated watercourse mapped near the proposal site. The application material has not addressed potential impacts to this natural feature.

The earthworks are proposed approximately 32 metres from the mapped biodiversity drainage feature. Therefore, assessment against the overlay is not required.



Bushfire hazard overlay code

The proposed development is located within the Potential impact buffer in a cleared area of the site.

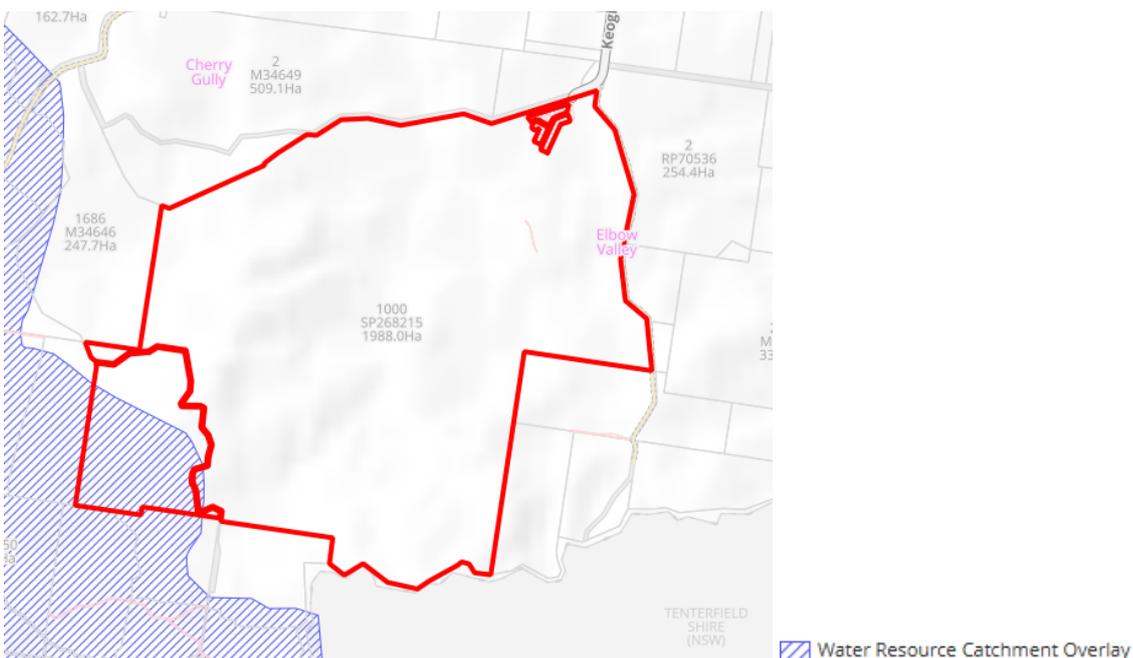


A Bushfire Hazard Assessment has been submitted which has assessed bushfire impacts to the proposed development. The assessment recommends a minimum 9.3 metre wide Asset Protection Zone to the north-east and south-west of the proposal to achieve a maximum 29Kw/m² fire line intensity exposure and the installation of water tanks for firefighting purposes with a minimum capacity of at least 20,000 litres. The internal access road and Keoghs Road are identified as a suitable sealed access and evacuation route due to the limited bushfire risk.

The proposed development complies with the applicable Acceptable outcomes of the Bushfire hazard overlay code. The design and siting of the proposed development does not increase the existing risk from bushfire hazard within the property and does not compromise the safety of people or property. Accordingly, compliance with the Bushfire hazard overlay code is achieved.

Water resource catchments overlay code

The south-eastern part of the site is located within the Water resource catchment overlay, which is associated with Connolly Dam.



AO2 *There is no acceptable outcome identified*

PO2 *Development within the catchment does not include uses that could impact on the water quality including intensive animal industries and industrial uses*

The proposal is for a High impact industry, including an increase to the ground water extraction to the full extent permitted by the Water License (96ML per year). In the absence of technical reporting that demonstrates the increase to ground water extraction will not impact on the water quality, compliance with PO2 cannot be achieved. An assessment against the Overall outcomes of the code is provided below.

(1) *The purpose of the Water resource catchments overlay code is to ensure that use and development of land within water resource catchments is managed to protect the qualities of the catchment.*

(2) *The purpose of the code will be achieved through the following overall outcomes:*

(a) *Water storage supplies are not adversely affected by development or the effects of development.*

(b) *The costs of water treatment and infrastructure maintenance are minimised.*

(c) *The scenic amenity of the water storages is not adversely affected by development*

As outlined above, no technical reporting has been provided to demonstrate that the increase in ground water extraction will not impact on the qualities of the catchment. Accordingly, compliance with the purpose of the code cannot be achieved.

Industry uses code

AO1.2 *The land is not in a Bushfire hazard area as shown on the Bushfire hazard overlay maps.*

PO1 *The physical characteristics of the land are suitable for industrial use.*

The proposal is located in a Bushfire hazard area. As per the response to the Bushfire hazard overlay code, a Bushfire Hazard Assessment has been prepared which provides recommendations that ensure the land is suitable for the use, including the implementation of an asset protection zone and water tanks for firefighting purposes, to comply with PO1.

AO2 *In partial fulfilment of the PO –*

(a) *Access to the site is via a fully constructed sealed road.*

(b) *In all urban zones, except the Township zone, the frontage of the site is kerbed and channelled.*

Note: In the Rural zone, access via a gravel constructed road may be acceptable for small scale industries with low traffic volumes.

PO2 *The site is accessed via a road that is of a standard to adequately cater for the traffic generated by the use without causing traffic hazards, damage to the road or dust nuisance to persons or property not connected with the use.*

The site is accessed via Keoghs Road, which is a sealed road with reduced pavement widths. The Traffic Impact Assessment only considers Stage 1 of the development. Ultimately, through Stages 2 and 30 HRVs per day could access the site. This will present safety and efficiency issues to Keoghs Road and potentially the wider local road network. Therefore, Keoghs Road is not of a suitable standard to adequately cater for the traffic generated by the use without causing traffic hazards, and compliance with the Performance outcome is not achieved nor has it been substantiated through technical reporting.

AO3.2 *Buildings do not exceed a height of 8 m.*

PO3 *Buildings and other structures are designed and constructed in a manner that complements the existing built form in the immediate area.*

The proposed water bottling facility has a maximum building height of 10 metres, therefore compliance with AO3.2 is not achieved. No buildings or structures currently exist within 100 metres of the proposed facility. Evidently, there is no built form in the immediate area. Accordingly, the

facility is designed in a manner that is contrary to the built form in the immediate area and conflicts with PO3.

AO4 *The use is consistent with the objectives set out in the Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2008 and the Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2008.*

PO4 *Uses do not result in sensitive land uses outside of the Industry zone experiencing a lower standard of amenity as a result of industrial air, noise and odour emissions.*

A Noise Impact Assessment has been provided to assess the acoustic impacts of the development. The Noise Impact Assessment does not assess the full extent of impacts associated with the development, including the increased vehicle movements associated with Stages 2 and 3 and impacts from industrial traffic on the local road network. Accordingly, compliance with PO4 is not achieved.

Given the development is not considered to directly comply with the outcomes sought by Performance outcome 2, 3 and 4, an assessment against the Overall outcomes is provided below.

(1) *The purpose of the Industry uses code is to ensure that industry uses are located on suitable sites having regard to site characteristics and access and are consistent with the built form and character and amenity of the locality and the environment of the area including water quality, air quality, soil quality, vegetation and wildlife.*

(2) *The purpose of the code will be achieved through the following overall outcomes.*

All industry uses:

(a) *Occur only on land that is suited to the development and operation of industrial uses;*

(b) *Are located, designed and operated in a manner that prevents unacceptable environmental and amenity impacts on adjoining land uses;*

(c) *Are sited and designed in a manner that is appropriate to the character, including heritage character and environmental values of the locality;*

(d) *Have adequate and safe vehicle access;*

(e) *Generate traffic on access roads that is within the capacity of the road and consistent with the types of traffic and frequency of traffic movement existing on the access roads;*

The proposed water bottling facility is located adjacent to the internal access road of the Cherrabah Resort, which is a tourist activity reliant on the natural and scenic character of the site. The proposed facility is located at the entrance to the site and represents an urban scale with a large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height and 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls. Additionally, large acoustic barriers 2 to 2.4 metres in height are required along the western and northern extents of the development to comply with noise criteria. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is not consistent with the characteristics of the land where the land is located in the Rural zone.

In addition, the proposal is accessed via Keoghs Road, which is a sealed road with reduced pavement widths. The ultimate scale of the development will result in up to 30 HRVs per day accessing the site, which will present safety and efficiency issues to the local road network. In the absence of traffic reporting supporting the heavy vehicle movements on Keoghs Road for Stages 2 and 3 of the development, it is considered that the increase in traffic generated on Keoghs Road is not within the capacity of the road, or consistent with the types of traffic and frequency of traffic movement existing on the road. As such, adequate and safe vehicle access is not provided to the site.

Given the above, the land is not suited to the development and operation of an industrial use, and therefore compliance with the Overall outcomes is not achieved.

Carparking and loading code

AO9

- a) *The service bays provided and their access, can accommodate, at any one time, the types of service vehicles detailed in Table 9.4.2.4.*

- b) *Service bays located wholly or partly within a building are physically separated from the rest of the building in a manner that makes it impractical to use them for storage or work areas.*
- c) *Vehicles being unloaded or loaded with goods stand completely on site and do not impede vehicle access to more than 10 parking spaces.*
- d) *Service vehicles enter and leave the site in a forward gear.*

The proposal provides 23 car parking spaces, to comply with the minimum number of spaces for a High impact industry use, as prescribed by Table 9.4.2.4.

In accordance with Table 9.4.2.4 of the code, the minimum number of spaces to be provided for an Undefined use is as determined by Council. With consideration to the number of parking spaces approved on-site, it is not considered reasonable for additional parking to be provided for the ground water extraction component.

Ingress and egress is provided via the existing internal access road and a one-way maneuvering arrangement is proposed to accommodate heavy rigid vehicle (HRV) movements. As HRVs are proposed to be utilised in lieu of articulated vehicles (AV), as prescribed by Table 9.4.2.4, compliance with AO9 is not achieved.

PO9 *Provision is made for the loading, unloading, maneuvering and access by service vehicles and such provision:*

- a) *is adequate to accommodate the design vehicle requirements;*
- b) *protects the safety and efficiency of roads in the vicinity; and*
- c) *does not unduly impede vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the site.*

The applicant has provided a swept path diagram for a HRV that demonstrates that loading, unloading, maneuvering and access can occur safely and efficiently and does not impede vehicular and pedestrian circulation, to comply with PO9.

Earthworks code

AO2 *No part of the finished ground level is more than 2 m vertical distance above, or below, the natural ground surface.*

PO2 *Cut and fill batters on the development site do not adversely impact on the streetscape and do not result in a significant loss of amenity to users of adjacent land or land in the general vicinity of the site.*

The proposal includes 24,517 cubic metres of fill and up to 5.5 metre high retaining wall to the rear of the development. This is a significant retaining wall which is not reduced through battering or softened with screen landscaping. Therefore, it is considered that the retaining wall will detract from the amenity of the area and compliance with PO2 cannot be achieved. Given the development is not considered to directly comply with the outcomes sought by Performance outcome 2, an assessment against the Overall outcomes is provided below. **(1)** *The purpose of the Earthworks code is to ensure that all earthworks is undertaken in a manner which does not have an unreasonable adverse impact on residents of land in the general vicinity of the construction site, the environment beyond the boundaries of the construction site, and Council infrastructure on and adjacent to the land.*

(2) *The purpose of the code will be achieved through the following overall outcomes:*

- (a)** *Earthworks are appropriate to the character and environmental values of the area.*
- (b)** *Earthworks do not result in an unreasonable impact on the levels of natural light, natural ventilation and privacy for users of adjacent land.*
- (c)** *Earthworks do not result in an adverse effect on adjacent land or infrastructure.*
- (d)** *Earthworks do not result in adverse impact on flooding or upstream, downstream and adjoining land.*
- (e)** *The resulting landforms are structurally sound and require minimal maintenance*

As outlined above, the retaining wall is of a significant height with no battering or screen landscaping. Retaining walls of this nature are inconsistent with the rural and landscape character of the area. Accordingly, compliance with the Overall outcomes and Purpose of the code is not achieved.

Landscaping code

AO1 *In partial fulfilment of the PO –*

Landscaping is carried out in accordance with a planting plan prepared by a suitably qualified landscape designer that:

- a) incorporates all proposed planting, paving, fences, recreational facilities and other landscape elements necessary to meet the performance outcomes; and*
- b) incorporates the following information:*
 - (i) Location and species of existing trees, including street trees;*
 - (ii) Location and species of proposed plants and a schedule of plants and plant size;*
 - (iii) Soil type;*
 - (iv) Location of drainage, sewerage and other underground services and overhead power lines;*
 - (v) Irrigation details;*
 - (vi) Proposed surfaces;*
 - (vii) Fence height and material;*
 - (viii) Location of doorways and windows of buildings on the site;*
 - (ix) Location of any existing or proposed solar collectors on the site;*
 - (x) Contours or spot levels as required;*
 - (xi) Scale and north point.*

PO1 *Development is landscaped in a manner which:*

- Makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and enhances the appearance of the facility;*
- Integrates natural landscape features such as rock outcrops and existing large trees and existing native vegetation;*
- Enhances buffer areas around property boundaries;*
- Compliments the relative size and nature of the development;*
- Screens the view of service, carparking and loading areas;*
- Enhances the appearance of screens and acoustic fences; and*
- Ensures the functionality of outdoor space.*

A landscape concept or planting plan has not been submitted as part of the application. The proposal plans indicate a minimum two (2) metre wide landscape strip along the proposal frontage to the internal access road. The development can comply with the code through the imposition of conditions that would ensure adequate landscaping is provided for the development.

Outdoor lighting code

With conditions imposed, compliance with the Code can be achieved.

Physical infrastructure code

An Engineering Services Report has been submitted as part of the application. As a reticulated water system does not exist, three 50,000 litre rainwater tanks will be installed to service the proposal. An additional 20,000 litres of water storage is recommended to be reserved for firefighting purposes. An ERA 63 application for a consolidated sewerage treatment plant is being prepared for the site, which the proposal would connect to. Should this not proceed, a new on-site effluent system for up to twenty equivalent persons will be installed for the development. The proposal will be connected to the Ergon Energy electricity network, and a new pad mounted transformer will be installed to service the electricity demand generated by the facility.

Constructed road access is available via Keoghs Road, which is sealed, to comply with Table 9.4.7.4.

Accordingly, compliance with the Physical infrastructure code is achieved.

Recommendation

THAT the application for Other Change - Material Change of Use for High impact industry (Water bottling facility) and Undefined use (Commercial ground water extraction) on land at 396 Keoghs Road, Elbow Valley, described as Lot 1000 SP268215, be refused for the following reasons:

1. The development is inconsistent with the rural landscape and character given the scale and nature of the use which presents as an intense industrial development due to the large building footprint, building height, retaining walls and acoustic barriers. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
 - Strategic Outcome 3.3.1 (3)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.9.3.2 (7)
 - Purpose of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcome (a) (iii) of the Rural zone code
 - PO1, PO8 and PO21 of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcomes (a), (b) and (c) of the Industry uses code
 - Purpose of the Earthworks code
 - Overall outcome (a) of the Earthworks code
 - PO2 of the Earthworks code
2. The development seeks an increase in ground water extraction to 96ML per year. A lack of information has been provided regarding potential impacts to the aquifer, surrounding agricultural uses and the water resource catchment. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
 - Strategic Outcome 3.3.9
 - Strategic Outcome 3.4.1 (4)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.4.3.1 (1) and (2)
 - Strategic Outcome 3.8.1 (7)
 - Purpose of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcomes (a) (ii) and (vi) of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Water resource catchments overlay code
 - PO2 of the Water resource catchments overlay code
3. The development will increase heavy vehicle movements to the local road network, including Keoghs Road, which is of insufficient standard to cater for the new traffic. No information has been provided regarding the impacts to Keoghs Road and the local road network in the ultimate stage of development. The increase in traffic generated on Keoghs Road is not within the capacity of the road, or consistent with the types of traffic and frequency of traffic movement existing on the road. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:

- Strategic Outcome 3.9.3.2 (2) and (7)
 - Overall outcome (a) (ii) of the Rural zone code
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcome (a), (d) and (e) of the Industry uses code
 - PO2 of the Industry uses code
4. The proposed Water bottling facility is of a significant urban scale, given the large 3,570 square metre building footprint, 10 metre maximum building height, 5.5 metre maximum retaining walls and 2 to 2.4 metre high acoustic barriers. Therefore, the proposal will conflict with the scenic character and amenity of the area, especially when viewed from the internal access road. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.3.1(3)
 - Overall outcomes (1) and (2)(a)(iii) of the Rural zone code
 - Overall outcome (a), (b) and (c) of the Industry uses code
 - PO1 and PO8 of the Rural zone code
 - PO3 of the Industry uses code
5. The Noise Impact Assessment assesses noise impacts on the basis there will be 1 truck per hour because it relies on the Traffic Impact Assessment which assesses traffic associated with Stage 1 only. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposal will have acceptable noise impacts associated with Stages 2 and 3. In this way, the proposal does not comply with:
- Strategic Outcome 3.3.1(3)
 - Purpose of the Industry uses code
 - Overall outcome (a) and (b) of the Industry uses code
 - PO6 of the Rural zone code
 - PO4 of the Industry uses code
6. The Properly Made Submissions received are unsupportive of the development application and reinforce the development's conflicts with the Planning Scheme and potential for unacceptable social impacts to the community.
7. There are no Other Relevant Matters which, on a balanced assessment, lend support to approval of the development.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Correspondence from James Lister MP to the Minister for Local Government and Water, and Minister's Response [↓](#)



JAMES LISTER MP

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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E-MAIL - SOUTHERN.DOWNS@PARLIAMENT.QLD.GOV.AU
ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: - P.O. Box 444 STANTHORPE 4380

The Honourable Ann Leahy MP
Minister for Local Government and Water
Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers
PO Box 2247
Brisbane QLD 4002
EMAIL: lgwv@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister *Ann,*

Thank you for your ongoing engagement with me on matters of concern to my electorate of Southern Downs. I write to you on the matter of a water licence held by the licensee *Joyful View Garden Real Estate Development Resort Co. Pty Ltd.* Reference: 187239.

It is my understanding that the Department, based on previous assessments, is confident that the extraction of almost 100ML of water per annum from this aquifer will not reduce availability for nearby licensees.

I, however, am concerned that the assessment may be incorrect based on discussions with constituents whose properties are in that area and may be impacted. I am advised that this particular resource is close to the surface and emanates from Dalveen to the nearby slopes.

This, my constituents tell me gives a picture of a resource which may not sustain all users under the proposed circumstances.

Given the doubts expressed to me by my constituents, I would be grateful please if the capacity of the resources be reassessed.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
James Lister MP
Member for Southern Downs

19 December 2025

P.S. Thank you for considering this report, as the matter of the possible commencement of taking 96 ML is great worrying my constituents. I am actually surprised that the department was confident enough to support this licence at 96 ML some years ago. Many thanks. T.

Minister for Local Government
and Water and Minister for Fire,
Disaster Recovery and Volunteers

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Our ref: CTS 27217/25

04 FEB 2026

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Mr James Lister MP
Member for Southern Downs
PO Box 444
STANTHORPE QLD 4380

Email: Southern.Downs@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Lister

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2025 regarding the water licence held by Joyful View Garden Real Estate Development Resort Pty Ltd (the licensee).

I acknowledge that the sustainable use of groundwater is an issue of strong interest and concern within the local community, particularly where existing bores rely on the underlying aquifers in the district to support their business and domestic needs.

You may be interested to know that the original application for the water licence was lodged in 2006, under the Beattie Government, and was granted with a nominal entitlement of 25 megalitres (ML) per year with strict conditions to manage impacts on nearby water users. In 2009, under the Bligh Government, a further application was made to increase the entitlement to 200 ML per year. To address community concerns, the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) required the licensee to undertake detailed hydrological assessments as part of the water licence application process. There was also a public submissions process for this application. The department considered the submissions received and reviewed the hydrological assessments to minimise and manage potential impacts on neighbouring water users and the surrounding environment before an entitlement for up to 96 ML of water for commercial purposes was decided.

To further ensure the sustainability of local water supplies, the department imposed a condition on the water licence that strictly limits extraction from the shallow colluvium aquifer to five ML per year. This aquifer, which is primarily recharged through localised rainfall events, is the same source that many nearby landholders depend on for their water needs. This condition was specifically included to minimise potential impacts on existing groundwater bores and to ensure equitable access to this shared resource.

The remainder of the authorised extraction under this entitlement is permitted from the deeper fractured rock aquifer of the Stanthorpe Adamellite. Furthermore, the licensee has the option to take the entire 96 ML allocation from the Stanthorpe Adamellite aquifer. The department's groundwater bore drilling database indicates that this deeper aquifer is not typically utilised by most landholders in the area, which significantly reduces the likelihood of interference with their water supplies.

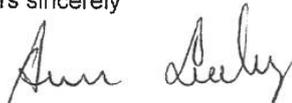
I hope this information provides some reassurance regarding the department's assessment process and the safeguards that have been put in place to protect local groundwater resources.

Item 15.1 MCU\02009.01 - 396 Keoghs Road, Elbow Valley - Other Change - High Impact Industry (Water bottling facility), over three (3) stages

Attachment 1: Correspondence from James Lister MP to the Minister for Local Government and Water, and Minister's Response

If you have any questions, please contact my Chief of Staff, Mr Angus McCaffrey, on 0407 073 631 or email Angus.McCaffrey@ministerial.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ann Leahy'.

ANN LEAHY MP
Minister for Local Government and Water
Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers

**15.2 RC\02063 - Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road, Rodgers Creek -
Realignment of boundaries (Six (6) lots into six (6) lots)**

Document Information

	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 25 February 2026
	Manager Planning and Development	ECM Function No/s: RC\02063

APPLICANT:	Gary Hayes & Partners Pty Ltd
OWNER:	Jamie and Cynthia L McDonald
ADDRESS:	Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road, Rodgers Creek
RPD:	Lots 4, 6, 7 and 8 SP322823, Lot 2277 SP232698 and Lot 80 SP309862
ASSESSMENT AGAINST:	Southern Downs Planning Scheme, v. 5
ZONE:	Rural zone (Sandstone Rises and Traprock Hills precinct)
PROPOSAL:	Reconfiguring a lot – Realignment of boundaries (Six (6) lots into six (6) lots)
LEVEL OF ASSESSMENT:	Impact
SUBMITTERS:	Four (4) submissions, one (1) properly made and three (3) not properly made
REFERRALS:	Not Applicable
CIS DATE:	4 February 2026
FILE NUMBER:	RC\02063

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

THAT the application for Reconfiguring a lot – Realignment of boundaries (Six (6) lots into six (6) lots), located at Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road, Rodgers Creek, formally described as Lots 4, 6, 7 and 8 SP322823, Lot 2277 SP232698 and Lot 80 SP309862, be approved subject to conditions.

REPORT

Background

Lots 4, 6, 7 and 8 SP322823 form part of a previous approval. On 15 January 2019, Council provided a Negotiated Decision Notice for a Development Permit for Reconfiguring a Lot – Realignment of boundaries (10 lots into 8 lots) over four stages (Council reference: RC\01711).

Lot 8 SP322823 and Lot 2277 SP232698 were also part of another previous approval. On 8 March 2019, Council provided a Negotiated Decision Notice for a Development Permit for Reconfiguring a Lot – Realignment of boundaries for Lot 8 SP322823 and Lot 2277 SP232698 to comply with Condition 1(b) of RC\01711 (Council reference: RC\01738).

In relation to the subject application, on 9 May 2025, Council issued an Information Request for this application and stated that Stage 4 of RC\01711 has the potential to be acted upon. Council requested the applicant to submit a minor change application to remove stage 4 from the previous approval. The applicant has not submitted a minor change application and requested that Council impose a condition to ensure Stage 4 is extinguished. A condition advising that the survey plan for

this application will not be endorsed by Council until such time that the previous approval is changed.

On 5 November 2025, the applicant provided a response to Council's Information Request, and an additional lot (Lot 80 SP309862) was included for the proposed development.

Lot 7 SP322823 also includes following development approvals on eProperty:

- MCU\02403: Material Change of Use – Dual occupancy (within Flood hazard overlay) – approved 9 September 2022.
- BLD\19072: Building Works – Private Certification – 1a Removal Home – approved 14 September 2022.

Report



Figure 1: Development site

The applicant seeks approval for Reconfiguring a lot – Realignment of boundaries (Six (6) lots into six (6) lots) at Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road, Rodgers Creek, formally described as Lots 4, 6, 7 and 8 SP322823, Lot 2277 SP232698 and Lot 80 SP309862.

The development site is 2193.936 hectares and is within the Rural zone (Sandstone Rises and Traprock Hills precinct). The site includes Dwelling houses, access roads, fencing and dams. The site is subject to a significant slope, and the southern lots contain large expanses of vegetation.

The site is accessed via an unsealed road (Rodgers Creek Road) and road reserves that traverse through the allotments. The site is also mapped within the Intensive animal industry buffers and Biodiversity, Bushfire hazard, Flood hazard and Water resource catchment overlays.

The existing and proposed lots sizes are included in the table below:

Lot	Lot Area	Proposed Lot	Proposed Area	Proposed change	%
Lot 4 SP322823	216.4 hectares	Lot 1	7.3 hectares	96.62 decrease	
Lot 6 SP322823	372.8223 hectares	Lot 2	9.5 hectares	97.45 decrease	
Lot 7 SP322823	245.7 hectares	Lot 3	13.6 hectares	94.46 decrease	
Lot 8 SP322823	801.2529 hectares	Lot 4	900.1 hectares	12.33 increase	
Lot 2277 SP232698	528.9108 hectares	Lot 5	1260 hectares	138.22 increase	
Lot 80 SP309862	28.85 hectares	Lot 6	12 hectares	58.40 decrease	

The applicant seeks to reconfigure the lot boundaries of six (6) lots to consolidate land for coordinated land management. The proposed development also proposed building envelopes for proposed Lots 1, 3 and 6 for future Dwelling houses and retains the existing buildings, structures and access.

The applicant states:

As shown on the submitted proposal plan, the boundary realignment has been designed as best as possible to accommodate the current rural functions of property, several existing dwellings (on proposed Lots 4 and 5), the existing road and access arrangements and the topography of the land.

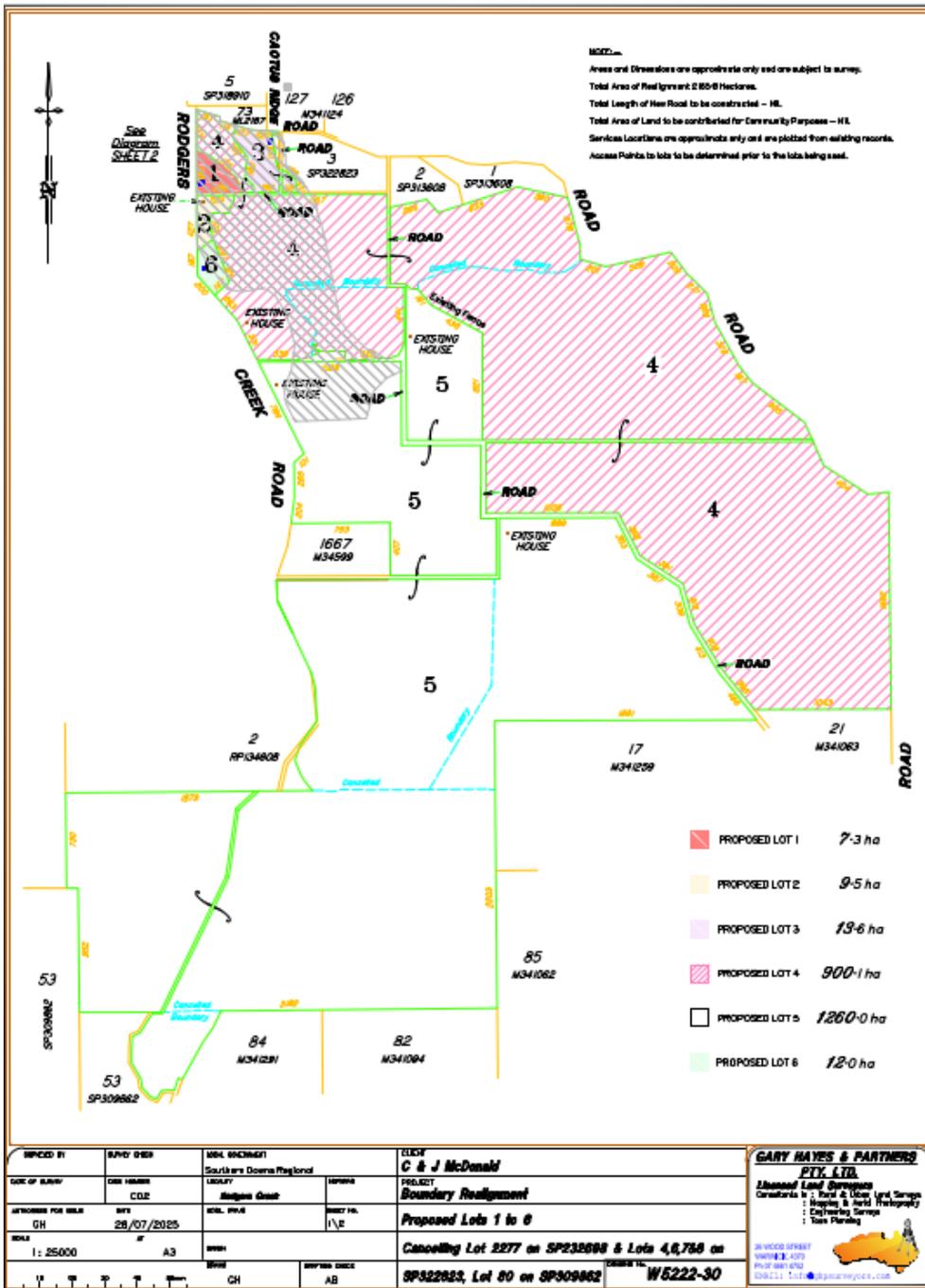


Figure 2: Plan of reconfiguration

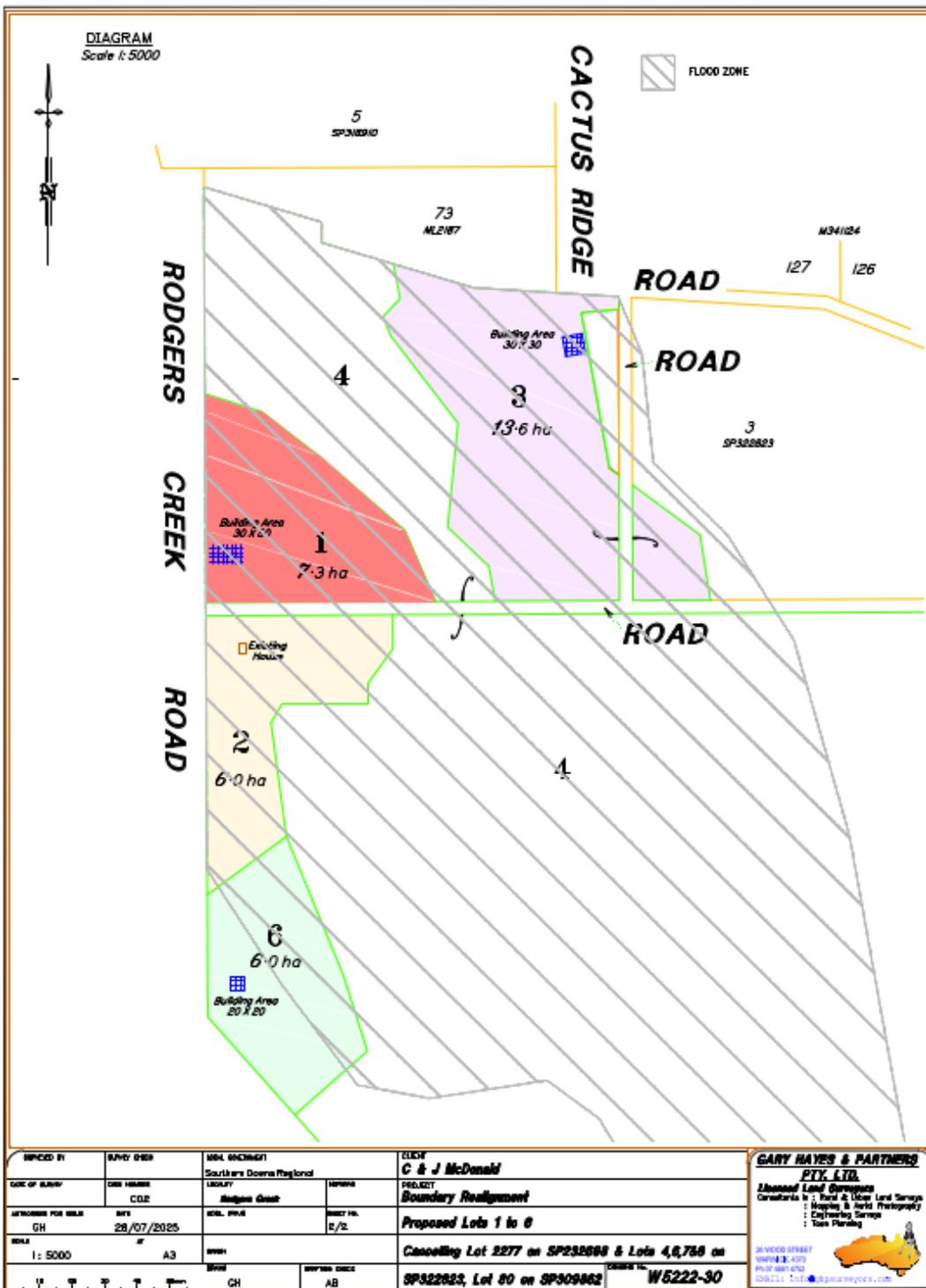


Figure 3: Proposed building envelopes

Submissions

Public notification for this development was undertaken for 16 business days from 1 December 2025 to 22 December 2025. The following actions were undertaken:

- A notice was published in Town & Country Journal on 27 November 2025.
- Notices were placed on the land on 28 November 2025.
- A notice was given to the owners of all land adjoining the land on 26 November 2025.

Under Section 53 of the *Planning Act 2017*, business days for public notification do not include between 20 December of a year and 5 January of the next year. Whilst the public notification for

this application was undertaken until 22 December, the 15th business day was the 19 December 2025. Therefore compliance was achieved with the public notification requirements.

Compliance with the notification process has been achieved. One (1) properly made submission and one (1) not properly made submission was received during the public notification period and two (2) not properly made submissions were received after the public notification period. In total four (4) submissions were received, two (2) against and two (2) in support of the application.

The properly made submission is against the development.

A response is provided to the matters raised in all of the submissions below:

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>The proposed small lots are significantly below the minimum lot size and rural land should be protected from fragmentation and used for rural production.</p> <p>The boundary realignment appears as a residential subdivision and is inconsistent with the Rural zone and Reconfiguring a lot code.</p>	<p>The proposal involves a boundary realignment and does not result in the creation of additional lots.</p> <p>The proposal has a minimum lot size of 7.3 hectares in lieu of the minimum requirement of 700 hectares. However, the existing lots have a minimum lot size of 28.85 hectares and do not meet the minimum requirement, except for Lot 8 SP322823. The proposal will also provide two (2) lots that exceed the minimum lot size requirement with lot sizes of 900.1 hectares and 1,260 hectares.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged the smaller lots are generally not the same size of the existing lots, the proposal aims to consolidate land for rural production and will provide for coordinated land management. The smaller lots have been designed to complement the existing lot pattern within the locality, in particular lots on and to the north of Catus Ridge Road. The smaller lots are also located outside of land currently used for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>The proposal will consolidate productive rural land into two larger lots, proposed Lot 4 and 5, ensuring the most productive land is maintained for agricultural purposes and not fragmented. The proposed realignment is considered appropriate as the reconfiguration will consolidate productive rural land.</p>

Matters raised in submissions	Response
<p>Future dwellings on small lots will increase infrastructure demand in areas not designed for residential densities, which may lead to precedent for fragmentation in other rural areas.</p>	<p>It is noted that proposed Lot 4 and 5 will be maintained for rural production and contain Dwelling houses, whilst proposed Lot 3 contains an existing Dwelling house. Therefore, the proposal could result in the addition of six (6) Dwelling houses, if Dual occupancies or Secondary dwellings were constructed, which is not expected to place unreasonable demand on existing services as each Dwelling houses would be required to provide its own on-site services and each lot will be provided with adequate access.</p> <p>Proposed Lots 1, 3 and 6 will be provided with a building envelope to ensure density is limited and Dwelling houses can be sited to limit any potential impacts or servicing and infrastructure issues.</p> <p>Conditions have been included to ensure each lot is provided with infrastructure expected in the Rural zone.</p> <p>Any future application for reconfiguration will be assessed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the planning scheme.</p>
<p>Waste facilities at Greymare have exceeded capacity and further housing will increase demand.</p>	<p>The proposal could result in the addition of six (6) Dwelling houses, if Dual occupancies or Secondary dwellings were constructed, which is not expected to place unreasonable demand on waste services.</p>
<p>Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road currently have unsafe access to and from the Cunningham Highway.</p>	<p>Conditions of approval have been included to ensure each lot is provided with suitable access. The proposal will not result in any changes to access to and from the Cunningham Highway and the additional vehicle movements expected from the development are anticipated to be low.</p>
<p>Smaller lots improve housing affordability for those entering the housing market while maintaining rural pursuits via hobby farming.</p>	<p>Noted. The application has been assessed against the Southern Downs Planning Scheme and is recommended for approval.</p>

Assessment against the Planning Scheme

Benchmarks applying to the development
<p>The following codes of the Southern Downs Planning Scheme are benchmarks applying to the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic framework - 8.2.2 Biodiversity areas overlay code - 8.2.3 Bushfire hazard overlay code - 8.2.5 Flood hazard overlay code - 8.2.9 Water resource catchments overlay code - 9.4.7 Reconfiguring a lot code

The proposed development complies with all Acceptable outcomes of the relevant codes, except those addressed below.

Strategic framework

3.4 Natural environment

3.4.1 Strategic outcomes

(6) The impacts of changes in agricultural practices to more intensive forms of animal husbandry, urban growth, the increase in rural residential living and climate change are mitigated through appropriate measures including control over location, intensity and scale of development.

3.6 Natural resources and landscape

3.6.1 Strategic outcomes

(6) Land identified as ALC Class A and Class B is a finite national and state resource that must be conserved and managed for the longer term. As a general principle all such land is protected from those developments that lead to its alienation or diminished productivity. Protection of ALC Class A and Class B land takes precedence over all development interests, except in exceptional circumstances.

3.6.2 Element – Rural land and production areas

3.6.2.1 Specific outcomes

(3) Land identified as ALC Class A and Class B is protected for on going production in accordance with the State Planning Policy.

(4) Planning and approval powers are used to protect land identified as ALC Class A and Class B from those developments that lead to permanent impacts or diminished productivity. Impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated consistent with the State Planning Policy.

3.9 Economic development

3.9.1 Strategic outcomes

(3) The maintenance and development of agriculture is supported by the protection of agricultural land resources from loss to other purposes and the protection of rural activities from incompatible uses. The dominance of the agricultural sector in the economy of the region is maintained by innovation and adaptation to changing market and climate conditions.

3.9.2 Element – Rural industries and primary production

3.9.2.1 Strategic outcomes

(1) Agricultural land is protected for ongoing agricultural use.

3.9.2.2 Land use strategies

(1) Rural industries are protected from the intrusion of urban and rural residential uses. Rural land which includes land identified as Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Class A or Class B is protected for ongoing rural use.

(2) The settlement pattern is designed to consolidate urban and rural residential areas and protect agricultural land from fragmentation and unplanned residential and rural residential expansion.

The proposal involves a boundary realignment and does not result in the creation of additional lots. Whilst it is acknowledged the smaller lots are generally not the same size as the existing lots, the proposal aims to consolidate land for rural production and will provide for coordinated land management. The smaller lots have been designed to complement the existing lot pattern within the locality, in particular lots on and to the north of Catus Ridge Road. The smaller lots are also located outside of land currently used for agricultural purposes.

The proposal will consolidate productive rural land into two larger lots, proposed Lot 4 and 5, ensuring the most productive land is maintained for agricultural purposes and not fragmented. The proposed realignment is considered appropriate as the reconfiguration will consolidate productive rural land.

It is acknowledged that the proposal includes building envelopes for proposed Lots 1, 3 and 6 which could facilitate the addition of six (6) Dwelling houses, if Dual occupancies or Secondary dwellings were constructed. Dwelling houses are not an incompatible land use in the Rural zone,

and the addition of six (6) Dwelling houses is not expected to introduce an intensity or scale of development that is inconsistent with the locality or the Rural zone.

Biodiversity areas overlay code

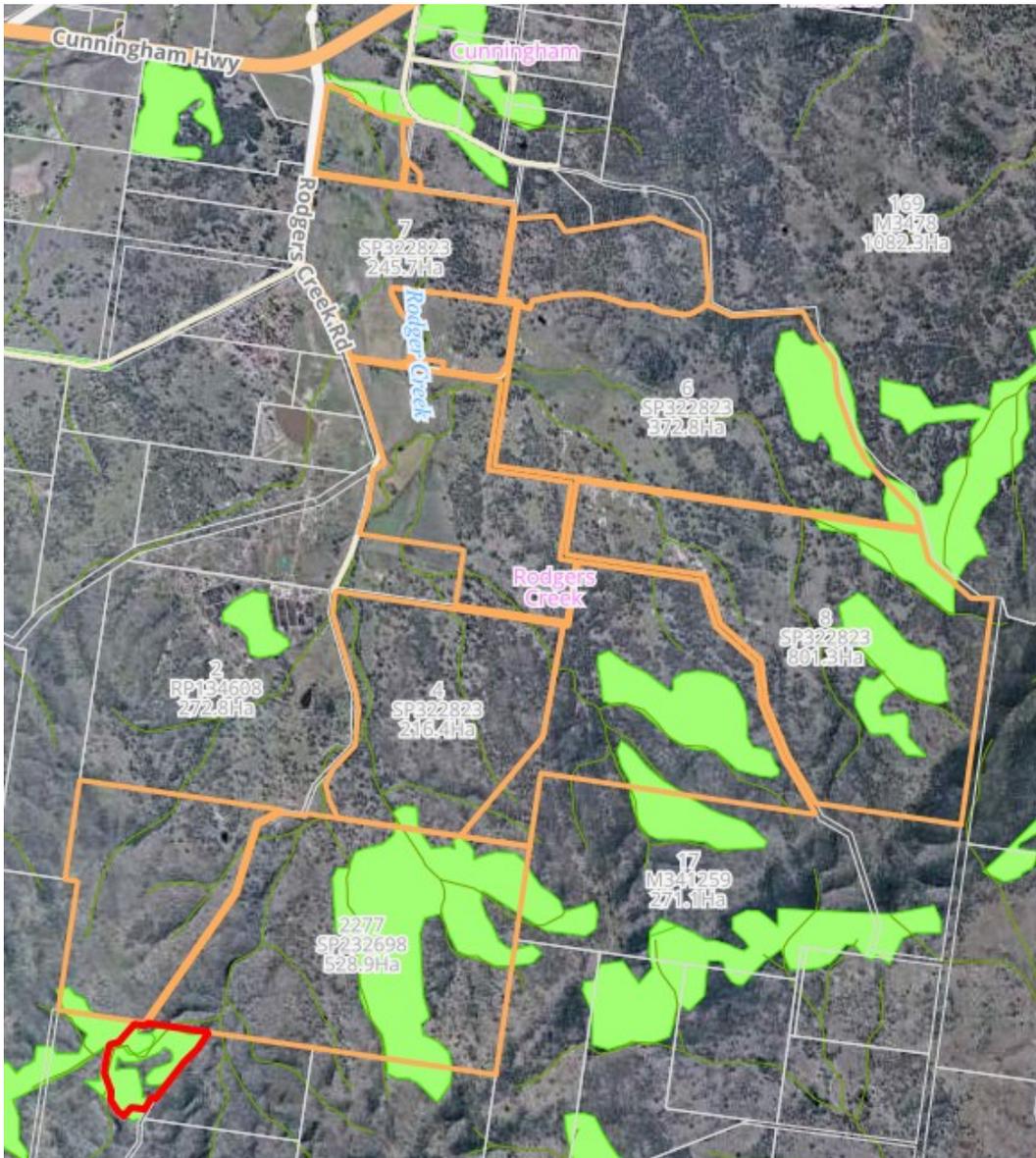


Figure 3: Biodiversity areas overlay mapping

The proposed development cancels lot boundaries that transect with drainage lines of Rodger Creek and consolidates land for proposed Lots 4 and 5 to provide coordinated land management. The smaller lots do not transect with drainage lines. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with the Biodiversity areas overlay code.

Bushfire hazard overlay code

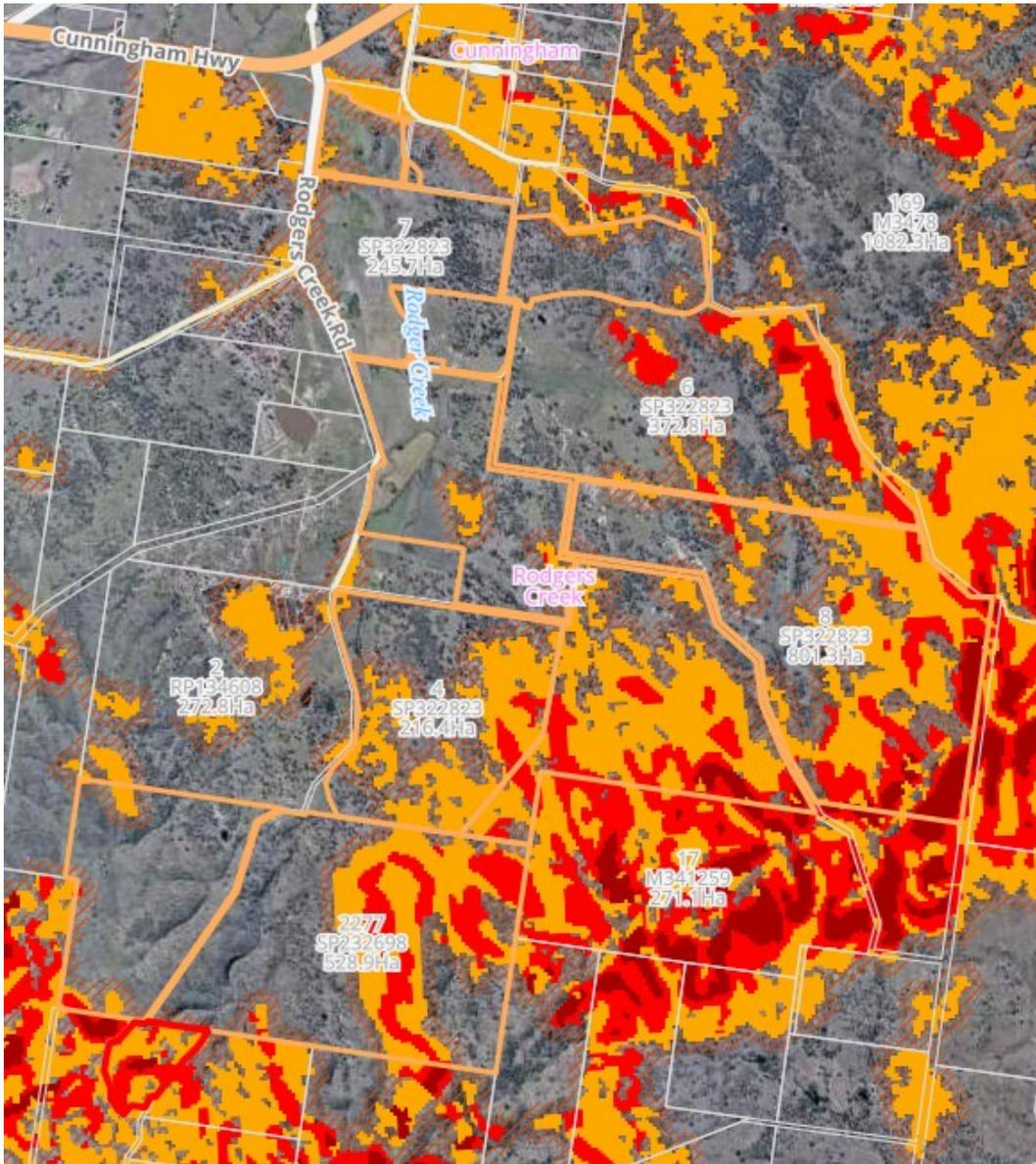


Figure 4: Bushfire hazard overlay mapping

PO9 Lot design and building siting minimises bushfire hazard to people and property having regard to slope, aspect, existing vegetation and adequate separation from hazardous vegetation. Lots are designed to allow buildings to be sited on the down slope of hills away from the most likely direction of the fire front or on a flat site at the base of any slope.

The building envelope for proposed Lot 1 is mapped within the Medium Potential Bushfire Intensity area while the building envelopes for proposed Lots 3 and 6 are within the Potential Impact Buffer. It is noted that the building envelopes for proposed Lots 3 and 6 are generally located on cleared land and provide sufficient area to site a Dwelling house that is not subject to unreasonable bushfire hazard. Council has included a condition to ensure the proposed building envelope for proposed Lot 1 is relocated to be outside the Medium Potential Bushfire Intensity area. All lots will have direct access to either Rogers Creek Road or Cactus Ridge Road which provide efficient access to the wider road network.

With conditions imposed, the proposal is considered to comply with the Performance outcome.

Flood hazard overlay code





Figure 5: Flood hazard overlay mapping

AO6.1 New lots are:

- (a) Located outside the overlay area; or
- (b) All new lots have an area at natural ground level measuring 17 m x 17m that is located outside the overlay area; and
- (c) Are provided with legal, clear and direct pedestrian and vehicle evacuation routes that are not within the flood hazard overlay area.

AO6.2 Road and pathway layout provides a safe and clear evacuation path:

- (a) By locating entry points into the reconfiguration above the flood level and avoiding culs-de-sac or other nonpermeable layouts; and
- (b) By direct and simple routes to main carriageways.

AO6.3 Signage is provided on site (regardless of whether the land will be in public or private ownership):

- (a) Indicating the position and path of all safe evacuation routes off the site; and
- (b) If the site contains or is within 100 m of a floodable waterway, hazard warning signage and depth indicators are also provided at key hazard points, such as floodway crossings or entrances to low-lying reserves.

Proposed Lots 1, 2 and 3 are mapped entirely within the Queensland floodplain assessment overlay under the State Planning Policy, which is reflected in the Flood hazard overlay. Therefore, compliance with the Performance outcome must be achieved.

PO6 Development siting and layout responds to flooding potential and maintains personal safety at all times.

Proposed Lot 2 includes an existing Dwelling house. However, the Dwelling house is located near existing roads and residents will likely have adequate response time to evacuate during a flood event. Proposed Lots 1 and 3 include building envelopes near existing roads to allow for site evacuation in the event of flooding. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with the Performance outcome.

Water resource catchments overlay code

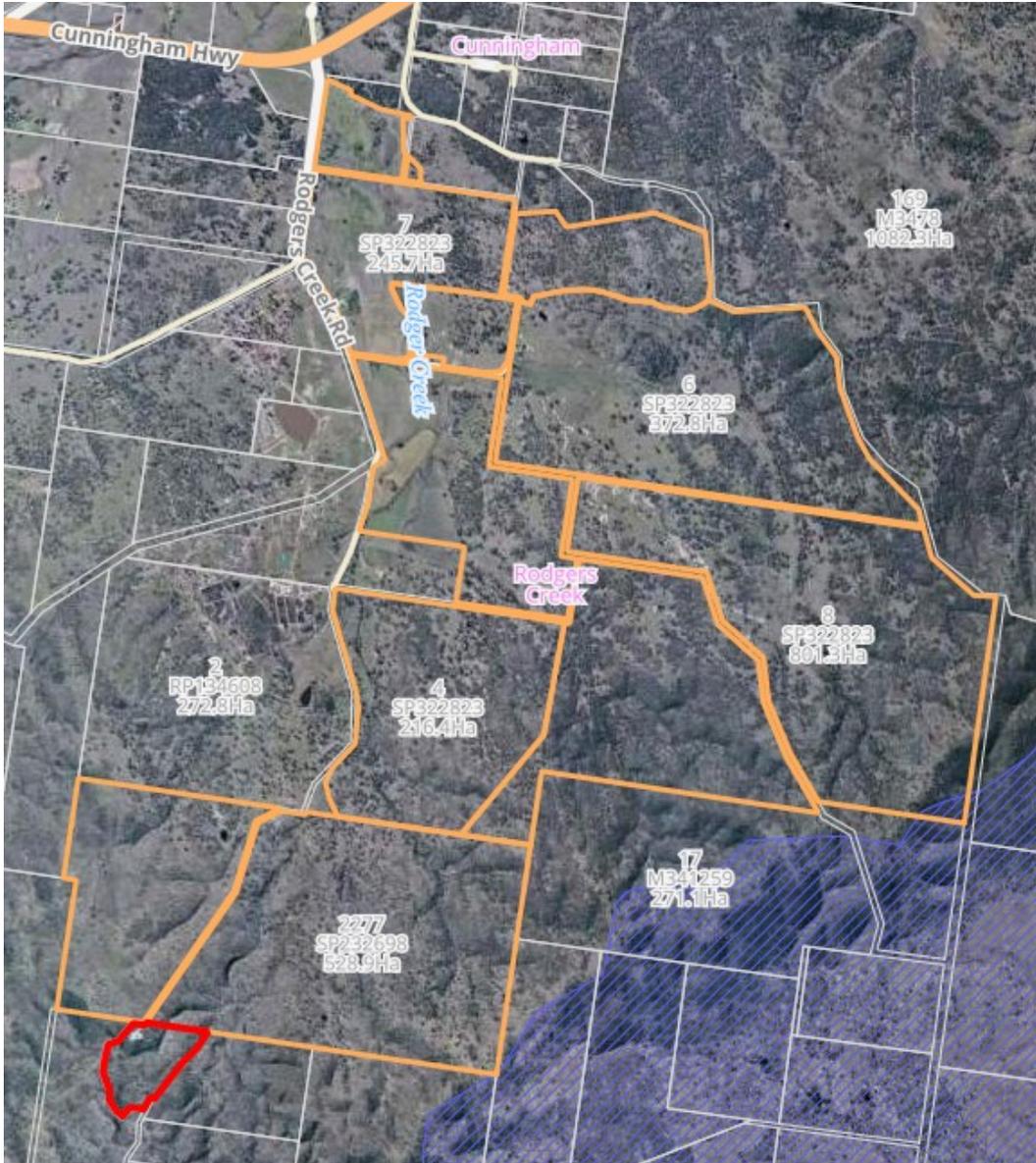


Figure 6: Water resource catchments overlay mapping

The proposed development is partially mapped within the Leslie Dam water resource catchment area. Given the proposal is for a realignment of boundaries and that the small portion of land within the overlay is remaining wholly contained within one lot, it is considered to comply with the Water resource catchment overlay code.

Reconfiguring a lot code

AO37

- (a) The number of new lots including the balance area is equal to or less than the total number of original lots.
- (b) The rearrangement involves only lots that are adjoining lots, or lots adjacent to each other (i.e. on the opposite side of a road).

- (c) *Unless the rearrangement is a minor change to a boundary to overcome an encroachment of a building, a lot:*
 - (i) *with an area of less than 4,000 m²; or*
 - (ii) *that physically cannot be used for development (e.g. it is wholly constrained by flood liability or slope); or*
 - (iii) *that was formerly a road reserve, rail corridor or the like; may be amalgamated with other lots but will not be counted in the total number of original lots as referred to in (a) above.*
- (d) *Except where use of a lot is prevented by (c) above, the newly created lots are generally the same size as the existing lots, or the rearrangement will result in lots that are more suited to the rural use of the land (see note below).*
- (e) *All new lots with an area of less than 4 ha are located on the least productive portion of the site.*
- (f) *Unless the rearrangement is a minor change to a boundary to overcome an encroachment of a building, building envelopes of at least 20m x 20m can be provided on all new lots. The building envelope:*
 - (i) *excludes land which is located within 50 m of a watercourse; and*
 - (ii) *complies with the setbacks required for a dwelling house in accordance with the Assessment criteria in this planning scheme.*
- (g) *Where possible, new lots with an area of less than 4 ha are located to form a logical extension of an existing community.*

The proposal creates smaller lots in areas identified as being subject to Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Class A or Class B, therefore creating smaller lots on land that may be considered highly productive. Compliance with the Performance outcome is required.

PO37 Rearrangement of the boundaries of existing lots:

- (a) *results in new lots that are generally the same size as the existing lots, or the rearrangement results in a more sustainable rural land resource;*
- (b) *involves only lots that are adjoining lots, or lots adjacent to each other (i.e. on the opposite side of a road);*
- (c) *does not lead to increased fragmentation of rural land;*
- (d) *does not increase the potential for conflict between rural and non-rural land uses;*
- (e) *allows for coordinated land management (e.g. ensuring water resources and the land to be irrigated are on the same lot);*
- (f) *avoids hazards (such as bushfire prone areas); and (g) results in improved environmental outcomes.*

The proposal involves a boundary realignment and does not result in the creation of additional lots.

The proposal has a minimum lot size of 7.3 hectares in lieu of the minimum requirement of 700 hectares. However, it is noted that the existing lots have a minimum lot size of 28.85 hectares and do not meet the minimum requirement, except for Lot 8 SP322823. The proposal will also provide two (2) lots that exceed the minimum lot size requirement with lot sizes of 900.1 hectares and 1260 hectares. All of the proposed lots have an area identified where a future Dwelling can be accommodated away from high bushfire danger and in accordance with building setbacks required by the Planning Scheme.

Whilst it is acknowledged the smaller lots are generally not the same size as the existing lots, the proposal aims to consolidate land for rural production and will provide for coordinated land management. The smaller lots have been designed to complement the existing lot pattern within the locality, in particular lots on and to the north of Catus Ridge Road. The smaller lots are also located outside of land currently used for agricultural purposes.

The proposal will consolidate productive rural land into two larger lots, proposed Lot 4 and 5, ensuring the most productive land is maintained for agricultural purposes and not fragmented. The proposed realignment is considered appropriate as the reconfiguration will consolidate productive rural land.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the Performance outcome.

Recommendation

THAT the application for Reconfiguring a lot – Realignment of boundaries (Six (6) lots into six (6) lots), located at Rodgers Creek Road and Cactus Ridge Road, Rodgers Creek, formally described as Lots 4, 6, 7 and 8 SP322823, Lot 2277 SP232698 and Lot 80 SP309862, be approved subject to the following conditions:

Schedule 1 - Southern Downs Regional Council Conditions

Approved Plans

1. The development of the site is to be generally in accordance with the following proposal plan submitted with the application, and subject to the final development being amended in accordance with the conditions of this approval.

Plan Name	Plan No.	Date
Proposed Lots 1 to 6, prepared by Gary Hayes & Partners Pty Ltd	W5222-30, Sheet 1 of 2	28/07/2025
Proposed Lots 1 to 6, prepared by Gary Hayes & Partners Pty Ltd	W5222-30, Sheet 2 of 2	28/07/2025

2. Where there is any conflict between the conditions of this approval and the details shown on the approved plans and documents, the conditions of approval prevail.
3. Prior to Council endorsing the survey for this approval (RC\02063), the existing approval RC\01711 is required to be amended to remove Stage 4.

Easements and Covenants

4. The building envelope for proposed Lot 1 is to be relocated to be entirely located outside the Medium Potential Bushfire Intensity area.
5. A covenant is to be provided over proposed Lots 1, 3 and 6 prohibiting the residential use of any building unless such buildings are constructed within the building envelopes approved in accordance with this condition. The covenant documentation is to be prepared at the developer's cost. The covenant documentation is to be submitted to Council for approval prior to the signing of the Plan of Subdivision.

Existing Buildings, Structures and Services

6. Demolish or relocate any buildings, structures, fencing or private infrastructure on the site that are located over any proposed lot boundary.

Electricity, Street Lighting and Telecommunications

7. Prior to Council signing the Plan of Subdivision, written advice must be provided from Ergon Energy, or the relevant electricity provider, confirming that it has been made aware of the proposed development.

Advisory Notes

- (i) Any demolition and/or removal works involving asbestos materials must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Workplace Health and Safety* legislation and *Public Health Act 2005*.
- (ii) The General Environmental Duty under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* prohibits unlawful environmental nuisance caused by noise, aerosols, particles dust, ash, fumes, light, odour or smoke, beyond the boundaries of the property during all stages of the development including earthworks, construction and operation.
- (iii) No clearing of remnant vegetation or regulated regrowth vegetation is to occur under this approval. A Development Permit for Operational Works must be obtained from the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning for the clearing of any remnant vegetation, unless exempt under Schedule 21 of the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

- (iv) Council does not have accurate flood information for this property and therefore cannot determine the height of a Defined Flood Event (DFE). Therefore there is no guarantee of flood immunity.
- (v) This area is expressly identified as being potentially impacted by lawful non-residential uses. In commencing a residential use, the owner(s) acknowledges and accepts that the use may be potentially impacted by emissions from the lawful non-residential use. It is the responsibility of the property owner(s) to take all measures necessary to ensure that the proposed dwelling is developed and maintained in such a way as to mitigate odour, dust and noise impacts from the surrounding lawful non-residential use. These measures must be undertaken at the expense of the property owner(s).
- (vi) Council will not be sealing Rodgers Creek Road or Cactus Ridge Road as a result of any dust complaints received.
- (vii) Prior to constructing or upgrading an access, an application must be submitted and approved by Council for a permit under Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No. 1.15 (Carrying Out Works on a Road or Interfering with a Road or its Operation) 2011.
- (viii) Site works must be constructed such that they do not, at any time, in any way restrict, impair or change the natural flow of runoff water, or cause a nuisance or worsening to adjoining properties or infrastructure.

Telecommunications in New Developments

- (ix) For information for developers and owner builders, on important Commonwealth telecommunication rules that need to be complied with, visit [www.infrastructure.gov.au\tind](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/tind)

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- (x) All reasonable and practicable measures must be taken to ensure that no harm is caused to Aboriginal cultural heritage (the “cultural heritage duty of care”). The cultural heritage duty of care is met if the development is conducted in accordance with gazetted cultural heritage duty of care guidelines. Further information on cultural heritage, together with a copy of the duty of care guidelines and cultural heritage search forms, may be obtained from www.datsip.qld.gov.au

Approval Times

- (xi) In accordance with the *Planning Act 2016*, this approval will lapse four years from the day the approval takes effect, unless the Plan of Subdivision is submitted to Council within the currency period. **Council will NOT approve the plan unless all conditions of this approval have been complied with to the satisfaction of Council and within the currency period of the approval.**
- (xii) The approved Plan of Subdivision must be lodged for registration in the Office of the Registrar of Titles within six months of the date of Council’s Compliance Certificate and approval of the Plan of Subdivision. If the Plan of Subdivision is not registered within this timeframe, Council’s approval of the Plan of Subdivision will lapse. Council may reapprove the Plan of Subdivision subject to payment of the applicable fee.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

16. REPORTS OF DEPUTATION OR CONFERENCE & REPORTS FROM DELEGATES APPOINTED BY COUNCIL TO OTHER BODIES

Nil

17. CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS ITEMS

In accordance with the provisions of Section 254J(3) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, a local government may resolve to close a meeting to the public and move 'into Committee' to discuss confidential items, such that its Councillors or members consider it necessary to close the meeting.

Recommendation

THAT the meeting be closed to the public and move into committee to discuss the following items, which are considered confidential in accordance with Section 254J(3) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to the following, as indicated:

17.1 Audit and Risk Management Committee - External Representatives

Reason for Confidentiality

This item is considered confidential in accordance with section 254J(3)(g) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, as it contains information relating to negotiations relating to a commercial matter involving the local government for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local government.

18. GENERAL BUSINESS