



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, 22 April 2026 at 9:00AM.**

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

Rachel Brophy

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

17 April 2026

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WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 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 - 25 March 2026**


Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026 be adopted.

5. ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1 Actions from Council Meeting 25 March 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 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 25 March 2026.

A copy of the Actions Report is attached.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Actions from Ordinary Council Meeting 25 March 2026 [↓](#)



ACTIONS FROM ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 25 MARCH 2026

MEETING DATE	ITEM NO	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION OFFICER	ACTION TO DATE	COMPLETED
25/03/2026	5.1	Actions from Council Meeting 25 February 2026	Brophy, Rachel	27 Mar 2026 9:51am Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 27 March 2026 at 9:51:23 AM - Noted.	27/03/2026
25/03/2026	8.1	Notice of Motion - Councillor Access to Southern Downs Regional Council Planning Scheme Public Submissions	Brophy, Rachel	27 Mar 2026 9:51am Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 27 March 2026 at 9:51:39 AM - Noted.	27/03/2026
25/03/2026	8.2	Notice of Motion - Murphys Crossing Road	Brophy, Rachel	27 Mar 2026 9:51am Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 27 March 2026 at 9:51:46 AM - Noted.	27/03/2026
25/03/2026	9.1	Correspondence	Brophy, Rachel	27 Mar 2026 9:51am Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 27 March 2026 at 9:51:52 AM - Noted.	27/03/2026
25/03/2026	12.1	Chief Executive Officer - Status Report	Brophy, Rachel	27 Mar 2026 9:51am Seymour, Marion - Completion Completed by Seymour, Marion on behalf of Brophy, Rachel (action officer) on 27 March 2026 at 9:51:59 AM - Noted.	27/03/2026
25/03/2026	12.2	Grants to Community Policy Review	Doyle, Alexis	07 Apr 2026 10:58am Doyle, Alexis - Completion Completed by Doyle, Alexis (action officer) on 07 April 2026 at 10:58:10 AM - Noted and the policy will be updated on SDRC website.	7/04/2026
25/03/2026	13.1	Financial Services - Financial Report as at 28 February 2026	Betts, Melissa	30 Mar 2026 11:17am Betts, Melissa - Completion Completed by Betts, Melissa (action officer) on 30 March 2026 at 11:17:36 AM - February Finance Report Noted	30/03/2026
25/03/2026	13.2	Application for Permanent Road Closure - Adjacent to Lot 15 on RP15589 and Lot 17 on RP15589 - Off Tuckers Road, DANDEROO	Glode, Patrina	14 Apr 2026 11:24am Glode, Patrina - Completion Completed by Glode, Patrina (action officer) on 14 April 2026 at 11:24:48 AM - Part C completed.	14/04/2026
25/03/2026	13.3	Conversion of a State issued Permit to Occupy lease over part of Road Reserve adjoining to Lot 29 on Registered Plan 50123 to Freehold.	Glode, Patrina	14 Apr 2026 11:25am Glode, Patrina - Completion Completed by Glode, Patrina (action officer) on 14 April 2026 at 11:25:07 AM - Department has been notified of the outcome of the meeting.	14/04/2026
25/03/2026	14.1	Fairwill Drive Stormwater Installations & Road Reconstruction, Warwick 26_078	Varughese, James	09 Apr 2026 8:11am Varughese, James Staff completing contract preparation and awarding for contractor and council (principal) sign offs.	9/04/2026



ACTIONS FROM ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 25 MARCH 2026

MEETING DATE	ITEM NO	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION OFFICER	ACTION TO DATE	COMPLETED
				09 Apr 2026 8:13am Varughese, James - Completion Completed by Varughese, James (action officer) on 09 April 2026 at 8:13:26 AM - Staff completing contract preparation and awarding for contractor and council (principal) sign offs.	
25/03/2026	14.2	O'Maras Road, Killarney - Petition	Varughese, James	09 Apr 2026 11:49am Varughese, James - Completion Completed by Varughese, James (action officer) on 09 April 2026 at 11:49:18 AM - Notes the resolution that no further action required as part of the report.	9/04/2026
25/03/2026	15.1	MCU\02702 - 314 Blacksoil Lane, Bony Mountain - Dual Occupancy (Second dwelling)	O'Mara, Angela	01 Apr 2026 10:43am O'Mara, Angela - Completion Completed by O'Mara, Angela (action officer) on 01 April 2026 at 10:43:38 AM - Decision Notice issued.	1/04/2026
25/03/2026	15.2	Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) - Interim LGIP amendment	O'Mara, Angela	01 Apr 2026 10:43am O'Mara, Angela - Completion Completed by O'Mara, Angela (action officer) on 01 April 2026 at 10:43:55 AM - Noted for further action.	1/04/2026

6. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

7. MAYORAL MINUTE

Nil


8. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

9. READING AND CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Correspondence

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Chief Executive Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

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

REPORT

- 1. Minister for Police and Emergency Services to Cr Richters** in response to his correspondence regarding the recent bushfire event which impacted the Karara community (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 2. Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers** in support of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's advocacy for the development and completion of Council's new Local Resilience Action Plan, and recognising Council's continued leadership in disaster preparedness, response and recovery (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 3. Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers** acknowledging Council's correspondence detailing Council's priorities as part of the 2026-2027 State Budget process (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 4. Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers** in relation to the Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline Project and confirming the approved changes in delivery of the project with Seqwater delivering on behalf of the State Government (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

- 5. James Lister MP** providing an update from the Regional Director of Department of Transport and Main Roads regarding the temporary speed signage on the Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway (copy attached).

Action: Noted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Correspondence from Minister for Police and Emergency Services [↓](#)
2. Correspondence from Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers [↓](#)
3. Correspondence from Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers [↓](#)
4. Correspondence from Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers [↓](#)
5. Correspondence from James Lister MP [↓](#)



Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Ref No: C2863 and 2026/2176 LM

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7150
Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

10 MAR 2026

Councillor Joel Richters
Southern Downs Regional Council
joel.Richters@sdr.c.qld.gov.au

Dear Councillor

I refer to your correspondence of 16 February 2026 about the recent bushfire event which impacted the Karara community.

I referred this matter to the Queensland Police Service so that I can be better informed about the issues you have raised.

I am advised Inspector Kelly Hanlen, Warwick District Disaster Coordinator, contacted you on 2 March to discuss your concerns.

I am further advised that the bushfire event in Karara was an agency-led response by Rural Fire Service Queensland and was managed within the capacities of the attending emergency services. Based on the available information, it was determined that a multi-agency review was not required for this event.

Throughout this event, strong communication networks were in operation between responding agencies and the status of the bushfire was subject to ongoing monitoring by representatives from the Southern Downs Local Disaster Management Group and the Warwick District Disaster Management Group.

The Chair of the Southern Downs Local Disaster Management Group also considered the Potential Triggers for Activation as outlined in the Queensland Bushfire Plan and it was determined the incident did not meet the threshold for the activation of the Local Disaster Management Group.

Should your office require further information, Ms Bianca Stone, Chief of Staff, is available on (07) 3719 7150.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Purdie'.

Dan Purdie MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

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

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Our ref: QRATF/26/1265

17 March 2026

Melissa Hamilton
Mayor
Southern Downs Regional Council

Email: melissa.hamilton@sdrc.qld.gov.au

Dear Mayor

Supporting the Development of Local Resilience Action Plans (LRAPs)

I am writing to express my strong support for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's (QRA) previous correspondence advocating for the development and completion of Southern Downs Regional Council new Local Resilience Action Plan (LRAP).

I'd like to firstly acknowledge your Council's continued leadership in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. However, as our State continues to face increasingly complex and frequent disasters, mitigation and preparedness are even more critical to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, as well as the sustainability of local economies.

LRAPs enable councils to identify local risks, prioritise resilience-building initiatives, and access funding opportunities to implement these measures. Importantly, council's LRAP provides visibility to the QRA of your local priorities, helping them to develop targeted funding programs, and ensuring strong alignment with state and national risk and resilience programs.

I understand QRA has developed a comprehensive framework to support councils in preparing their new LRAPs and accurately determining the breadth of projects and scope of funding required. I encourage you to work closely with the QRA team to ensure your plan is tailored to the unique needs of your community. Completion and adoption of your updated LRAP by July 2026 will ensure your council's projects are considered in upcoming resilience funding such as the 2026-27 Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Program.

I greatly appreciate the significant role local governments play in disaster preparedness and recovery, and I commend your ongoing commitment to building safer and more resilient communities.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the QRA or my Chief of Staff, Mr Angus McCaffrey on 0407 073 631 or via email at Angus.McCaffrey@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Yours sincerely

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

1 William Street Brisbane
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Queensland 4001 Australia
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**Minister for Local Government
and Water and Minister for Fire,
Disaster Recovery and Volunteers**

**DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND**



**Queensland
Government**

Our ref: CTS 03474/26

25 MAR 2026

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

Email: melissa.hamilton@sdrcl.qld.gov.au

Dear Councillor Hamilton

Thank you for your letter dated 24 February 2026 outlining the Southern Downs Regional Council's (the council) priorities as part of the 2026–27 State Budget process.

I appreciate the strong case you have put forward for the Warwick Saleyards shelter and for improving water security across the Southern Downs. These are important issues for the local community, and I recognise the role they play in supporting both the region's economy and liveability.

I also acknowledge the council's commitment to the Warwick Saleyards project, including the allocation of \$795,000 from the 2024–27 Works for Queensland program to progress Stage 4.

Thank you for also providing an update on the council's Water Security package submission. I encourage the council to continue working closely with the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) to explore available funding opportunities. This includes the Queensland Government's Residential Activation Fund, with Round 2 now open, as well as other programs such as the National Water Grid Fund which supports projects that improve water access and security.

I am pleased to advise that I will support the consideration of these projects through the State Budget process and in discussions with the Australian Government. However, as you would expect, funding decisions are made by the Queensland Government as a whole and must be balanced against a range of priorities across the state and the local government sector.

In closing I would like to thank you for your ongoing advocacy on behalf of the Southern Downs community and your continued engagement with the department.

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

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

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

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Our ref: CTS 04124/26

27 MAR 2026

Councillor Melissa Hamilton
Mayor
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Website www.qld.gov.au

Dear Councillor Hamilton

Thank you for meeting with me on 19 November 2025 regarding the Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline Project (T2WP). Further to those discussions, I am writing to confirm the approved change in delivery of the T2WP, which Seqwater is delivering on behalf of the Crisafulli Government.

When the T2WP was announced by the former Queensland Government in June 2022, there was a severe drought in Warwick. Since then, investment in water supply and efficiency measures have significantly improved Warwick's water security position and revised water modelling indicates a very low risk of Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) not being able to meet restricted demand in the foreseeable future. Consequently, construction of the full T2WP now would unnecessarily burden Warwick residents with higher water bills through ongoing operation and maintenance costs. This outcome is inconsistent with the Crisafulli Government's commitment to easing cost-of-living pressures.

Therefore, I have decided to stage the delivery of the T2WP. Stage 1 will involve construction of the first 47 kilometres of the pipeline from Toowoomba to Greenmount, with all required approvals and enabling works in place to allow for construction of the remaining 64 kilometres from Greenmount to Warwick, when it is required. The Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (the department) is finalising a formal direction to Seqwater to proceed with the T2WP on this basis.

The department is progressing the necessary work and will collaborate with SDRC to determine an appropriate trigger that will inform a future government decision to construct Stage 2. Upon completion of Stage 2, the T2WP will operate in accordance with the operational arrangements agreed by all stakeholders.

I have approved additional funding to cover the ongoing operation and maintenance cost of SDRC's unused capacity within the T2WP Stage 1 for a period of 10 years. The department will work collaboratively with SDRC on the most appropriate pathway for administering this funding. The funding will be reviewed after 10 years, following consideration of SDRC's water security position and requirements for the T2WP Stage 2.

I understand that since our discussion on 19 November 2025, SDRC officers have raised concerns with the department regarding Southern Downs regions water security in the context of the T2WP staging. I acknowledge these concerns and want to reassure you that drought contingency for the region remains a priority for the Crisafulli Government, and staging of the T2WP does not change our commitment to long term water security for the region.

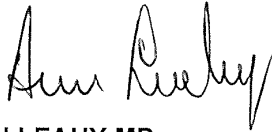
I am also aware you have separately outlined SDRC's priorities for the 2026-27 State Budget to the Honourable David Janetzki MP, Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership. The department will continue to work with SDRC officers to understand the concerns and work with Queensland Treasury to consider what options are available to support SDRC's broader water security objectives.

Additionally, I emphasise the works undertaken by SDRC officers to date remains valuable. Agreements must be progressed as far as possible as part of Stage 1, preferably to an agreement in principle where appropriate, so Stage 2 can be constructed and operational as soon as the trigger is met. Shareholding Ministers are directing Seqwater to progress these and I encourage SDRC to collaborate to ensure Stage 2 can respond efficiently to the potential needs of the region.

In closing I would like to reassure you that the department will continue to work closely and collaboratively with SDRC as the T2WP project progresses. I appreciate SDRC's ongoing engagement and support.

If you have any questions about my advice to you, please contact my office on 0407 073 631 or email Angus.McCaffrey@ministerial.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



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



JAMES LISTER MP

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: P.O. Box 444 STANTHORPE 4380

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

Dear Melissa

Further to my correspondence of 23 January, 2026 regarding temporary speed signage on Cunningham Highway between Cunningham's Gap and the New England Highway. I have now received an additional response from the Regional Director, Department of Transport and Main Roads, who has supplied the following information:-

Following several significant wet weather events in recent years, pavement conditions on this section of the Cunningham Highway have become prone to rapid changes and deterioration. Sudden and unexpected failures are very difficult to predict, making it challenging to provide timely warnings to motorists. TMR is actively managing this issue through increased monitoring, responsive maintenance and, implementation of proactive speed reductions in higher risk locations where failures may be imminent.

Temporary speed reductions that are not directly related to a work site have been recently removed. However, the panels remain in place in readiness for speed reductions to be reinstated quickly, if inclement weather or deteriorating pavement conditions increase the risk to motorists.

As you are aware, the Queensland Government recently announced funding had been allocated for major rehabilitation works on the Cunningham Highway. Design is underway which will include some trial pavement works to find the best pavement treatment for the most deteriorated sections of the Cunningham Highway between Tregony and Gladfield. Major rehabilitation is planned to begin later this year.

The works will focus on rebuilding damaged road surfaces and improving safety for local drivers, freight operators and travellers. Construction will be delivered in stages, with priority given to the worst affected sections.

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The highway has experienced long-term wear from heavy traffic and extreme weather, resulting in rough surfaces, reduced speed limits and safety concerns. The upcoming works aim to provide a safer, smoother and more reliable road and improve resilience along this important regional freight and transport route.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



James Lister MP
Member for Southern Downs

31 March 2026

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10. RECEPTION AND READING OF PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Nil

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: 22 April 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. Portfolio Report - Prosperous Communities [↓](#)



PORTFOLIO REPORT

Mayor Melissa Hamilton

Prosperous Communities: Economic Development, Regional Advocacy, Intergovernmental Relations

PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES – APRIL 2026

ADVOCACY

On 16 March I attended a forum in Toowoomba organised by Trade & Investment Queensland with the Darling Downs and South West Council of Mayors. This was an opportunity to pitch opportunities for trade and investment to the Trade Commissioners of major trading partners including Greater China, South Korea, Taiwan, the Middle East and Africa, South Asia (India), and South-East Asia (Vietnam and Singapore). The forum allowed Southern Downs to showcase investment-ready opportunities within our region and provided a platform to discuss potential investment, present project proposals, and strengthen the profile of our region in key international markets.

On 25-26 March together with Cr Cynthia McDonald I attended the LGAQ Civic Leaders conference in Brisbane. Sessions included the importance of clear communications in disasters and changes under the Local Government (Empowering Councils) Bill. The Director-General of Local Government, Water & Volunteers provided an update on water matters. A briefing on impacts of the Middle East conflict particularly as regards fuel costs provided an opportunity for broad discussion.

On 26-27 March while in Brisbane I took the opportunity to meet with the office of Minister Leahy, with James Lister MP also attending, the office of Minister O’Connor and the office of Minister Watt.

MONTHLY REPORT

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

DATE	WHO/WHERE	DETAILS
02 March 2026	Rose City FM Interview	Warwick
03 March 2026	Ten FM Interview Meeting with HANZA	Stanthorpe
04 March 2026	Zonta Warwick International Women’s Day breakfast Council Information Session	Warwick Warwick

05 March 2026	Shiwa School visit Councillor Strategic Session 4WK Interview Killarney Historical Society – Grant Funding Acknowledgement	Stanthorpe Warwick Warwick Killarney
06 March 2026	Greenlands State School Leadership Presentation Meeting with Darling Downs Health Constituent meeting	Greenlands Warwick Warwick
07 March 2026	International Women’s Day Afternoon Tea	Allora
09 March 2026	Karara Hall Bushfire Community Drop-in Meeting Royal Historical Society of Qld re Commemoration of 200th Anniversary of Allan Cunningham’s exploration of the Darling Downs	Karara Warwick
10 March 2026	Guest Speaker Blue EDGE Program	Stanthorpe
11 March 2026	Council Information Session Meeting Stanthorpe Swimming Club	Stanthorpe Stanthorpe
12 March 2026	Triple M Interview 4WK Interview	Phone Phone
14 March 2026	Orion International Film Festival – Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery	Stanthorpe
15 March 2026	Centenary Mass at St Mary’s Warwick Centenary Celebrations Darling Downs Heavy Horse Festival Opening the Life & Rhymes of Banjo Paterson Show	Warwick Allora Allora
16 March 2026	Trade and Investment Queensland Investment Forum Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers Webinar	Toowoomba Virtual
17 March 2026	Stanthorpe Meals on Wheels – Annual volunteer thank you lunch Meeting Stanthorpe RSL Sub-branch Granite Belt Business Excellence Awards launch	Stanthorpe Stanthorpe Stanthorpe
18 March 2026	Citizenship Ceremony LDMG Exercise	Warwick Warwick
19 March 2026	LDMG Meeting Meeting GIVIT Constituent meetings x 3 4WK Interview	Warwick Virtual Warwick Phone
20 March 2026	President’s morning tea – Warwick Show Official Opening Ceremony – Warwick Show	Warwick
22 March 2026	Killarney Platypus Watch and volunteer breakfast	Killarney
23 March 2026	Audit & Risk Management meeting	Warwick




24 March 2026	Dalveen Community Wellness Day	Dalveen
25 March 2026	Ordinary Council Meeting LGAQ Civic Leaders Summit – Day 1	Warwick Brisbane
26 March 2026	LGAQ Civic Leaders Summit – Day 2 Meeting with Office of Minister Leahy and James Lister MP Meeting with Office of Minister O’Connor Meeting with Sunwater	Brisbane Brisbane Brisbane Brisbane
27 March 2026	Meeting with Office of Senator Watt	Brisbane
30 March 2026	Meeting with CUC Southern Downs Rose City FM Interview	Warwick Warwick
31 March 2026	Meeting with Chair of Stanthorpe Shire River Improvement Trust 4WK Interview Ten FM Interview	Stanthorpe Phone Stanthorpe



11.2 Portfolio Report - Cr Harslett - Inspired Communities

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Research and Advocacy Support Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council's Inspired Communities Portfolio Report be received.

REPORT

Cr Harslett has submitted a Portfolio Report providing an update on Inspired Communities.

Attached is a copy of the Portfolio Report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Portfolio Report - Inspired Communities [↓](#)



Inspired Portfolio Report – Cr Morwenna Harslett

Civic Events

Councillors are required, under Section 12 of the Local Government Act, to represent the current and future interests of their community, achieve its corporate plan and provide high quality leadership. When performing a responsibility, a councillor must serve the overall public interest of the whole local government area. The mayor, or councillor(s) on behalf of the mayor, must also represent the SDRC at ceremonial and civic functions. Included below is a list of ceremonial and civic events and initiatives which various councillors have attended, participated in and presided over this year. For those events that are central to the delivery of our corporate plan, media releases have also been included in further detail.

Australia Day 2026

The Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards were held in Allora, celebrating outstanding community contributions and welcoming new citizens to the Southern Downs. Media release attached.

Citizenship Ceremonies

In addition to 23 new Australian citizens welcomed to the Southern Downs on 26th January in Allora, 21 people from New Zealand, Fiji, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam, China and USA became Australians on 18th March at Warwick Town Hall as part of our Harmony Week celebrations. Media release attached.

ANZAC Day 2026

Communities across the region will come together to commemorate ANZAC Day, honouring the service and sacrifice of Australians who have served in conflicts worldwide. Media release attached.

SDRC Support and Participation in Community Events in 2026 in addition to the core council initiatives listed above.

Council continues to support a wide range of community events and initiatives across the region, including:



- Regional agricultural shows in Stanthorpe, Allora, Killarney and Warwick
- School leadership badge presentations
- Stanthorpe RSL 100th anniversary commemoration of Stanthorpe Soldier's Memorial
- Warwick Chamber of Commerce Local Business Excellence Awards
- Dalveen WWI Virtual Memorial launch
- Sister School visit from Shiwa, Japan
- Community greening initiatives by Killarney & District Historical Society
- International Women's Day events across the region
- Centenary of St Mary of the Assumption Church, Warwick
- Darling Downs Heavy Horse Festival, Allora
- Harmony Week celebrations across the region
- Stanthorpe Meals on Wheels volunteer appreciation luncheon
- Women Who Weld program at Stanthorpe State High School
- Sunflower Day awareness activities
- Dalveen Community Wellness Day
- Youth Week 2026, including WarwickCon hosted by Headspace Warwick



Civic Programs

Changes to Community Grant Funding

During last month's OCM, councillors resolved changes to community funding streams. The intention of these changes is to make the process of seeking council funding more equitable and transparent. Media release attached.

Southern Downs Youth Council 2026

The 2026 Southern Downs Youth Council is now well underway, with students representing nine secondary schools across the region. The program provides Year 10 students with valuable insight into local government processes while empowering them to contribute to decision-making within their communities.

Two sessions have been delivered to date: the first at Stanthorpe Civic Centre in February, and the second at Warwick Town Hall in March. Both sessions were facilitated by Peer Power and focused on team building, leadership development, and recognising the importance of youth voices in shaping the region's future.

Current Youth Councillors were joined by participants from the 2025 cohort, who shared their experiences and formally handed over to the new group. This also provided an opportunity to revisit and assess previous project proposals for potential continuation. During the second session, students began developing new ideas and identifying priorities they would like to progress throughout the year.



SDRC Youth Waste Conference

In February 16 environmentally engaged students from Dalveen State School, St Joseph's School and Warwick State High School participated in the inaugural SDRC Youth Waste Conference.

The conference provided an opportunity for students to connect with peers, showcase waste reduction initiatives within their schools, and collaborate on innovative strategies to reduce and divert waste from landfill. Participants also toured the Warwick Waste Management Facility and the Endeavour Foundation Tip Shop, gaining valuable insight into waste sorting, processing, and reuse practices.



Council Services and Facilities

SDRC Libraries - Warwick, Stanthorpe & Allora

Public Programs:

- School Holiday Storytime events featuring children’s author Rory H. Mather were held in Allora, Warwick, and Stanthorpe.

	23/24 FY	24/25 FY
Members	9,715	12,373
Visitors	51,639	84,975
Loans	139,551	197,89
Total Physical collection	78,721	85,365
Program attendees	2,441	4,643
Activity packs distributed	1,413	2,659
Online interactions	NA	8,945
Catalogue visits	26,294	29,261

Some of the year-on-year growth can be attributed to Stanthorpe returning to full operational capacity and Allora renovations offering more capacity for programs, and this growth is forecast to continue with library memberships for FY26 already sitting above the total for FY25 at 13,802.

SDRC Art Galleries in 2026

Warwick Art Gallery

Exhibitions:

- *Mestiza/Mestizo* – Mark Klein (14 January – 21 February)
- *Side By Wonder: Children in Conversation* (30 January – 7 March)
- *Cloud B#3* – Guan Wei (from 13 March)
- *Furari Flores* – Cara-Ann Simpson (28 February – 11 April)
- *Breathing Fire* – Anna Louise Hayden Freya (12 March – 18 April)
- *Everyday Abstractions* – Wayne Budge & Julie Sisco (16 April – 23 May)

Upcoming:

- *Ceramics: Earth in Motion* – Warwick Potters Association (23 April – 30 May)
- *Twist & Shout: Dance Music through the Centuries* – Southern Downs String Ensemble (2 May)
- *The Mistletoe Waltz* – Rosie Lloyd Giblett (4 June – 11 July)
- *Drawn Together: Portraits of QLD Homes* (4 June – 11 July)
- *Models of QLD Homes* – Shane Donnelly (4 June – 11 July)

Public Programs:

- In Conversation with Mark Klein (17 January)



- Engaging with Art with Leonie Hart (17 March)
- Art in the Garden (10–11 April), in partnership with the Children’s Hospital Foundation

Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery

Exhibitions:

- *Local Art Prize 2026* (30 January – 15 March)
- *Coming Home* – Loyd Garwura Hornsby (19 March – 17 May)
- *Together We Stand* – Juanita Faint & Kat Thorpe (19 March – 17 May)

Upcoming:

- *Twist & Shout: Dance Music through the Centuries* – Southern Downs String Ensemble (3 May)
- *Stanthorpe National Art Prize* (12 June – 23 August)

Public Programs:

- Book launch by children’s author Cynthia Collins (21 February)
- Ensemble Q Concert (22 February)
- Natalee McCosker Piano Recital (28 February)
- Apple & Grape Ambassador Event (6 March)
- Workshop in the Park with Belinda Jamieson (7–8 March)
- In Conversation with Lloyd Garwura Hornsby (11 April)

Ongoing programs include Yarnies Fibre Group (weekly), Sustainable Stitching Group (fortnightly), and volunteer and student training initiatives supporting local capacity building and education pathways with Granite Belt Support Services and Stanthorpe State High School.





SOUTHERN DOWNS CELEBRATES COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AND NEW CITIZENS AT AUSTRALIA DAY CEREMONY

27 January 2026

Southern Downs Regional Council is proud to announce the 2026 Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Award recipients, with Warwick's Nerissa 'Noo' Shepherd taking out the top honours for her outstanding commitment to strengthening community wellbeing.

James Henry was named as the Southern Downs Young Citizen of the Year, in recognition of his outstanding leadership and volunteer work across the region.

Alongside the six award recipients, Council also warmly welcomed 24 new Australian citizens at the official Australia Day citizenship ceremony in Allora.

The new citizens are from Philippines, India, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Taiwan, Brazil, Spain, United States and El Salvador.

This year's event brought the community together to reflect on our shared story, respect the diversity of the people who shape our region, and celebrate the individuals who go above and beyond to make the Southern Downs a vibrant and connected community.

The 2026 Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Award recipients are:

- Citizen of the Year Award: *Nerissa Shepherd*
- Highly Commended Citizen of the Year Certificate: *Michelle Feenan*
- Young Citizen of the Year Award: *James Henry*
- Sportsperson or Sports Administrator of the Year Award: *Gregory Ryan*
- Cultural Citizen of the Year Award: *Maria De Vries*
- Community Event of the Year Award: *Bridal Extravaganza & High Tea organised by the Allora and District Historical Society Inc.*

Southern Downs Mayor Melissa Hamilton said this year's award recipients exemplify the spirit of generosity, leadership and community pride that defines the region.

"What makes the Southern Downs remarkable isn't just our picturesque landscapes, award winning wines and iconic events — it's also our people," Mayor Hamilton said.

"Australia Day is our opportunity to recognise the volunteers who strengthen our community simply by showing up for others, and to also welcome new citizens who chose to call the Southern Downs home.

"Today's ceremony is a reminder that our community is always growing, always learning and always becoming stronger.

"Congratulations to our award winners, to all those who received a nomination and our new citizens. Every person recognised here today helps shape the future of the Southern Downs."

Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Nerissa ‘Noo’ Shepherd has driven programs such as school breakfast and lunch support, senior wellness activities, intergenerational partnerships and large-scale community events that foster connection and inclusion.

A passionate advocate shaped by her own lived experience, Ms Shepherd continues to champion initiatives that ensure no one in the community is left behind.

“Community isn’t just something I support – it’s at the heart of everything I do,” Ms Shepherd said.

“I grew up with very little, and that shaped a lifelong passion for giving back and improving the lives of those around me,” she said.

Portfolio Councillor for Inspired Communities Cr Morwenna Harslett said the Australia Day ceremony is a celebration of connection.

“When families, friends and newcomers gather side by side, you can feel the pride and warmth that make the Southern Downs such a special place to live,” Cr Harslett said.

“Today we celebrate the people who roll up their sleeves, lend a hand and quietly make life better for those around them. These are the stories worth sharing and celebrating.”

For all the latest Council news and information, download the ‘My SDRC’ App or visit www.sdrc.qld.gov.au. Alternatively, call 1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372) or email mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au.

Award Recipient Biographies

Southern Downs Citizen of the Year 2026 – Nerissa ‘Noo’ Shepherd

Nerissa Shepherd, or Noo as she prefers to be called, has been awarded the *Southern Downs Citizen of the Year 2026* for her outstanding commitment to strengthening community wellbeing through initiatives that support local schools, seniors, families, and vulnerable residents across Warwick. Her leadership has driven programs such as school breakfast and lunch support, senior wellness activities, intergenerational partnerships, and large-scale community events that foster connection and inclusion. A passionate advocate shaped by her own lived experience, she continues to champion initiatives that ensure no one in the community is left behind.

Southern Downs Young Citizen of the Year 2026 – James Henry

James Henry has been awarded the *Southern Downs Young Citizen of the Year 2026* award, in recognition of his outstanding leadership, community service, and dedication to supporting others across the region. His achievements include volunteer work with the Warwick Community Van, leadership roles at Warwick State High School, service on the Southern Downs Youth Council, and significant contributions to the pharmacy student sector through state and national committees. Now studying a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) at the University of Queensland, he continues to give back through mentoring, ambassador roles, and his recent appointment as a Justice of the Peace (Qualified).

Southern Downs Cultural Citizen of the Year 2026 – Maria De Vries

Maria De Vries has been awarded the *2026 Cultural Citizen of the Year Award* in recognition of more than 30 years of cultural leadership, education, and advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Southern Downs. Her contributions include establishing and chairing the Granite Belt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, leading annual NAIDOC celebrations, delivering arts and cultural programs for local children and adults, and sharing her Gamilaroi identity through widely recognised art practice. Maria’s work has fostered

greater understanding, strengthened community relationships, and created safe, inclusive spaces where First Nations people feel seen, valued, and connected.

Community Event of the Year 2026 - Bridal Extravaganza & High Tea, presented by the Allora and District Historical Society

The Allora and District Historical Society has been awarded the *Southern Downs Community Event of the Year* award for their 2025 Bridal Extravaganza & High Tea held on 11 October – a vibrant celebration that brought residents and visitors together to honour more than a century of local bridal fashion and community history. Delivered entirely by dedicated volunteers, the event not only created a joyful shared experience but also raised significant funds toward relocating and unifying Allora’s historic Court House and Nevilton School buildings. This initiative reflects the Society’s long-standing commitment to preserving local heritage, fostering community pride, and supporting tourism in the region.

Sportsperson or Sports Administrator of the Year 2026 - Gregory Ryan

Gregory Ryan has been honoured as the 2026 *Sportsperson or Sports Administrator of the Year* for his extraordinary three decades of service to the Warwick Gymnastic Club and the wider community. A long-time senior coach, mentor, and volunteer, Greg has been instrumental in growing the club from 70 to over 200 members per term, expanding programs for children, adults, and seniors, and ensuring high-quality coaching and facilities for local athletes. His dedication to the sport—and to the wellbeing of local families—has created opportunities, strengthened community connections, and brought significant economic and social benefits to the region through events, competitions, and partnerships.

In recognition for being Highly Commended in the Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards 2026 – Michelle Feenan

Michelle Feenan has been awarded a *Highly Commended* certificate for the 2026 Citizen of the Year Awards, for her outstanding leadership in securing the future of the Queensland College of Wine Tourism and her extensive contributions to the Granite Belt community. As President of the Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce, Michelle united community groups, industry leaders, government representatives, and local organisations to deliver a successful bid that kept the facility open and revitalised it with a renewed purpose. Her broader influence spans more than 30 years of community development work, ongoing support for local tourism operators, and strategic contributions to economic and regional planning across Queensland.

Recognised for receiving a nomination in the Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards 2026:

- Dr Leith Geisel
- Rodney Kelly
- Robert Reid
- Andrew Freebody
- Barbara Bowyer
- Carolyn Vardy
- Jennifer Rauchle
- Neil Burtenshaw
- Sarah Puglisi
- Kelvin Johnston



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SOUTHERN DOWNS WELCOMES NEW AUSSIES DURING HARMONY WEEK

16 March 2026

Twenty-one people from New Zealand, Fiji, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam, China and the United States will become the region's newest Australian citizens during a special citizenship ceremony at Warwick Town Hall to celebrate Harmony Week (Monday 16 – Sunday 22 March 2026).

Harmony Week is an annual Australian celebration of cultural diversity, inclusiveness and belonging, and Southern Downs Mayor Melissa Hamilton said the citizenship ceremony's timing is a fitting celebration of the 2026 theme *Everyone Belongs* as it reflects the region's proud heritage and spirit.

"On the Southern Downs, everyone belongs. This ceremony is a reminder that our cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and our community is better because of it," Mayor Hamilton said.

"Our newest citizens bring valuable skills, experiences and cultural traditions to our region. Their hard work and participation in community life help build a more vibrant Southern Downs, as we come together to celebrate Australia's multicultural society."

At the ceremony on Wednesday 18 March, each conferee will receive their citizenship certificate, a native Australian plant and a commemorative coin as gifts to acknowledge the shared values that unite Australians from all backgrounds.

Council will host a welcome morning tea featuring classic Australian favourites such as lamingtons, meat pies, scones and quiche following the ceremony.

Media are invited to attend the event as the region welcomes its newest citizens and celebrates the diverse stories, cultures and experiences they bring to the Southern Downs.

Event details

WHAT: 21 new Australian citizens at Citizenship Ceremony

WHEN: Wednesday 18 March, 8:45am for 9am start

WHERE: Warwick Town Hall

RSVP: Tuesday 17 March to danielle.cassels@sdrc.qld.gov.au

For all the latest Council news and information, download the 'My SDRC' App or visit www.sdrc.qld.gov.au. Alternatively, call 1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372) or email mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au.



ANZAC DAY: REMEMBERING SERVICE, SACRIFICE AND SPIRIT

10 April 2026

ANZAC Day provides an opportunity for communities across the Southern Downs to come together in solemn reflection to honour the service, sacrifice and ANZAC spirit of the men and women who have served Australia in times of war, conflict and peacekeeping.

Southern Downs Regional Council is proud to work with the RSL Sub-Branches and community groups to support a range of commemorative services on 25 April for residents to pay their respects and acknowledge the enduring legacy of Australia's past and present veterans.

In line with this year's national ANZAC Day theme, **Women in Service**, Council is supporting the Warwick and Stanthorpe RSL Sub-Branches' efforts to celebrate the contribution of women in service, encouraging female defence force personnel to connect with the Sub-Branches, which are overseeing arrangements to ensure women are represented and recognised in the annual march.

In the lead-up to ANZAC Day, Mayor Melissa Hamilton and Councillors share their reflections on the significance of the day and its continuing meaning for the Southern Downs community.

Mayor Melissa Hamilton: *"On ANZAC Day we respond to the ode committing to 'remember them'. But ANZAC Day is not just about memories or rituals. It is about actively building connections to those who served and who serve today, their families and friends and the histories they hold and pass on. We do this together to pass the torch to future generations so that they can understand, through those human connections, the true value of the political freedoms that were hard won through the sacrifices of those who came before them."*

Deputy Mayor Sheryl Windle: *"The significance of ANZAC Day has seen a steady increase in attendance at services over the past decade. It is pleasing to see that the interest has particularly increased in younger people. They are very interested in hearing the stories from veterans, and in attending services. They are aware of the sacrifices which were made by Australians and their families in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. ANZAC Day provides young people an opportunity to come together with people of all ages and from all walks of life. It is an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices that were made, and to pay their respects to those who are still serving, those who gave their lives in combat and the families who made sacrifices."*

Councillor Sarah Deane: *"ANZAC Day allows us to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who served, and to recognise the impact that legacy still has on our communities today. Lest we forget."*

Councillor Morwenna Harslett: *"ANZAC Day is not only a time to remember the well-known chapters of our military history, but also to honour those Australians whose service has too often gone unrecognised. From foreign conflicts to frontier conflicts here at home—now increasingly acknowledged as the Australian Wars—we reflect on all who have served, suffered and sacrificed. We also recognise those who remained on the home front during*

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times of war, whose resilience, labour and sacrifice kept our nation strong. In particular, the contributions of women—so often overlooked—were vital in sustaining families, communities and the broader war effort. They too are heroes of our national story. Here in the Southern Downs, we are proud of our strong sense of community and remembrance. We honour the service and sacrifice of local men and women and acknowledge the generations who have carried that legacy forward. Their stories, whether widely told or long overlooked, form part of the full and honest story of our nation. We stand in respect, gratitude, and remembrance for every one of them.”

Councillor Cynthia McDonald: *“The RSL has designated this year’s theme for ANZAC Day to celebrate the sacrifices of women who have served in Australia’s Military and Defence Forces. As a former serving member, I am proud to see that the RSL and Australian public are formally celebrating those brave women who served beside our soldiers, sailors and airmen throughout the wars and conflicts that Australia has been involved in since Federation. ANZAC Day is a deeply personal event for those who have served and for those families that have suffered loss, separation and the stress of having a loved one deployed into a combat zone or on a humanitarian mission. I therefore provide my personal thanks to all those that have served, whether in operations or war, whether through peacetime regular or reserve service or as a cadet in all three services and their families for their patriotism and sacrifice. During this time of uncertainty and conflict in the Middle East and Europe, it is timely to reflect upon our Government’s responsibility under the Constitution to provide adequate defence forces to protect the States of Australia. I would call upon all Australians to reiterate to our Federal representatives that the necessary resources are provided for our current service personnel to adequately defend our culture and way of life. To me, this is the primary and most important role of our Federal Government.”*

Councillor Russell Wantling: *“ANZAC Day is deeply personal to me, as my grandfather served in World War I and returned home to a soldier settler block in Amiens, as did many others of his generation who helped to build much of our region from the ground up. Their stories reflect the sacrifice, resilience and quiet strength that define the ANZAC spirit, and why it must never be forgotten.”*

Lest we forget.

Visit <https://www.sdrc.qld.gov.au/our-region/explore-southern-downs/events-and-festivals/2026-anzac-day-services> for a comprehensive list of events across the region.

For all the latest Council news and information, download the ‘My SDRC’ App or visit www.sdrc.qld.gov.au. Alternatively, call 1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372) or email mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au.



COUNCIL REVAMPS COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUNDING PROGRAM

25 March 2026

Applying for a community grant is now easier, fairer and provides greater accountability of ratepayers' funds, after Southern Downs Regional Council today launched a revamped program to better support applicants.

The new, updated framework for the Community Grants and Event Sponsorship Programs is designed to help everyone from organisers of small, volunteer-run organisations to major event co-ordinators.

The revamped assessment process includes weighting criteria designed to foster equity and inclusion with greater clarity for event organisers with the introduction of four sponsorship tiers.

Mayor Melissa Hamilton said the changes reflect Council's commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive and well-supported community and ensure funding is shared more equitably.

"Projects championed by local groups and event organisers play a vital role in making the Southern Downs such an active, connected and resilient region," Mayor Hamilton said.

"These changes give our community more certainty, more opportunity and a fairer, more transparent process.

"We want to ensure every group, regardless of size, has the support they need to make a positive impact in delivering projects which benefit the community."

Portfolio Councillor for Inspired Communities Cr Morwenna Harslett said the revised framework recognises the importance of supporting creativity at all levels.

"Creative projects play a vital role in telling our local stories, strengthening community identity and bringing people together," Cr Harslett said.

"These improvements make it easier for artists, makers, creative groups and even sporting organisations to access funding, particularly for smaller or emerging projects that might not have applied in the past.

"By creating clearer pathways and fairer access, Council is investing in the creative energy that makes the Southern Downs such a vibrant and inspiring place to live."

Under the revised **Community Grants Program**, Council will now offer three distinct funding categories: Community Grants up to \$2,000; Minor Grants up to \$500; and Olympic and Paralympic Pathway Grants up to \$750.

Applications will be offered twice a year and can be submitted through the SmartyGrants online portal.

The **Event Sponsorship Program** has also undergone a major overhaul, introducing four funding tiers: Community Events, Regional Events, Signature Events and Hallmark Events, with support ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Hallmark Events will be supported through a three-year funding program, providing greater certainty for organisers and allowing events the time and stability needed to grow and become financially independent.

Two funding rounds will be held each year in August and February, and again, applications will be managed through the SmartyGrants system.

Mayor Melissa Hamilton said the new structure would support both established and emerging events while giving organisers clearer timelines for planning.

“Our region is home to extraordinary events which draw visitors from near and far, and we want to build on that reputation,” Mayor Hamilton said.

“This updated framework provides certainty for event organisers, a streamlined process and enables Council to support a greater variety of events which contribute to our visitor economy and community life.”

Council has also introduced a new **Strategic Industry Association Collaboration** funding stream, offering three-year funding agreements of up to \$50,000 per year to industry associations. The funding is designed to support economic development initiatives that respond to the needs of the Southern Downs region and align with relevant state and federal strategies.

More information will soon be available on Council’s website.

For the latest Council news and information: ‘My SDRC’ App or www.sdrc.qld.gov.au.
Phone: 1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372) Email: mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au.




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12. EXECUTIVE SERVICES REPORTS

12.1 Chief Executive Officer - Status Report

Document Information

	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 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 25 March 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 Bartley	8.2 Notice of Motion – Murphys Crossing Road	Is it only Council who has authority to open roads that have previously been closed?	<p>In Queensland, the authority to open a closed road depends on whether the road is a state-controlled road (e.g. highway/freeway) or a local government road, and whether the closure is for emergency, operational, or legal (permanent) reasons.</p> <p>1. State-Controlled Roads (Highways/Major Roads)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR): Responsible for managing state-controlled roads under the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. TMR reopens state roads following inspections by authorised officers. Queensland Police Service (QPS): Officers have the authority under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to close and reopen state-controlled roads, particularly in emergency situations or as first

			<p>responders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors/RoadTek: If a contract is in place (e.g., Road Maintenance Performance Contract), contractors or local councils acting on behalf of TMR can reopen state roads, provided TMR is notified. <p>2. Local Government Roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Council: Local councils are responsible for the management of dedicated roads in their area under the Local Government Act 2009. They have the authority to open/close roads for construction, maintenance, or temporary events. <p>3. Legal/Permanent Road Closures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Resources (formerly Land Act 1994 administration): Permanent or long-term temporary closures under the Land Act 1994 are managed by the Department of Resources. Councils are one of the parties that the State will engage with to understand any views or requirements (This is the typical road closure request that Governance takes to Council) Simultaneous Opening/Closing: If a road is being reopened as part of a realignment, the Department of Resources handles this process under the Land Act 1994, typically with Council actively involved. <p>4. Temporary Closures (Events/Construction)</p> <p>QPS and Council: For events like street parties or construction, approval/permit must first be obtained from the local council, followed by approval from the Queensland Police Service</p>
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2. Other Business


Nil

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

12.2 Local Resilience Action Plan

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Disaster Management Coordinator	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the amended Southern Downs Local Resilience Action Plan (“LRAP”), which includes the following projects:

- Southern Downs Multi-Purpose Community & Emergency Coordination Centre (Dual-Use Facility)
- SDRC Stanthorpe Depot Relocation Project
- Community Resilience and Recovery Coordinator Project
- SDRC Flood Signage Renewal Project
- Causeway Betterment Projects
- Variable Message Board Establishment Project
- Alternate Community Emergency Messaging
- Evacuation Centre Renewal Project - Design
- Evacuation Centre Renewal Project - WIRAC
- Warwick Airstrip Pavement Upgrade Project
- Stanthorpe Airstrip Pavement Upgrade Project
- Warwick and Stanthorpe Airstrip Water Access Upgrade Project
- Drone Capability Project
- Stanthorpe Joint SES/RFS Facility Upgrade Project
- Carnarvon Bridge Betterment Project
- Warwick Reservoir Upgrade
- Raising of Dwelling houses in the Flood hazard overlay
- Flood-resilient upgrade to Community Housing
- Enviromon Replacement
- OO Madsen Bridge Betterment Project
- Warwick RFS Facility Upgrade Project
- Warwick Hospital Helipad Upgrade Project

REPORT

Background

The Local Resilience Action Plan (“LRAP”) is a strategic tool that captures and prioritises resilience-building projects based on local needs, aligns them with broader strategies, and provides a pathway to seek and secure resilience funding.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (“QRA”) recently redesigned the template that had local projects listed, which now requires Council to submit an amended version.

Report

The LRAP is a living document that can be updated annually. However, Council may choose to update the LRAP more frequently to reflect changing priorities.

The benefits of an LRAP include:

- Clearer demonstration of how local priorities align with State and Federal priorities, including linkages to the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience (QSDR).
- Improved accuracy and reliability of information.
- Usable and transferable dataset with improved functionality.
- Centralised and consistent data capture across all Councils.
- Streamlined process reducing administration burden for Councils.
- Greater confidence for decision makers across Councils and the QRA.

Conclusion/Summary

The LRAP, excluding the Warwick Hospital helipad Upgrade Project that has now been included, has been endorsed by the Local Disaster Management Group (“LDMG”) at its meeting on 19 March 2026. Council must now consider the list of projects and endorse for submission to the QRA by June 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

If Council does not submit an LRAP, it risks not being eligible for grant funding to complete those projects listed.

Opportunity

The intent of LRAPs is to provide visibility of each LGA’s priorities to the State. This ensures that funding decisions are made in an informed and equitable manner, aligned with strategic priorities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Executive Leadership Team
Senior Leadership Team
Councillor Information Session on 8 April 2026

External Consultation

Local Disaster Management Group on 19 March 2026

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Nil

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

13. CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS

13.1 Financial Services - Financial Report as at 31 March 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Management Accountant	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

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

REPORT

Background

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

Report

Income Statement

Revenue

YTD operational revenue of \$111.1M is \$5.6M more than budget with the following increases:

- Grants & Subsidies are currently \$1.4M more than budget due to the receipt of emergency funding not originally budgeted and the timing of the receipt of grants.
- \$0.9M 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.
- \$0.97M increase in fees and charges due to additional \$0.23M in waste disposal fees, \$0.44M in application fees, \$0.17M increase in saleyards revenue and \$0.08M in cemetery fees
- \$0.6M in interest revenue due to a larger cash balance than originally budgeted.
- The balance of \$1.7M is comprised of small items.

Expenses

YTD operating expenses of \$91M reflect a \$5.9M unfavorable variance, driven by a combination of timing differences and updated cost forecasts. The key increases in expenses are:

- \$2.6M in Material and Services because of additional work undertaken for TMR and works related to unbudgeted emergency work. These costs have been funded by either TMR or grants. Invoices for these works will be sent out in due course.
- Higher employee expenses resulted from several factors, including higher-than-anticipated enterprise bargaining increases, greater than anticipated road maintenance works

undertaken on behalf of, and funded by TMR. These figures are reflected in the 2026 Forecast.

- \$0.5M 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 \$1.9M more than budget due to property being donated to Council (contributed asset) as part of development obligations.

Balance Sheet

Cash and Loans

As at 31 March 2026, Council had \$92.7M in cash at bank and investments, of which approximately \$65.9M is unrestricted cash. The total of outstanding loans, both the current and non-current, is \$8.8M, this is \$6.2M 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.

Capital Works in Progress

Capital works expenditure as at 31 March 2026 was \$35.2M which is 50.4% of the approved capital works budget of \$69.8M. There is a further \$18.7M in committed costs, meaning \$53.9M has been spent or committed, representing 77.2% of the adopted budget. In comparison to last year, at this stage Council had spent or committed 52.6% 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 March 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.

There is an emerging risk concerning the impact of higher diesel prices and supply affecting Council's budget and operations. At this stage the diesel actual spend is \$100k over Council's diesel budget year to date. Council will continue monitoring the situation and will determine what actions need to be taken as needed.

The unleaded fuel spend is not affected at this stage.

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. March 2026 Finance Report [↓](#)



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Performance Report

March 2026

Southern Downs Regional Council Income Statement March 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	45,511,948	45,106,800	405,148	0.9%		45,105,550	41,833,000
Rural fire brigade levy	285,188	283,570	1,618	0.6%		283,570	283,570
Utility Rates and Charges	37,032,161	36,564,838	467,323	1.3%	1	36,564,838	40,163,566
Less Discounts	(2,650,403)	(2,665,171)	14,768	(0.6%)		(2,665,171)	(2,665,171)
Rates on Council properties	(857,587)	(734,752)	(122,835)	16.7%		(880,294)	(880,294)
	79,321,307	78,555,285	766,022	0.98%		78,408,493	78,734,671
Fees and Charges	7,684,728	6,711,842	972,886	14.5%	2	8,817,955	9,132,515
Interest	3,225,064	2,642,818	582,246	22.0%	3	3,531,824	4,131,824
Contract & Sales Revenue	1,940,188	1,007,693	932,495	92.5%	4	2,264,716	3,555,642
Rent and Other Income	1,019,964	970,424	49,540	5.1%		1,320,766	1,521,866
Government Grants and Subsidies	7,658,317	6,229,859	1,428,458	22.9%	5	11,595,126	12,991,390
Internal Revenue	10,254,529	9,420,261	834,267	8.9%		12,560,348	12,560,348
Total Operating Revenue	111,104,097	105,538,182	5,565,914	5.3%		118,499,229	122,628,256
Expenses from ordinary activities							
Employee Costs	26,688,477	24,771,549	1,916,927	7.7%	6	32,126,684	34,736,677
Materials and Services	35,433,496	32,841,696	2,591,800	7.9%	7	47,852,158	48,820,335
Depreciation and Amortisation	19,531,499	18,688,167	843,332	4.5%	8	26,643,546	26,643,546
Plant Hire	4,357,345	3,890,957	466,387	12.0%	9	5,078,440	5,078,440
Finance Costs	564,057	493,859	70,198	14.2%		863,319	837,605
Internal Charges	4,486,453	4,486,431	22	0.0%		5,981,908	5,981,908
Total Operating Expenses	91,061,325	85,172,659	5,888,666	6.9%		118,546,055	122,098,511
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before capital items	20,042,771	20,365,523	(322,752)	(1.58%)		(46,827)	529,745
Other Capital Amounts							
Capital Grants, Contributions and Donations	12,418,681	10,522,749	1,895,932	18.0%	10	14,029,433	14,029,433
Other capital income and (expenses)	(713,754)	830,250	(1,544,004)	(186.0%)	11	(4,271,000)	(4,271,000)
Net Result Surplus/(Deficit)	31,747,698	31,718,522	29,176	0.1%		9,711,606	10,288,178

Note 1: Utility charges higher than budget due to sewerage rates \$210K and water access \$161K

Note 2: Fees and Charges above budget due to Waste Disposal Fees \$162K, Application Fees \$397K and Cattle Sales Fees \$167K

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: Higher employee expenses resulted from several factors, including, higher-than-anticipated enterprise bargaining increases. These figures have been reconciled and are fully reflected in the 2026 Forecast

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

Note 8: Depreciation higher than budget due to upgrade of new plant being depreciated, replacing old equipment previously fully expensed

Note 9: Internal Plant Hire charges review resulted in an increase, due to ensuring all plant items are charged plant hire fees

Note 10: Capital Grants currently above budget due to donated assets not accounted for in budget

Note 11: Other Capital Income and (expenses) under budget due to disposal of fleet

Southern Downs Regional Council Balance Sheet

March 2026

	Phased 2026 YTD Actual \$	Annual 2026 Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	YTD Variance %
Current Assets				
Cash assets & Investments	92,698,891	87,589,000	5,109,891	5.8%
Receivables	11,079,061	11,872,000	(792,939)	(6.7%)
Assets held for sale	-	160,000	(160,000)	(100.0%)
Inventories	1,226,327	1,138,000	88,327	7.8%
	105,004,279	100,759,000	4,245,279	4.2%
Non-Current Assets				
Investment Property	363,900	364,000	(100)	(0.0%)
Property, plant and equipment	1,001,710,125	1,027,804,000	(26,093,875)	(2.5%)
Other Financial Assets	121,758	136,000	(14,242)	(10.5%)
Capital works in progress	45,810,557	15,000,000	30,810,557	205.4%
Intangible Assets	74,906	88,000	(13,094)	(14.9%)
	1,048,081,246	1,043,392,000	4,689,246	0.4%
TOTAL ASSETS	1,153,085,525	1,144,151,000	8,934,525	0.8%
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and other payables	8,961,385	15,318,000	(6,356,615)	(41.5%)
Provisions	8,999,526	9,119,000	(119,474)	(1.3%)
Interest bearing liabilities	2,098,379	2,367,000	(268,621)	(11.3%)
	20,059,290	26,804,000	(6,744,710)	(25.2%)
Non-Current Liabilities				
Interest bearing liabilities	6,716,442	12,615,000	(5,898,558)	(46.8%)
Provisions	15,527,380	15,155,000	372,380	2.5%
Other Payables	1,680,467	1,671,000	9,467	0.6%
	23,924,289	29,441,000	(5,516,711)	(18.7%)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	43,983,579	56,245,000	(12,261,421)	(21.8%)
NET COMMUNITY ASSETS	1,109,101,947	1,087,906,000	21,195,947	1.9%
Community Equity				
Asset Revaluation Reserve	382,365,600	377,790,000	4,575,600	1.2%
Retained surplus	726,736,347	710,116,000	16,620,347	2.3%
TOTAL COMMUNITY EQUITY	1,109,101,947	1,087,906,000	21,195,947	1.9%

Southern Downs Regional Council Cash Flow Statement

March 2026

	Phased 2026 YTD Actual \$	Phased 2026 YTD Budget \$	YTD Variance \$	YTD Variance %	Annual 2026 Budget \$	Forecast 2026 Budget \$
Cashflows from operating activities						
Receipts from customers	95,170,043	86,767,665	8,402,378	9.7%	90,268,000	99,831,667
Payments to suppliers and employees	(80,699,925)	(65,592,246)	(15,107,679)	23.0%	(82,769,000)	(91,881,544)
Investment and interest revenue received	3,668,589	2,642,818	1,025,771	38.8%	3,531,000	4,131,824
Rental Income	558,348	477,579	80,769	16.9%	632,000	632,000
Non-capital grants and contributions	7,658,317	6,229,859	1,428,458	22.9%	11,495,000	12,991,390
Borrowing costs	-	-	-	0.0%	(576,000)	(576,000)
Other cashflows from operating activities	-	-	-	0.0%	-	-
Net Cash Operating Activities	26,355,372	30,525,675	(4,170,303)	111.4%	22,581,000	25,129,337
Cashflows from Investing Activities						
Sale of property, plant and equipment	328,884	1,205,250	(876,366)	(72.7%)	1,607,000	1,607,000
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	11,368,454	10,522,749	845,705	8.0%	14,183,000	14,183,000
Net investment maturities	-	-	-	0.0%	-	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(35,177,135)	(32,751,000)	(2,426,135)	7.4%	(43,668,000)	(63,000,000)
Other cashflows from investing activities	-	-	-	0.0%	128,000	128,000
Net Cash Investing Activities	(23,479,797)	(21,023,001)	(2,456,796)	(57.3%)	(27,750,000)	(47,082,000)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities						
Proceeds from/repayment of borrowings and advances	(1,544,212)	3,359,250	(4,903,462)	(146.0%)	4,479,000	(1,574,995)
Net Cash Financing Activities	(1,544,212)	3,359,250	(4,903,462)	(146.0%)	4,479,000	(1,574,995)
Net increase in cash and cash and equivalent held	1,331,363	12,861,924	(11,530,561)	(89.6%)	(690,000)	(23,527,658)
Cash at beginning of period	91,367,528	63,816,000	27,551,528	43.2%	91,367,528	88,279,104
Cash at end of period	92,698,891	76,677,924	16,020,967	20.9%	90,677,528	64,751,446

Note: The annual forecasted cash at end of period now includes total capital expenditure (current and carry-over), correcting the previous cash balance which included only current-year capital expenditure.

Southern Downs Regional Council Sustainability Ratios March 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%	87.12%	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%)	28.6%	> 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%	36.13%	> 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	16	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%	99.0%	> 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%	62.9%	> 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%	N/A	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	0.22	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

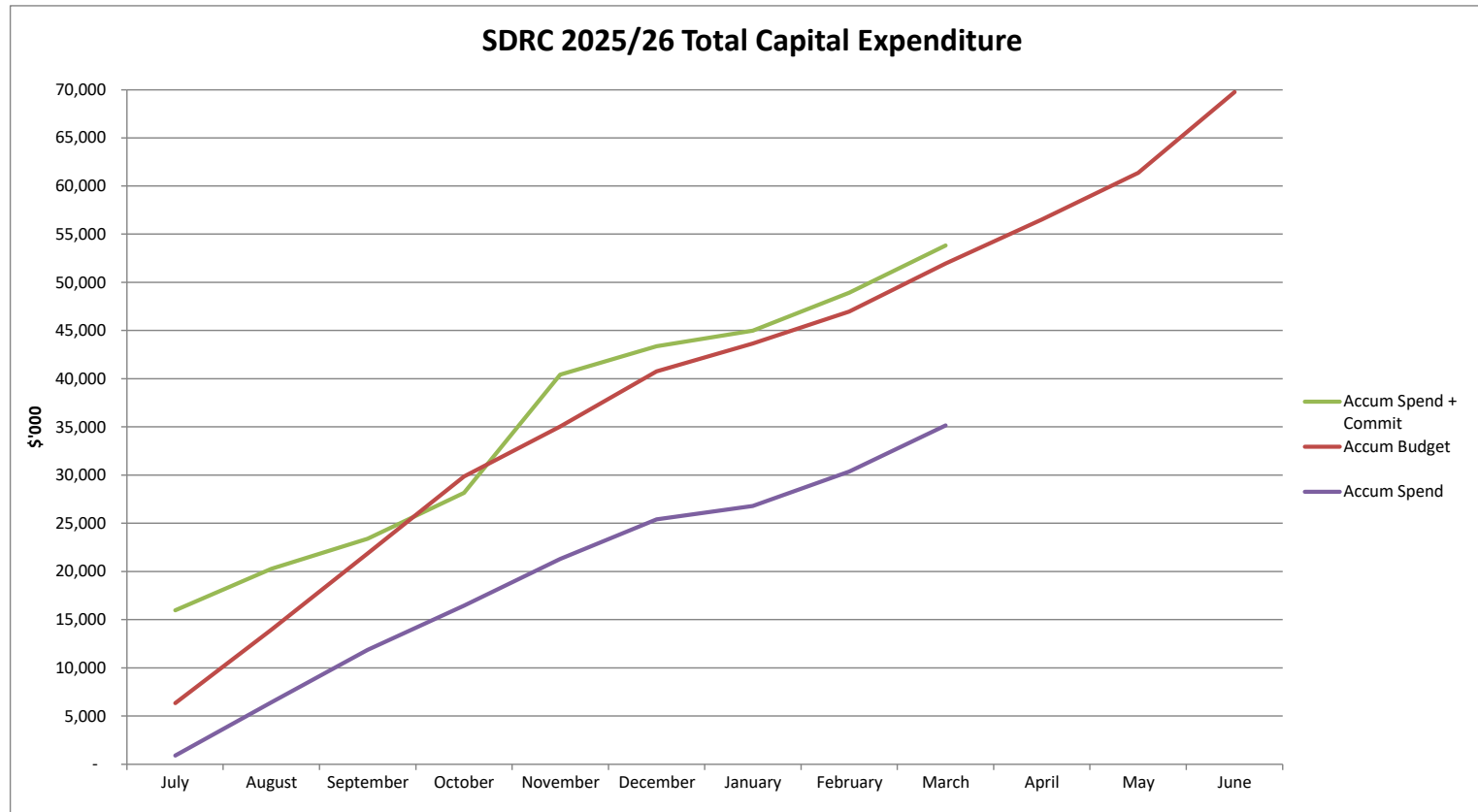
When looking at ratios it is important to understand that they represent a snapshot in time and some ratios are more annualised targets.

* 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.

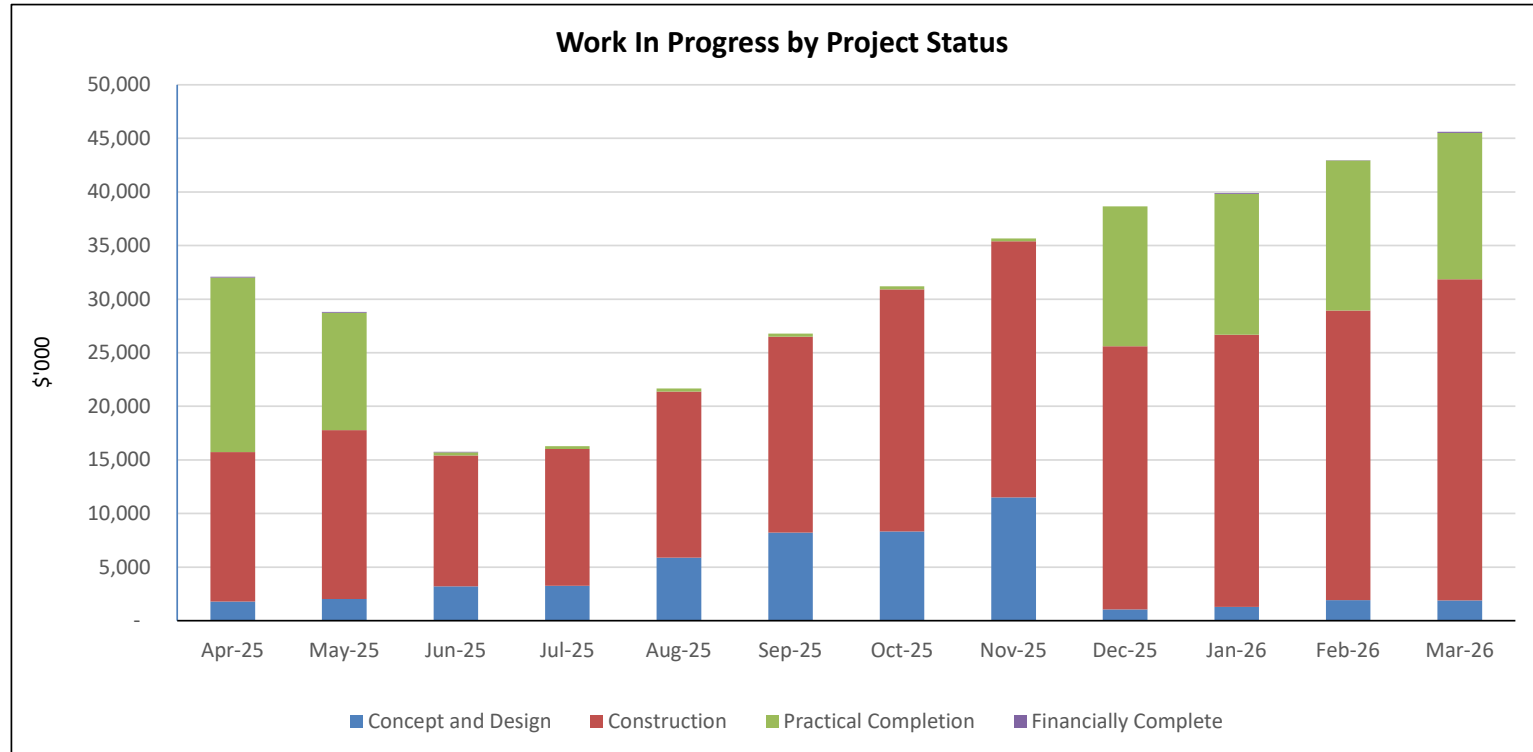
Southern Downs Regional Council
Capital Works Projects by Asset Class
 As At 31 March 2026

	Budget	YTD Expenditure	% Spent	Committed	Spent and Committed	% Spent and Committed
Land	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buildings	4,189,910	1,572,243	37.5%	1,361,605	2,933,847	70.0%
Plant & Equipment	8,803,097	3,028,827	34.4%	4,180,562	7,209,389	81.9%
Roads, Drains & Bridges	24,331,341	15,098,396	62.1%	3,770,652	18,869,048	77.6%
Water	12,368,022	4,723,419	38.2%	3,949,960	8,673,379	70.1%
Sewerage	7,718,918	1,400,197	18.1%	4,682,155	6,082,352	78.8%
Other Assets	12,357,040	9,354,054	75.7%	720,411	10,074,465	81.5%
Total	69,768,328	35,177,135	50.4%	18,665,345	53,842,481	77.2%

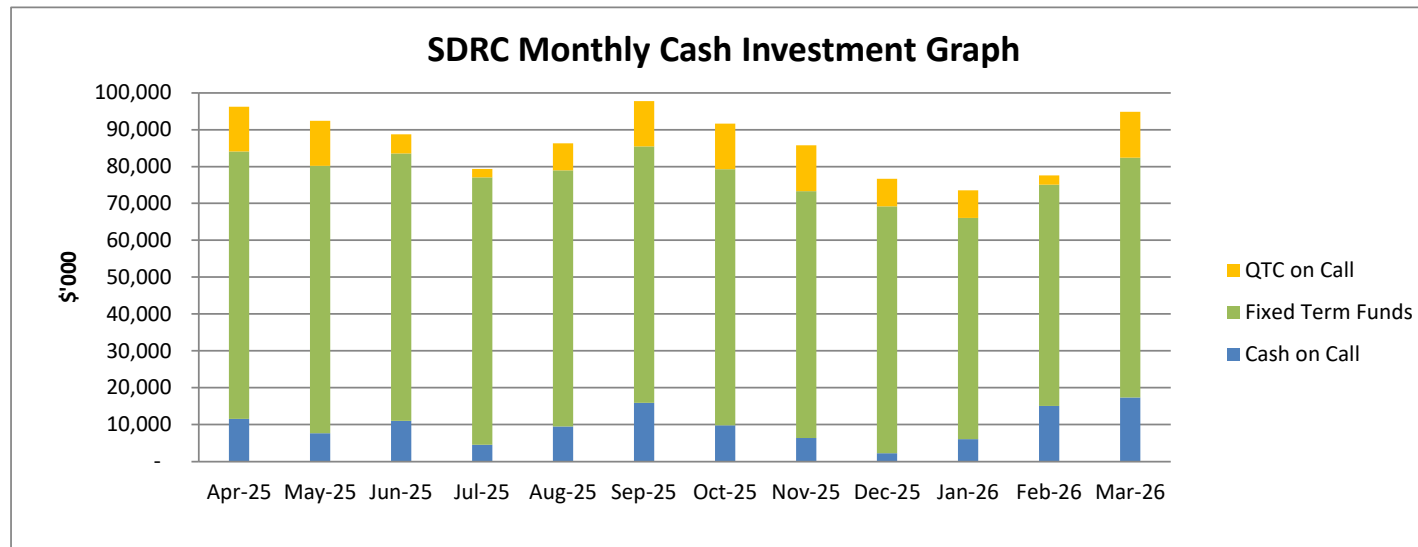
Southern Downs Regional Council
Capital Expenditure
As At 31 March 2026



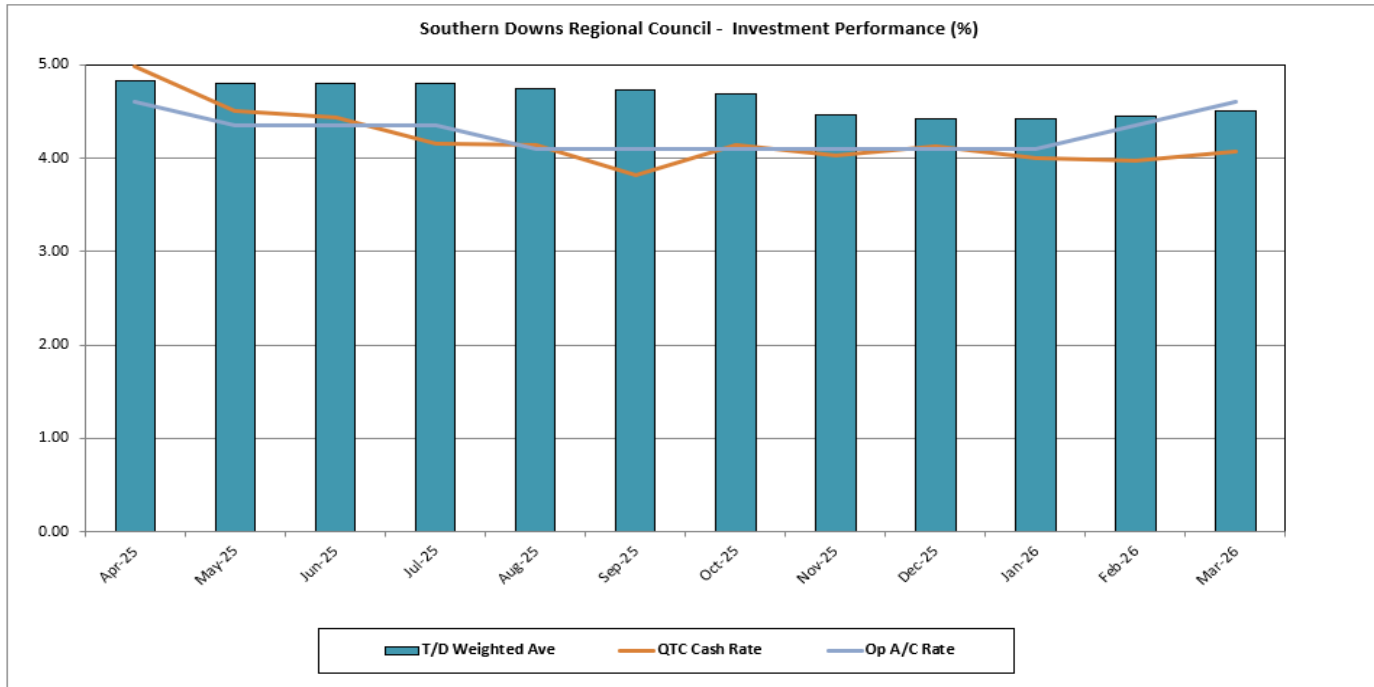
**Southern Downs Regional Council
 Work in Progress (WIP) Status Report
 As At 31 March 2026**



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



Southern Downs Regional Council
Investment Performance
As At 31 March 2026




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

QTC Loan Account	Balance	Payout Date
CBD Redevelopment Stage 2	252,989	Mar-28
Market Square Pump Station	118,061	Mar-28
General	854,329	Mar-28
General 2009	404,543	Mar-28
General 2009/10	61,477	Mar-28
General 2010/11	927,828	Mar-28
General 2011/12	2,268,627	Jun-32
General 2012/13	1,324,235	Dec-32
Warwick Sewerage Treatment Plant	38,251	Jun-26
Allora Water Main	2,564,481	Mar-34
Total Loan Balance	<u>8,814,821</u>	

13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Governance & Risk Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council receive and note the third quarter update of the 2025/2026 Operational Plan.

REPORT

Purpose

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires that Council prepare and adopt an Operational Plan for each financial year.

The Operational Plan 2025/26 is a key component of Council's integrated planning and reporting framework and gives effect to the strategic directions and priorities set out in Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2026. It translates Council's long-term vision and community objectives into specific, measurable actions to be delivered within the current financial year, supported by the adopted budget and resourcing arrangements.

The *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that Council must make assessments of its progress towards implementing its Operational Plan at regular intervals of not more than three months and that it must discharge its responsibilities in a way that is consistent with the annual Operational Plan.

This Quarter Three report provides an update on Council's progress in implementing the Operational Plan during the period January 2026 to March 2026, demonstrating how Council's activities continue to align with its strategic objectives and community outcomes. The report also supports Council's legislative and governance obligations by providing transparent information on performance, service delivery and operational effectiveness.

The reporting framework ensures that strategic priorities, operational activities, performance measures and resource allocations remain aligned, enabling Council to monitor progress, identify emerging risks and challenges, and take timely corrective action where required. This alignment supports sound decision making, responsible sound management of public resources and continuous improvement in service delivery to the community.

Key Achievements

- Two citizenship ceremonies held in Quarter three welcoming 44 new citizens to the region.
- Council's inter-agency meeting attracted over 53 member attendees.
- Social media community awareness plan developed.
- Interim LGIP drafted and public consultation will commence in April 2026.
- Drought Resilience package - the bulk of the works have been awarded and are commencing or are underway. The outstanding works are ready to go to market.

- Funds have been secured for the relining of sewers. This tender is to be awarded during April.
- The Water Supply Security Strategy is being developed.
- The “talk-to-a-planner” duty roster has now commenced. This provides a significant uplift in the level and standard of service to the community through making a planner available to answer questions as they are raised with Council.
- Digitising of the water sample points and the septic waste disposal are complete.
- Multi Factor Authentication has been applied to all user logins to enhance credential protections.
- External Attack Surface Management Platform has been deployed, enhancing cyber security.
- 862 aerated on-site treatment facilities tagged as of 31 March 2026.
- Positive responses to both project management and delivery of major capital projects training courses. Feedback from participants being incorporated into the PMF to align with user expectations.

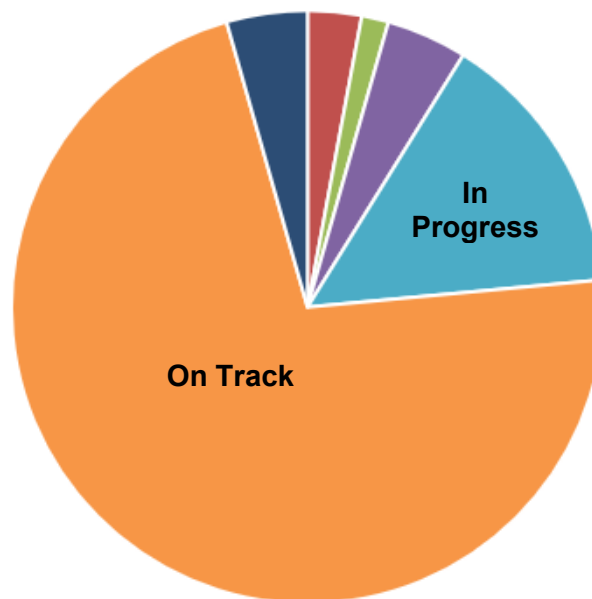
Completed during Quarter 3:

- OP1 – Develop and implement an effective and genuine renewable energy community engagement process.

Performance Overview

Category	Percentage
On Track	72%
In Progress	16%
Completed	1%
Delayed/Off Track	4%
At Risk	0%
Cancelled/deferred	3%
Not Started	4%

Operational Plan - Quarter 3



■ Cancelled/Deferred ■ Delayed/Off Track ■ In progress ■ On Track ■ Not Started

Key:

On Track	Progress is occurring as planned and the deliverable is expected to be completed by the due date within the approved resources.
In Progress	Work has commenced and is actively underway. Milestones or tasks are being undertaken internally or by contractors.
Delayed/Off Track	Progress has significantly fallen behind schedule, and the deliverable will not be achieved within the planned timeframe or needs major changes to the scope or resources.
At Risk	The deliverable is behind schedule, experiencing issues, or facing barriers that may affect delivery, but recovery is still possible.
Completed	The deliverable has been fully delivered, and evidence is available to verify completion (e.g. report adopted, project handed over, milestone achieved).

Cancelled/Deferred	The deliverable has been formally ceased due to a decision by Council or ELT or moved to next FY due to funding or scope change.
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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget performance relevant to delivery of the Operational Plan.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Failure to meet legislated timeframes.

Opportunity

Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Council's Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for their applicable departmental actions within the 2025/2026 Operational Plan, and the leadership teams consult with their respective staff to complete and report on the progress of the actions.

Report presented to Council Information Session on 8 April 2026.

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Section 104 Local Government Act 2009

Sections 169, 174, 175 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: 4.4.1 Provide assurance through effective governance, audit and risk management practices.

Policy / Strategy

Corporate Plan 2021-2026

Annual Operational Plan 2025/26

ATTACHMENTS

1. Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update [↓](#)

Item 13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update
 Attachment 1: Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update



Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update

Jan-Feb-Mar 20:

REF	ACTION/OUTCOME	DEPARTMENT	START	FINISH	MULTI YEAR?	CORPORATE PLAN LINK	QUARTER 3 PROGRESS UPDATE	QUARTER 3 CURRENT STATUS
OP1	Develop and implement an effective and genuine renewable energy community engagement process.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Mar-26	No	1.1.2	Engagement with identified community groups conducted from February to March 2026. Online community survey released over a 4-week period garnered 104 responses. QCEP project activity completed by 31 March 2026.	Completed
OP2	Deliver quality library services through Council's three (3) fixed locations.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.2.1	Libraries continue to deliver quality services to the community. Visits from authors and interactive wildlife workshops are planned over the coming weeks.	On Track
OP3	Continue to deliver community and civic events, such as Citizen of the Year, Anzac Day and Carols.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.2.1	Australia Day/Citizen of the Year Awards has been successfully delivered with positive feedback. The event included a citizenship ceremony with 23 new citizens. A Citizenship ceremony was also held on the 18th March welcoming 21 new citizens. Planning for ANZAC Day events is in progress.	On Track
OP4	Conduct a stock take of public toilet facilities to review existing service standards improving these where required.	Parks and Operations	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.2.1	Toilet inventories stocktake is completed, for amenities block and including pedestal, hand basins and # Persons with a Disability (PWD) facilities. Ongoing work to be completed by June 2026 includes mapping of cleaning frequency, operating hours, PWD compliance, environmental compliance, family friendliness (baby change tables), frequency of asset inspections/audit, ""unsanitary"" response time standards and compliance, graffiti removal standards and compliance and average number and categories of complaints received.	On Track
OP5	Review non-traditional burials being adopted elsewhere with a view to expanding Council interment services.	Parks and Operations	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	1.2.1	This has been incorporated into a broader SDRC Future Cemeteries discussion paper with first draft completed by 30 May 2026	On Track
OP6	Deliver community events e.g. NAIDOC Week, Youth Week, Disability Action Week, Seniors Week.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.2.2	Planning for NAIDOC week event in partnership with Darling Downs Health is in progress. National Volunteer Week 'Thank you' events will be held on 19/05/26 (Stanthorpe) and 21/05/26 (Warwick)	On Track
OP7	Hold quarterly Interagency Meetings with key stakeholders.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.2.3	The last interagency meeting occurred on the 17th March with 53 members in attendance.	On Track
OP8	Through the Stanthorpe and Warwick Art Galleries, deliver exhibitions and educational programs.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.3.1	Quarterly catch up with both Stanthorpe and Warwick Art Gallery presidents was held on 3 February 2026. Both galleries continue to deliver exhibitions and educational programs.	On Track
OP9	Work with state agencies, sporting and recreational groups to identify programs, grant opportunities and events.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.3.3	The economic development team delivered activities including circulation of grant programs to stakeholders, engaging with sporting groups (eg. Allora Equestrian Olympics proposal) and presenting to the Trade & Investment Qld Trade Commissioners roundtable (protein hub investment).	On Track
OP10	Develop and implement a Facility Management Transition Plan.	Assets Management, Spatial and Saleyards; Parks and Operations	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.3.3	Building Audit program is developed. An OPEX bid will be submitted for the 2026-27 budget. Project will precipitate a CAPEX program in 2028-29 budget cycle.	In progress
OP11	Plan and provide a calendar of educational programs which extend to Visitor Centre volunteers.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	1.3.3	Visitor Centre volunteers have been provided with an annual roster of meetings, region familiarisation trips and an annual volunteer conference to provide training and education to all volunteers. During this quarter, staff delivered a Volunteer Conference for all volunteers to receive training, networking opportunities and induction refreshers. In addition, monthly meetings have been delivered with presentations from Jumpers & Jazz in July and Council's Safety Team, providing further education opportunities for volunteers.	On Track
OP12	Hold regular LDMG meetings bringing together agencies to ensure alignment of delivery during natural disasters.	Community Resilience	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.1.1	While the last quarter has been busy with severe weather and bushfires, Council continued to hold LDMG meetings on time, with the third meeting for the financial year scheduled for March 2026.	On Track
OP13	Support events e.g., Apple and Grape Festival, Warwick Rodeo, Jumpers and Jazz, Snowflakes in Stanthorpe, Celtic Fest.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.1.2	During Quarter 3, Council financially supported the Darling Downs Heave Horse Festival and calendar of agricultural shows. In addition, in-kind support was provided to these events and the Apple & Grape Festival in the form : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotion in Council's tourism marketing efforts across digital and social media campaigns (for the Apple & Grape Festival, positioned as a 'hero event' in the region's event calendar); •Continued visitor servicing through the Visitor Information Centres; •Event planning and preparation; •On-call emergency on-call assistance for facilities, parks and general maintenance needs by the Parks and Operations team. 	On Track

Item 13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update
Attachment 1: Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update



Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update

Jan-Feb-Mar 20:

REF	ACTION/OUTCOME	DEPARTMENT	START	FINISH	MULTI YEAR?	CORPORATE PLAN LINK	QUARTER 3 PROGRESS UPDATE	QUARTER 3 CURRENT STATUS
OP14	Investigate options to manage all Saleyards effluent.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	2.1.3	Returning to market following engagement with potetial vendors for the solution. No vendors on Local Buy have shown any interest.	Delayed/Off Track
OP15	Develop and deliver 2025/26 Action Plan to implement Environmental Sustainability Strategy 21-31 outcomes.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.1.3	Due to vacancy in the Sustainability and Environment Officer role for an extended period of time, this item was delayed. Work has commenced on updating and prioritising action plan for the 26/27 financial year.	Delayed/Off Track
OP16	Implement annual awareness program for environmental health, environmental sustainability, regulatory services, local laws and waste management	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.1.3, 2.2.3 2.3.3	Annual social media community awareness plan developed and being rolled out. Annual waste education plan developed and being delivered.	On Track
OP17	Work with Stakeholders of Warwick Saleyards to develop further revenue streams e.g. special sales.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jul-25	Jun-25	Yes	2.2.1	Saleyard Coordinator is in constant discussion with the Agents Association to improve the opportunities for special sales.	In progress
OP18	Undertake delivery of Stages 3 and 4 of the Warwick Saleyards Redevelopment Project under W4Q funding.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	2.2.1	The frontage and sign have been completed. Drainage works are being completed. Sheep Office has been completed. Electrical ducts installation programmed post Easter. 55 Plants (Red Robins) have been planted around yards. Bollards installed to define non trafficable areas. Paddock fencing about to be let for construction before June 30 2026. Leveled approach to last loading ramp programmed for delivery by internal labour, post Easter 2026.	On Track
OP19	Continue to seek funding opportunities to construct a roof over the Warwick Saleyards.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jul-25	Jun-27	No	2.2.1	The Warwick Saleyards roof was included in the FY27 Pre-Budget submissions to both the Queensland and Australian governments.	In progress
OP21	Integrate Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) into new Planning Scheme, ensuring seamless transition between current and new LGIP.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	2.2.1	Interim LGIP has been prepared, which aligns with the draft LGIP. Public consultation of the Interim LGIP will commence in April 2026.	On Track
OP22	Progress the outcomes of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP).	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.2	Major components development about to be let for completion before June 30 2026.	On Track
OP23	Work with Dept Local Government, TRC and SEQ Water to facilitate Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline project.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	2.2.2	On 31 March 2026 the State announced that the project will be delivered in stages. Stage 1 will deliver the pipeline from Toowoomba to Greenmount and Stage 2 will deliver the remainder of the pipeline from Greenmount to Warwick. Negotiations are continuing to determine the approvals, agreements, final design and timing for the second stage to Warwick	In progress
OP24	Complete actions in the Drought Resilience Package.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Nov-26	No	2.2.2	Procurement of the various components are well advanced with several tenders let and some works awarded. The meters ordered have been delivered and the main contract for installation of these has been awarded.	On Track
OP25	Seek funding for renewal of critical water and wastewater assets.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.2.2	This is an ongoing action but significant funds have been secured for the relining of sewers. This tender is to be awarded shortly.	Not Started
OP26	Develop an overarching water supply strategy.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-27	No	2.2.2	The Water Supply Security Strategy is being produced and is 50% complete	On Track
OP27	Develop and implement a new Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan for the region.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Dec-25	No	2.2.3	Workshop with Council completed. The waste strategy community engagement with survey commences end of May 2026.	On Track
OP28	Develop and adopt a climate change policy in alignment with Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2031.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.3.1	Work to be commenced on this as resourcing now available due to a vacant position now being filled.	Delayed/Off Track
OP29	Implement the 25/26 actions within Invasive Pests Strategic Plan for the region.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	2.3.3	Engagement on new strategy to be completed June 2026	On Track

Item 13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update
 Attachment 1: Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update



Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update

Jan-Feb-Mar 20:

REF	ACTION/OUTCOME	DEPARTMENT	START	FINISH	MULTI YEAR?	CORPORATE PLAN LINK	QUARTER 3 PROGRESS UPDATE	QUARTER 3 CURRENT STATUS
OP30	Collaborate with external stakeholders to develop innovative solutions to ease the need for affordable housing for workers.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.1.2, 3.1.3	New Snr Economic Development officer on board and preliminary meetings with Planning re housing. Ec Dev team secondary research into housing trends and case studies to support the Residential Activation Fund grant submission.	On Track
OP31	Continue to research and investigate developer incentive policies and associated actions.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	3.1.3	Works for Queensland funding being utilised to prepare a Planning Incentivisation Strategy.	On Track
OP32	Deliver a project regarding development compliance high priority matters, e.g., outstanding infrastructure charges and review rental accommodation regulatory framework.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	3.1.3	Officer recruitment has occurred, project has commenced.	On Track
OP33	Support local business through investment in industry led activities. E.g. local buy campaign, mentoring workshops.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.2.1	The Economic Development unit continues to work with the Disaster management team to roll out a business disaster management training program in Killarney. Working with solar installers and electricians in setting up a solar and Battery installation accreditation training for interested staff.	On Track
OP34	Develop plans and frameworks outlined in the Workforce Strategy 2024 – 2028.	People, Performance and Safety	Jul-25	Jun-28	Yes	3.2.1; 4.3.2	Survey completed which informed the Wellness Program. Program develop. Launch organised. Wellness services researched and pamphlet designed and printed for all employees for easy access. Wellness collateral organised. Wellness hubs created at Council's Administration Buildings and Depots. Guidelines developed for Apprentices, Trainees and Work Experience.	On Track
OP35	Advocate for regional water security and for retention of good agricultural land to ensure the viability of the sector.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.2.3	Council have made a submission for its 'water security package' as part of the state and federal 2026-27 pre-budget submission process. Funding has been requested for 5 key water priorities including the Warwick to Stanthorpe pipeline business case. Follow-up letters have also been sent to the Premier and Minister for Local Government and Water.	On Track
OP36	Collaborate with partner agencies and stakeholders to progress the development of a small animal abattoir.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.1	Warwick protein Hub project investor launch undertaken at Queensland Trade Commissioners event in Toowoomba on 17 March. Investment interest shown from the South Korean Trade commissioner.	On Track
OP37	Undertake business process review of department wide development assessment and enquiry processes to reduce duplication and improve overall customer experience.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Dec-26	Yes	3.3.1	Business improvement processes have been identified and changes have commenced being implemented.	On Track
OP38	Collaborate with industry stakeholders to promote Council's development assessment services, by establishing a contact list of relevant parties to assist with ongoing engagement.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Dec-26	Yes	3.3.1	Initial industry engagement has been undertaken. A follow up session is going to be scheduled in the following months, to align with the anticipated commencement of the new planning scheme.	In progress
OP39	Collaborate with Granite Belt Growers Association, undertaking a pilot "Composting Project" to investigate benefits to farmers of humus soil.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.1	The economic development team has reached out to the associated parties for the composting project in order to progress.	On Track
OP40	Collaborate with industry / community groups to support specific projects through sourcing of available Grant funding.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.1	EDU has passed on grant announcements to various community organisations directly and via eNewsletter. Ec Dev team has been working with the two Chambers of Commerce and Australian Govt Jobs Coordinator to secure funding for a region-side workforce strategy and learning plan. Advocated to Qld and Aust Govts for water security as infrastructure enabler (FY27 Budget Submissions). Planning and coordination of an education campaign for the new Grants to Community Policy occurred during the Qtr, will roll-out commencing mid-April.	On Track
OP41	Implement the Southern Downs Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2022 – 2026 Action Plan.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.2	New Snr Economic Development Officer on board, working towards the economic development action plan including protein hub positioning with Trade & Investment Qld, participation in the Nature Based Tourism Working Group and RFQ to market for the new Tourism Strategy. Advocated to Qld gov't for water security as infrastructure enabler. Provision of information to businesses wishing to relocate to the region.	On Track

Item 13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update
 Attachment 1: Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update



Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update

Jan-Feb-Mar 20:

REF	ACTION/OUTCOME	DEPARTMENT	START	FINISH	MULTI YEAR?	CORPORATE PLAN LINK	QUARTER 3 PROGRESS UPDATE	QUARTER 3 CURRENT STATUS
OP42	Investigate new opportunities/experiences to attract more visitors to region in the Nature Based and Agritourism sectors.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.3	Destination marketing activities for Quarter 3 occurred under the QLD's Wild Country Summer theme which includes blogs, an email newsletter and social media activities promoting the region's many natural attractions.	On Track
OP43	Work with neighbouring Councils, farmers, stakeholders to undertake a Pilot Plastic Farming Waste Recovery and Pre-processing project reducing cost/burden on landfill.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.3	Council has launched the Southern Downs Agricultural Plastic Recycling Pilot in Stanthorpe for the management of irrigation tape. The plastic binding machine has arrived and is currently in use.	On Track
OP44	Support and work with regional partners to deliver the annual calendar of destination marketing activities.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.3	Ongoing membership of the official RTO, Queensland Country Tourism was held, and a Council Officer attended at the National Outdoors Show with the RTO to support promotion of Destination Marketing. Council also continued to work closely with Granite Belt Wine Tourism, Warwick Chamber of Commerce and Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce.	On Track
OP45	Develop a Tourism Strategy.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	3.3.1	RFQ issued early 2026 with appointment of successful contractor in March 2026. Kick off meeting to be held early April.	On Track
OP46	Enable electronic lodgement of operational works, plumbing and drainage, and building applications through eSubmit.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.1.1	Elodgement has been delayed and scheduled to commence in June 2026.	Not Started
OP48	Review Council's Customer Service Charter ensuring it adequately addresses customer needs.	Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.1.1	RFQ for consultancy services went to market in February 2026 however no suitable submissions were received. Currently undertaking more targeted engagement prior to going back to market.	Cancelled/Deferred
OP49	Review Local Laws and supporting processes to align with current regulatory standards and improve functionality.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.1.1	Initial investigation into proposed method to deliver project has commenced, however the delivery of this project in full is anticipated to be delayed until the 26/27 financial year.	Cancelled/Deferred
OP50	Continue digitisation of water treatment plants and pump station maintenance work.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	4.1.2	Digitising of the water sample points and the septic waste disposal are complete. Preparing QR codes for each site and starting to work on the maintenance requirements for each plant	On Track
OP51	Deliver Technology One related CIA projects as per the ICT Road map.	Information, Communication and Technology	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.1.2	The Merit product is being migrated to the Technology One Request Management(RM) module. RM reached production ready state as of March 2026 and user training is in progress. System cutover and go-live is scheduled throughout May 2026.	On Track
OP52	Conduct activities enhancing Cyber Security Resilience including vulnerability scanning, cyber security awareness training and enhanced access and security.	Information, Communication and Technology	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.1.2	Multifactor Authentication has been applied to all user logins to enhance credential protections. Protective Website address name pre-checks has been implemented to reduce the likelihood of users being directed to malicious links. Website vulnerability scanning platform has been deployed to monitor for security issues and exploitable vulnerabilities.	On Track
OP53	Develop a 10 year works program for all infrastructure assets.	Works	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.1.3	Prioritised lists of projects exist for most renewal programs e.g. reseal, pavement rehabilitation, pathway renewal etc. For new and upgrade projects, projects are prioritised using Council's adopted prioritisation framework.	In progress
OP54	Review and improve the grant application process.	Strategy, Growth and Stakeholder Engagement	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.1.3	Review of Grants to Community is complete, streamlining the process, introducing grant principles, event sponsorship tiers and SmartyGrants application process across all grant programs. New Policy endorsed at OCM on 25 March 2026.	On Track
OP55	Carry out Safety and HAZOP studies for all pump stations.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.2.1	The contract has been awarded and commencement from 21 April 2026.	On Track
OP57	Fully implement the Safety Management System.	People, Performance and Safety	Jul-25	Apr-26	No	4.2.1 4.2.2	Outstanding Safety Procedures developed. Procedures ready for review and consultation processes. Full handover in April 2026 to be completed. 3rd party audit currently being sourced.	On Track

Item 13.2 Operational Plan 2025/26 - Third Quarter Update
 Attachment 1: Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update




Operational Plan - Quarter Three Progress Update

Jan-Feb-Mar 20:

REF	ACTION/OUTCOME	DEPARTMENT	START	FINISH	MULTI YEAR?	CORPORATE PLAN LINK	QUARTER 3 PROGRESS UPDATE	QUARTER 3 CURRENT STATUS
OP58	Implement business process improvements as per outcome of Customer request internal audit.	Information Communication and Technology and Community and Customer Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.4.1	The Merit product is being migrated to the Technology One Request Management(RM) module. RM is now production ready as of March 2026 and user training is in progress. Customer Services deployment is scheduled for May 2026. Review of business process improvements, as per outcome of Customer request internal audit, will be progressed by the business owners post RM module deployment.	On Track
OP59	Implement governance training across the organisation.	Governance	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.4.1	Targeted training and assistance activities have been undertaken across the organisation.	On Track
OP60	Undertake a review of Council's key system, implementing updated system or alternatives to the current system.	Governance	Jul-25	Jun-30	Yes	4.4.1	Scoping for the project is in progress. A tender will be issued during quarter 4.	In progress
OP62	Review strategic risks and risk appetite statement with current elected members, embedding in all reporting.	Governance	Jul-25	Jun-27	No	4.4.1	Project scoping and planning is underway.	In progress
OP63	Commence the implementation of the on-site sewage facilities register, issuing compliance notices if applicable.	Planning and Development	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	4.4.1	This project is well advanced, with 862 aerated on-site treatment facilities tagged.	On Track
OP64	Implement best practice project management and governance of the delivery of major capital projects with Capital PCG.	Infrastructure, Assets and Projects	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.4.1	Second Project Management course delivered. Feedback from both sessions is being incorporated into templates and processes of the PMF.	On Track
OP65	Provide procurement-related training to staff and hold supplier information sessions.	Financial Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.4.1	Supplier information sessions, coordinated with Local Buy, are planned for May 2026.	In progress
OP66	Complete definitive 10-year plans (Master Plans) to deliver our services and outcomes.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jun-25	Jun-27	Yes	4.4.2	Stormwater and Major Structures about to start development. Buildings being developed.	On Track
OP67	Develop the SDRC Services Catalogues, focusing on service levels and targets.	Financial Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.4.2	Development of the scope and project planning is underway. This is a cross-disciplinary project that will draw upon resources from across the organisation.	In progress
OP68	Review current arrangements for sourcing, distribution and utilisation of fuel supply for Council plant.	Parks and Operations	Jul-25	Jun-27	Yes	4.4.3	Business case currently in development for onsite storage. Expected completion date end of April 2026. Due to current international shortage alternative short-term business continuity solution also being advanced.	On Track
OP69	High Risk Asset State Assessment – using tools to record state of assets with high risk of damage due to natural disaster/similar events.	Asset Management, Spatial and Saleyards	Jun-25	Jun-27	Yes	4.4.3	Next group of assets being defined for data capture.	On Track
OP70	Undertake risk assessment to prioritise work on legacy landfill sites ensuring compliance with Environmental Authority and legislation.	Environmental Services	Jul-25	Jun-26	Yes	4.4.3	Due to be commenced by 30 June 2026.	On Track
OP71	Provide ongoing support for the Regional Water Assessment Program and advocate for positive outcomes for SDRC.	Water and Wastewater	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.5.3	There has been no update on this program from the State Government, they are still working on the business cases in the background	Not Started
OP72	Design and delivery of the leadership program for SDRC.	People, Performance and Safety	Jul-25	Jun-26	No	4.6.3 4.3.2	7 Leadership Workshops, 2 Change Management Workshops and 2 Project Management Workshops coordinated, designed and delivered to ELT/SLT/OLT. Draft Leadership competencies researched and developed.	On Track

13.3 Minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee Meeting held 23 March 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Governance & Risk Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council receive and note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held 23 March 2026.

REPORT

Report

For the information of Councillors, please find attached the minutes and Interim Chairperson's report from the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) meeting held on 23 March 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The external members of the ARMC, including the Chairperson, are remunerated from existing budget allocation.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

The ARMC is another layer of audit and protection in an aim to reduce risk and ensure Council's sound operations, governance and compliance with reporting requirements.

Opportunity

Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Manager Governance

External Consultation

Interim Chair – Audit and Risk Management Committee

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

- The ARMC is established under the authority of section 105 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. The *Local Government Regulation 2012* provides further detail about audit committees.
- *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*

Corporate Plan

Goal 4 Our Performance

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

Objective: 4.4.1 Provide assurance through effective governance, audit and risk management practices.

Policy / Strategy

- Audit and Risk Management Charter
- PL-CS093 Human Rights Policy

Legal

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

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. Minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held 23 March 2026 [↓](#)



**MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF AUDIT & RISK
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2026**



ORDER OF BUSINESS:

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3.	DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST	1
4.	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	1
	4.1 Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting - 18 September 2025.....	1
	4.2 Special Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting - 16 October 2025	1
5.	BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS	2
6.	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S UPDATE	2
	6.1 Appointment of Acting Chair	2
7.	PEOPLE & SAFETY	2
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	8.1 Comprehensive Valuation of Transport and Stormwater Asset Classes Update.....	2
9.	INTERNAL AUDIT	3
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10.	BUDGETING & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE	3
	10.1 Budgeting and Financial Performance Update.....	3
11.	SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGY	3
	Nil	
12.	GOVERNANCE	3
	12.1 Governance and Risk Update	3
13.	EXTERNAL REPORTS	4
	Nil	
14.	LEGAL & REGULATORY	4
	14.1 Legal & Regulatory Update.....	4
15.	GENERAL BUSINESS	4
	15.1 External Auditors and Queensland Audit Office Updates	4
16.	NEXT MEETINGS	4
	Thursday, 25 June 2026	
17.	CLOSURE	4



Minutes of the Meeting
Held at 64 Fitzroy Street, Warwick on 23 March 2026 at 9:00 AM

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Hamilton took the Chair until the Interim Chair was appointed and declared the meeting open.

1. PRESENT

Committee Members:

Mayor Hamilton, Cr Joel Richters (via Teams), Mel Jacobs (via Teams), Anthony Matthews and Rob Foley (via Teams)

Observers:

Rachel Brophy (Chief Executive Officer), Dean Frost (General Manager Corporate Services), Anthony Bigby (Manager Governance), Carolyn Eagle (Pacifica – Internal Auditors) (via Teams), Bruce Preston (Crowes - External Auditor), Fikile Nyati (Queensland Audit Office) (via Teams), Arun Dias (Chief Financial Officer), Di Woolley (Director People, Performance and Safety), Helen Gross (Financial Services Coordinator) and Marion Seymour (Minute Taker)

2. APOLOGIES

Nil

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting - 18 September 2025

Resolution

Moved M Jacobs

Seconded Cr J Richters

THAT the minutes of the Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting held on Thursday 18 September 2025 be adopted.

Carried

4.2 Special Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting - 16 October 2025

Resolution

Moved M Jacobs

Seconded Cr J Richters

THAT the minutes of the Special Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting held on Thursday 16 October 2025 be adopted.

Carried



5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES – Summary of Action Points

Nil

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE

6.1 Appointment of Acting Chair

Resolution

Moved Cr M Hamilton

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee:

1. Appoints Mel Jacobs as interim Chairperson.
2. Recommends a member of the Committee be appointed Chairperson by the Council.

Carried

ACTION ITEM 353: Preference of the ARMC moving forward is for a majority on decision making during ARMC Meetings rather than formally recording movers and seconders.

7. PEOPLE & SAFETY

7.1 People and Safety Update

THAT the Audit and Risk Management Committee receive note the verbal update from the Chief Executive Officer on the decrease in lost time and severity of injuries, the reduction in staff vacancies and the progress on the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. **Carried**

8. EXTERNAL AUDIT

8.1 Comprehensive Valuation of Transport and Stormwater Asset Classes Update

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee receive and note the content of this report. **Carried**

ACTION ITEM 354: The Audit and Risk Management Committee will be provided with the opportunity to meet with Council's Finance Team to discuss how the revaluation of assets is dealt with.

9:32am Caroline Eagle from Pacifica joined the meeting.



9. INTERNAL AUDIT

9.1 Internal Audit Activity Report

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee:

1. Receive and note the Internal Audit Activity Report.
2. Defer the existing two planned Internal Audit projects for "Councillor Obligations, including Implementation of Council Decisions" and "Financial and Non-Financial Reporting Integrity" to allow focus on the following:
 - a. Audit Issues Register Improvement Program and Migration; and
 - b. Internal Audit Standard Compliance Framework and Documentation. **Carried**

Carolyn Eagle left the meeting at 10:08am

10. BUDGETING & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

10.1 Budgeting and Financial Performance Update

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee receive and note the verbal update from the General Manager Corporate Services on progress with the 2026/2027 Draft Budget, and the monthly Financial Statements, a copy of which would be provided to the Committee after the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 March 2026. **Carried**

11. SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGY

Nil

12. GOVERNANCE

12.1 Governance and Risk Update

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee:

1. Receive and note the contents of this report as a status update for Governance and Risk.
2. Note that the ARMC Charter and Terms of "Reference are to be updated and aligned.
3. Note that feedback provided by the Committee to Management for suggested improvements in the workspace moving forward. **Carried**



13. EXTERNAL REPORTS

Nil

14. LEGAL & REGULATORY

14.1 Legal & Regulatory Update

THAT the Audit & Risk Management Committee receive and note the verbal updated provided by the Manager Governance on current matters. **Carried**

15. GENERAL BUSINESS

15.1 External Auditors and Queensland Audit Office Updates

THAT the Audit and Risk Management Committee receive and note the following verbal updates:

1. External Audit Strategy has now been developed and will be circulated to ARMC Members out of session. Proposed external examination to be undertaken by the end of May.
2. Queensland Audit Office. **Carried**

16. NEXT MEETINGS


Thursday, 25 June 2026

17. CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 10:42am.

13.4 Local Government Boundary Realignment - Goondiwindi Regional Council - Lot 14 on B34379 and Lot 15 on SP332758 - Rabbit Fence Road KARARA

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Land Management Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Supports the request to refer the Local Government Boundary realignment to the Local Government Change Commission; and
2. Supports the request from Goondiwindi Regional Council, in regard to Lot 14 on B34379 and Lot 15 SP 332758, being wholly incorporated into Goondiwindi Regional Council's local government area.

REPORT

Background

Council has received correspondence from Goondiwindi Regional Council requesting that Southern Downs Regional Council collaborate with them to commence a Local Government Boundary realignment. The realignment of boundary is only for a small section of the land impacting two parcels of land, described as Lot 14 on B34379 and Lot 15 on SP332758, located at Rabbit Fence Road, Karara.

Legislation

The process for changing a local government area is set out in Part 2 of Chapter 2 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. The Minister for Local Government considers requests to change boundaries. The Minister may consider many factors, including community identity, representation, service delivery, and financial impacts. If the request is supported by the Minister, it is referred to the Local Government Change Commission to be assessed.

Report

The abovementioned parcels of land have been identified as anomalies. A recent boundary survey identified that the local government boundary bisects the lots, effectively dividing the parcels of land between the two different Council areas. These two small areas are in the Southern Downs Regional Council area. The larger portion of the area is in the Goondiwindi Regional Council area.

The owner of these two lots has requested this realignment such that the entirety of the subject lots are contained within the Goondiwindi Regional Council area.

Following the registration of the boundary survey, and during the 2024 land valuation, the department of Resources separately valued the portion of these properties within the Southern Downs Regional Council area.

As a result of this the registered owner is currently receiving two sets of Rates for their property, one from each of Goondiwindi Regional Council, and Southern Downs Regional Council.

Conclusion/Summary

- This gives the registered owner the opportunity to amalgamate their land into one Local Council area for Rates purposes.
- This matter will be referred to the Local Government Change Commission for review and approval.
- Officers recommend supporting this request for the realignment of the boundaries impacting the Lot 14 on B34379 and Lot 15 on SP332758.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The change would result in a loss of revenue to Council of \$1,952 (rates less levies collected for State), based on current figures.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

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

Opportunity

Opportunity to provide more efficient service to the applicant by not having to pay two sets of rates.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Views were sought from Council's Directorates through the Land & Road use working group. Presented at Councillor Information Session on 4 March 2026.

External Consultation

Consultation with the Goondiwindi Regional Council
The Local Government Change Commission will be the decision makers.

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

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

13.5 Renewal of Tenure - Expiry up to 31 December 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer: Land Management Officer	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
		ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Apply the exception in section 236 (1)(c) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* to the disposal of the interest in the land identified in Attachment 1; and
2. Approve the renewal of the tenure agreements in Attachment 1 in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012* whilst adhering to the Council Lease Policy, the Land Title Practice Manual and *Land Act 1994*; and
3. Grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer and delegated officer to negotiate and complete any documents and dealings necessary to implement Council's decision to renew the tenure arrangements in Attachment 1.

REPORT

Background

Council currently has approximately 150 tenure arrangements across the region which are made up of agreements for community, sporting, rural fire brigades, commercial, aerodromes, grazing and telecommunication towers/equipment. These agreements are on both Freehold and State land of which Council is trustee (i.e. Reserves).

Report

In accordance with Section 236 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, a resolution by Council is required to apply an exemption to the disposal of an interest in land other than by tender or auction. Relevant exceptions are where the disposal is for the purpose of, "... *renewing the lease of land to the existing tenant of the land*" and "... *a lease for a telecommunications tower*". The tenure agreements listed in Attachment 1 have either expired or are due to expire prior to 31 December 2026.

In the event that the current tenant does not wish to renew, or if the terms and conditions of the agreement have not been met and maintained during the agreement, Council may decide not to renew and, or alternatively, advertise the land for lease through an open tender process.

The term of the renewed lease agreements will be in accordance with the Council Lease Policy (PL-RP001) which is up to a maximum of ten (10) years. License agreements proposed are for a period of three (3) years.

The tenure arrangements contained in Attachment 1 have been presented to Council to consider and approve on a consolidated basis as a matter of convenience and to assist in processing the volume of tenure renewals in a timely and efficient manner. Each of the tenure arrangements contained in Attachment 1 will be independent of each other and Officers will communicate with each counterparty separately.

Conclusion/Summary

All tenure agreements will be renewed in accordance with *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council Lease Policy (PL-RP001) and the Standard Terms and Conditions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Tenure agreements over Council owned and controlled land will provide revenue to Council from annual rental, rates and charges.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

If tenure arrangements, such as leases, are not renewed, then uncertainty can arise with counterparties, and this can cause reputational damage to Council.

Opportunity

Encourage and enable community involvement and growth.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Views on the renewal of the tenure agreements in Attachment 1 have been sought from Council's Directorates.

Presented at Council Information Session on 8 April 2026.

External Consultation

The existing tenants have been, or will be, contacted to seek interest in renewing tenure agreements.

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Regulation 2012
Land Act 1994
Land Title 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
- Outcome:** 4.4 Council has embedded risk management, good governance, transparency and accountability into what we do.
- Objective:** 4.4.1 Provide assurance through effective governance, audit and risk management practices.
- Outcome:** 4.5 We have genuine and effective partnerships.
- Objective:** 4.5.1 We act in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships, partnerships and trust with our stakeholders at all levels of the organisation.

Policy / Strategy

Council Lease Policy PL-RP001

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 Council's Human Rights Policy PL-CS093.

ATTACHMENTS


1. Attachment 1 [↓](#)

	Full Details	Property Address	Lot and Plan	Freehold / Reserve	Lease Expiry	Renewal Term	Type
1	Allora Sports Club Inc	20 Warwick Street, ALLORA	Whole of Lots 4 and 5 on CP A236, whole of Lot 113 on SP905810; and Lease A and C in Lot 2 on CP A240 on SP273249	Reserve	28/02/2025	10 Years	Lease
2	Tannymorel Rodeo & Campdraft Association Inc	296 Tannymorel Road, TANNYMOREL	Lot 40 on ML 1211	Reserve	28/02/2025	10 Years	Lease
3	Warwick and District Dirt Bike Club Inc	Old Stanthorpe Road, MORGAN PARK	Part of Lot 132 on SP 108821	Reserve	31/07/2025	10 Years	Lease
4	Cadets Branch Airforce	140 – 142 McEvoy Street, WARWICK	Part of Lot 132 on SP 108821	Freehold	31/01/2026	10 Years	Lease
5	Warwick Bridge Club Inc	39e Wallace Street, WARWICK	Part of Lot 1 on W3094	Reserve	30/06/2026	10 Years	Lease

14. INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSETS AND PROJECTS REPORTS

14.1 Wallangarra Rural Water Supply Area Adjustments

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Manager Water	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Approve the inclusion of Lot 185 on BNT1725 in the Rural Water Supply Area.
2. Approve in principle the lots shown in Figure 3 in the Rural Water Supply Area.
3. Delegate approval to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to amend the Rural Water Supply Area to incorporate these lots as they connect to the water supply.

REPORT

The Purpose

The purpose of the report is to extend the Water Supply Area in Wallangarra as required to facilitate potable water connections.

Background

- Council received a request for a water connection for Lot 185 on BNT1725 in Wallangarra (see plan below)
- This Lot is currently outside of the approved Water Supply Areas
- The existing watermain is too small to service this additional Lot



Figure 1 – Lot in question requesting the water connection

The existing water connections are shown in the plan below. Green shading is the urban supply area and red shading is the rural supply area



Figure 2 – Existing water connections

Report

The existing watermain is almost 60 years old and due for replacement. This would normally be replaced with 63mm PE pipe under the "Replace Rural Watermain" program. It is recommended to upgrade this to 100mm watermain. The cost difference is not significant and provides better flow and pressure to customers. Should this area become urban in the future, this will then just require the installation of fire hydrants on this watermain.

The benefits of this upgrade are as follows:

- The existing customers are provided with an improved service
- This applicant can be allowed to connect without any impact on other users
- Facilitates future development of the lots for housing
- Allows for changing the area to urban at minimal cost in the future

Each time there is a request for a new connection, this can require amendment to the water supply area. This requires Council approval. It is recommended that approval be granted in principle of all the highlighted lots shown in Figure 3 below. Further it is recommended that the CEO be delegated approval to amend the area to incorporate these lots as they connect.

- This means all the vacant blocks will not have to pay access charges immediately, only as they connect.
- Water would be available for connection to Wallangarra Cemetery, if desirable.



Figure 3 – Lots to be approved in principle

Conclusion/Summary

It is recommended that this request for the water connection be approved and that the Rural Water Supply area be amended to include this lot.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council will receive income from the access and usage charges for this connection and any other water connections adjacent to the lot.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk If Not Approved:

- Failure to open up sufficient land with water connections expediently for construction will add to housing pressures in our region.
- This will take additional resource to action piecemeal approvals through Council. The Water Supply Safety and Reliability Act only require annual approval of the overall Water Service Area by Council. Approval of additions to the area can be handled much more efficiently and quickly by a delegation to the CEO, freeing up limited resources in the CIS and Council meeting processes.

Opportunity

This provides an opportunity to encourage development of these lots and housing in Wallangarra.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Discussed and agreed outcome with Specialist Water Capital Delivery - Major Maintenance Delivery

This was discussed at the Council Information Session on 8 April 2026.

External Consultation

Nil

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Declaration of Water Supply Areas is covered under the Water Supply (Safety & Reliability) Act 2008.

Corporate Plan

Goal 2 Our Places

Outcome: 2.2 Public places, services and facilities are accessible, sustainable and cost effective.

Objective: 2.2.1 Facilitate and plan for safe, accessible and affordable infrastructure, housing, health and communication services for the community, visitors and industry.

Policy / Strategy

This matter is covered under the Rural Water Connection Policy PL-131.

Legal

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

HUMAN RIGHTS


A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

14.2 26_035-Sewer Main Inspection and Relining

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Water Capital Delivery - Major Maintenance Delivery	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Award the contract to Underground Experts for the value of \$2,537,991.18 ex GST over 2 Financial Years.
2. Allocate funding of \$1,700,000 in the 2026/27 Financial Year to be endorsed in the future budget.
3. In accordance with Section 224 of the Local Government Regulations 2012, enter into a contract with with Underground Experts for the CCTV inspection and relining of sewer mains in Warwick and Stanthorpe.
4. 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.

REPORT

The Purpose

The purpose of the report is to recommend the appointment of a contractor to undertake sewer main inspections and relining to improve the asset lives and effectiveness of our existing sewer asset.

Background

Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) has been awarded up to 60% of funding under the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program (LGGSP) available through the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV) for the Sewer Main CCTV and Relining Project.

A significant amount of the sewerage infrastructure in the Southern Downs Region is aging and requires renewal works to ensure it is kept in good working condition. Infiltration of storm water and ground water into the sewage network can cause flooding conditions at pump stations resulting in overflows to the environment. Sewage overflows are reportable under the Environmental Protection Act which may result in fines and prosecution.

Considering the above risks, sewer mains in Warwick and Stanthorpe identified to be in poor condition were prioritized based on age of catchment and number of incidents. Since 2021, Council has undertaken CCTV and relining works covering over 45% of the total sewer mains in Warwick and 77% in Stanthorpe totaling to 80.9km of sewer main cleaning and CCTV, 18.3km of relining and reinstatement of 73 manholes.

As part of this Works Under Contract (WUC), SDRC aims to undertake a further 30km of CCTV investigation and 10km of relining works in catchment on top of the priority list. This will cover 37% of the total catchment in Warwick and the remaining 23% in Stanthorpe.

The CCTV investigation will ascertain the existing conditions of sewer mains in the catchment and will assist council in identifying additional sewer mains in poor condition for relining. The relining works will restore integrity, prevent collapse or ingress of tree roots and reduce infiltration during wet weather. Relining a sewer main will extend its life for up to 50 years, deferring the cost of full replacement of the mains while addressing water ingress into the sewer network. Relining sewer mains will also assist in reducing operational costs from reactive maintenance to breaks and leaks as well as improving customer service standards.

Report

The Tender was advertised after approval by Procurement for 34 days from 13 January 2026 to 16 February 2026

Tenders were received and assessed by the evaluation panel from:

Rank	Evaluation Criteria	Score	Tendered Price
1	Underground Experts	77	\$2,319,688.68
2	Tenderer B	76.28	\$2,537,991.18
3	Tenderer C	73.11	\$3,069,682.98
4	Tenderer D	72.44	\$2,516,565.27
5	Tenderer E	52.71	\$5,327,947.00

Conclusion/Summary

Underground Experts had the highest overall score and has shown good understanding of the project and Council's requirement in their submission. They have also shown best value for money with the lowest meterage rates for CCTV and relining works.

Conclusion/Summary

Underground Experts had the highest overall score and has shown good understanding of the project and Council's requirement in their submission. They have also shown best value for money with the lowest meterage rates for CCTV and relining works.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project is funded by the LGGSP through DLGWV for 60% of the project value. The project funding received is \$1,723,280.40 with Council contributing \$1,148,853.60, totaling to the value of **\$2,872,134.00**. Breakdown of LGGSP funding and internal contributions are as follows

FY	Funding	Council portion	sub-totals
25/26	\$ 713,081.54	\$ 475,387.70	\$ 1,188,469.24
26/27	\$ 1,010,198.86	\$ 673,465.90	\$ 1,683,664.76
sub-totals	\$ 1,723,280.40	\$ 1,148,853.60	\$ 2,872,134.00

This project is part of Council's 8-year rolling program with a council budget of \$750,000 and \$973,280.40 for the 25/26FY and 26/27FY respectively, with a tentative budget allocated for the

remaining 6 years. It is unlikely that the 25/26 budget will be fully utilized in this financial year with the remaining to be rolled over to the next. Expected expenditure for the 25/26 FY is \$1,200,000.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

This project aims to reduce infiltration in sewer mains in Warwick and Stanthorpe. Failure to do so will result in increase in sewage overflow during peak wet weather events leading to land, surface water and groundwater contamination, health risks and environmental breaches.

Due to recent increase in the price of fuel and oil-based products and materials, there is a risk of increase in capital costs if the project is not contracted now due to the increase in price of raw petroleum-based materials and fuel.

Opportunity

Undertaking CCTV investigations will allow council to have a better understanding of the current condition of the sewer network which will assist in future private works and capital works as well as assisting with managing sewer asset life.

Relining works will also significantly reduce infiltration and blockages which may result in overflow. Recent relining works have shown results in reducing overflows and as a result, maintenance and operation costs to council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Finance regarding budgetary requirements.
Customer services regarding public notifications.
This was discussed at the Council Information Session on 8 April 2026.

External Consultation

Residents likely to be affected due to planned work to be notified a minimum of 48 hours prior to and whilst undertaking the work.

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulations 2012

Corporate Plan

Goal 2 Our Places

Outcome: 2.2 Public places, services and facilities are accessible, sustainable and cost effective.

Objective: 2.2.1 Facilitate and plan for safe, accessible and affordable infrastructure, housing, health and communication services for the community, visitors and industry.

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

Objective: 2.1.3 Advocate for, develop and implement environmental strategies that protect and enhance living assets in urban, rural, natural and agricultural landscapes.

Goal 4 Our Performance

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

Objective: 4.1.3 We “get stuff done” and are solution seekers.

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

Objective: 4.4.3 Our asset management is smart, effective and efficient with robust project selection pathways.

Policy / Strategy

SDRC Procurement Policy (PL-FS010)

Work Health and Safety Policy (PL-HR003)

Legal

There appear 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 Citizen of the Year Policy Amendments

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Manager Community & Customer Services	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council resolves to endorse proposed amendments to Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards Policy PL-SD041.

REPORT

Background

A recent review of Southern Downs Regional Council's (SDRC's) Citizen of the Year (COTY) Awards procedures identified a number of improvements to streamline and simplify the nomination process for community members. The COTY nomination process is guided by the provisions of *Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards Policy PL-SD041* (the Policy). This report presents proposed amendments to the Policy required to enact identified improvements to the nomination process.

Report

Following a review of this year's COTY process Council's COTY Awards Panel made recommendations for improvement including:

- Prior year's nominees (other than winners) can be considered by the panel
- Young citizens to be under 25 years not 18 years as stated in the Policy
- Opening nominations in February so nominations are open nearly all year
- Simplified nomination process requiring less initial information
- Supporting marketing collateral for distribution including QR code to link to entry form.

An Australia Day debrief was also held with SDRC Mayor and Councillors on 4 March 2026 where further recommendations were made.

In response to the above the following Policy amendments are proposed:

- Change 'Community Event of the Year' to 'Community Event *or Organisation* of the Year

- Change Senior Sportsperson or Sports Administrator of the Year to Sportsperson, Sports Administrator, Sports Team of Sports Event of the Year throughout document
- Change Young Sportsperson of the Year to Young Sportsperson, Youth Team or Youth Sports Event of the Year throughout document
- Change Senior Cultural Citizen of the Year to Cultural Citizen, Cultural Organisation or Cultural Event of the Year
- Change Young Cultural Citizen of the Year to Young Cultural Citizen, Youth Cultural Organisation or Youth Cultural Event of the Year
- Section 5.1.2 NOMINATIONS: change 'If no nominations are received which meet the eligibility and selection criteria for a category, then the Award for that category will not be awarded' to *'The panel may consider nominees, other than winners, from the prior year'*
- Section 5.1.10 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: Section change 'For Young Citizen of the Year Awards, the nominees must be under 18 years of age as of the 26 January in the year that the award will be presented' to 'For Young Citizen of the Year Awards, the nominees must be *over 12 and under 25* years of age as of the 26 January in the year that the award will be presented
- Section 5.1.11 TIMELINE FOR AWARDS: change 'September – Nominations Open' to *'February – Nominations Open'*
- Section 5.1.14 COMMUNITY AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS: change 'This event will move venues each year being held on a rotational basis as follows: Dalveen, Allora, Wallangarra, Killarney, Leyburn and Maryvale' to 'This event will move venues each year *and be held in one of the following towns with the host location to be determined by Council:*

Allora, Dalveen, Killarney, Leyburn, Maryvale, or Wallangarra.'
- Section 6 DEFINITIONS: change 'To classify for the Young category, the nominee must be between 12 to 25' to 'To classify for the Young category, the nominee must be *over 12 and under 26 as of the 26 January in the year the award will be presented.'*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

As the proposed Policy amendments are not substantial and/or relate to process community engagement was not undertaken, however community concern is anticipated to be low given the changes enhance opportunities for community members to participate in the Citizen of the Year Awards process. No legislative or other risks have been identified.

Opportunity

The proposed amendments to the Policy serve to facilitate simplified and more inclusive processes and greater opportunity for community participation in the Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

A/General Manager Communities, Planning and Environmental Services, Community Development Officer and Manager Governance.

Mayor and Councillors via Councillor Information Sessions on 4 March 2026 (Australia Day Debrief) and 1 April 2026 (COTY Policy amendments).

External Consultation

Citizen of the Year Awards Panel

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Nil

Corporate Plan

Goal 1 Our People

Outcome: 1.3 Communities are active, healthy and celebrate cultural diversity.

Objective: 1.3.3 Plan and provide facilities and programs that enable participation in sport, recreation and cultural and community activity.

Policy / Strategy

Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Awards Policy PL-SD041

Legal

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

1. PL-SD041 - Southern Downs Citizen of the Year Policy - 2026 Amendments DRAFT [↓](#)

SOUTHERN DOWNS CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS POLICY

PL-SD041



SOUTHERN DOWNS CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS POLICY

POLICY NUMBER	PL-SD041
DIRECTORATE:	Community Services
SECTION:	Community Development
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	Manager Community Services
DATE ADOPTED:	24 August 2016
DATE TO BE REVIEWED:	20 August 2026
DATE REVIEWED:	20 August 2025
APPROVED BY:	

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
01/09/18	1	Alteration at General Meeting
11/11/20	2	Reviewed with amendments at sections 2, 5.1.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.5 and 5.1.9
31/08/22	3	Transferred to new corporate template, 5.1.7
06/02/23	4	Reviewed with amendments at sections 1, 5.1.1.1, 5.1.7, 5.1.8, 5.1.9
12/07/23	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1- Policy background updated to reflect the historic relevance and cultural awareness surrounding Australia Day. • Section 2 – Purpose has been amended to correctly reflect the Policy intention. The specifics of the award categories are now appropriately located within Section 5.1.1 of the Policy. • Section 4 – Legislative context updated to include The Australian Citizenship Code. • Section 5.1.3 – Selection criteria adequately updated to correctly reflect the Selection Criteria and formatting of the Policy document. Selection Criteria removed the requirement to be a resident of the Southern Downs regarding the activity or outcome achieved in the Southern Downs Regional • Section 5.1.6 – Award recipients formatting update to correctly reflect the policy document. Existing context of the policy updated to correctly reflect the process. • Section 5.1.7 – Announcement of awards updated in response to feedback to acknowledge nominees publicly before the event. • Section 5.1.8 – Timeline for awards updated to provide transparent direction for Officers to complete the required tasks in a realistic timeframe and feedback.

2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections 5.1.9, 5.1.10, 5.1.11 - Formatting update to correctly reflect the Policy document and provide clear direction regarding the level of support provided.
16 August 2024	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2- Purpose has been amended to include the proposal of removing the Northern and Southern categories and creating the new list of categories, region-wide with an inclusion of Young and Senior. Section 5.1.1 – Policy Details has been updated to include a newly proposed selection panel including three community members through EOI. Section 5.1.1.a – An addition of the selection criteria when processing EOI’s to select suitable community panel members. 5.1.4 – Addition of eligible nominees outside of the region for relevant reasons 5.1.6 – Addition of eligible nominees outside of the region for relevant reasons Section 5.1.7 – Timeline for awards minor changes to reflect the proposed changes to one major event (ceremonies to ceremony). Section 5.1.9 – Announcement of Award Recipients removal of the reference to overarching award as per new proposed award categories in Section 2. 5.1.10 – Addition of explanation of the proposed one major Civic event, rotating throughout the region each year.
16 August 2025	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to policy title Section 2.b, d and f. changed Junior to Young Replacement of Junior term to Young throughout document Section 5.1.1 Include panel in place for Council term and inclusion of Youth Council representatives from the North and South of the region Section 5.1.1.1.1 Include in Assessment Panel Meeting Practices a prestart meeting and a debrief meeting at the end Section 5.1.5 Amended criteria and included further clarification in 5.1.6, 5.1.7, 5.1.8 and 5.1.9 Section 5.1.14 Added locations
18 March 2026		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change Community Event of the Year to Community Event or Community Organisation of the Year throughout document Change Senior Sportsperson or Sports Administrator of the Year to Sportsperson, Sports Administrator, Sports Team of Sports Event of the Year throughout document. Change Young Sportsperson of the Year to Young Sportsperson, Youth Team or Youth Sports Event of the Year throughout document. Change Senior Cultural Citizen of the Year to Cultural Citizen, Cultural Organisation or Cultural Event of the Year Change Young Cultural Citizen of the Year to Young Cultural Citizen, Youth Cultural Organisation or Youth Cultural Event of the Year Section 5.1.2. Include nominees, other than winners, from prior year as eligible to be considered by the panel. Section 5.1.10 and 6. Amend Young Citizen eligibility from under 18 to over 12 and under 25 as of 26 January in the year the award is to be presented. 5.1.11 Change nominations open from September to February 5.4.1 Remove prescribed rotational basis for host venue



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1 POLICY BACKGROUND

Celebrated on 26 January, Australia Day is an opportunity to inspire national pride, and for all Australians to celebrate being an Australian citizen and to recognise and reflect on the privileges we all have as citizens.

Furthermore, Australia Day provides an opportunity to welcome new Australians to our Country and our region, through the Citizenship Ceremonies

The Australia Day Civic Ceremonies are organised in accordance with the Australian Citizenship Code (The Code).

Citizenship ceremonies must be non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular. They must not be used as forums for political, partisan or religious expression, for the distribution of political material or the sale of souvenirs.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to outline a process for the administration of Council's Australia Day Awards. Australia Day Awards are presented in the following categories:

- a. Senior Citizen of the Year Award
- b. Young Citizen of the Year Award
- c. Senior Sportsperson, Sports Administrator, Sports Team or Sports Event of the Year Award
- d. Young Sportsperson, Youth Sports Team or Youth Sports Event of the Year of the Year
- e. Senior Cultural Citizen, Cultural Organisation or Cultural Event of the Year Award
- f. Young Cultural Citizen, Youth Cultural Organisation or Youth Cultural Event of the Year Award
- g. Community Event or Community Organisation of the Year Award

The award recipients will be chosen from nominations received during the nomination period.

3 SCOPE

Southern Downs Regional Council celebrates Australia Day each year with awards to recognise the achievements of our community members and organisations. Furthermore, Australia Day provides an opportunity to welcome new Australians to our Country and our region, through the Citizenship Ceremony.

4 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*

5 POLICY DETAILS

5.1 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

5.1.1 ASSESSMENT PANEL

An awards assessment panel will be appointed by Council and will comprise:

- The Mayor or representative; and
- Two (2) Councillors
- Three (3) members of the community
- Two (2) members of the current SDRC Youth Council cohort, with one (1) representing the North of the region and one (1) representing the South of the region.

The three members of the community will be selected through an Expression of Interest ("EOI") process.



Apart from the SDRC Youth Council members, the awards assessment panel will be in place for the term of the Council.

5.1.1.1 Criteria for Selection Process of Community Panel Members:

Expertise and Experience:

- Relevant experience in fields related to the awards' categories (e.g., community events, community sports) or,
- Professional or academic background that demonstrates an understanding of the criteria for the awards.

Community Engagement:

- Active involvement in the community or relevant organisations.
- Experience in volunteering or working in roles that contribute to the community.

Diversity and Inclusivity:

- A diverse representation of backgrounds, including life experience, community representation, gender, equity experience and/or cultural background.
- Ability to bring diverse perspectives and insights to the decision-making process.

Knowledge of the Awards:

- Familiarity with the history, purpose, and criteria of the Australia Day awards.
- Understanding of the significance of the awards and the impact they have on individuals and the community.

Leadership Qualities:

- Demonstrated leadership in relevant areas, such as community service, professional fields, or civic engagement.
- Ability to guide discussions and decisions effectively.

Commitment to Confidentiality:

- Willingness to maintain confidentiality regarding the nomination process and panel discussions.

Conflict of Interest:

- Absence of conflicts of interest related to the nominees or the award categories.
- Full disclosure of any potential conflicts and an understanding of how to manage them

Selecting panel members with these criteria can help ensure a fair, diverse, and effective decision-making process for the Australia Day awards.

5.1.1.1.1 Assessment Panel Meeting Practices

Before any meetings, the assessment panel will meet to review the learnings from the previous year and to discuss any assessment criteria that require a clarification for consistent application in the assessment.

At least one panel meeting must be convened to consider nominations for the Award categories. Additional meetings may be convened if deemed necessary. This panel and any additional panel meetings should be conducted face-to-face where possible.

All members are required to be given a Notice of Meeting of the Assessment Panel, with at least five (5) working days' prior notice being given, where practicable.

All panel members will be provided with information on all nominations received for the assessment meeting. The Mayor will chair the meeting/s.

All elected members on the panel are required to vote for each Award, except if an elected member has a conflict of interest in relation to a nominee.

Panel members unable to attend the meeting/s can lodge their vote with the panel via email prior to the meeting.

All discussions relating to the assessment of nominations and decisions on final award recipients must be kept confidential until the award recipients have been notified, and Council has issued a media announcement.

Where a panel member is unavailable, or fails to provide their assessments by the required date and time, their votes will not be accepted and the decision will be determined by the remaining panel members.

In exceptional circumstances, for example, where the nomination period has been extended to January of the year in which the Awards will be presented, the assessment panel may be convened entirely by an online method, such as email or an MS TEAMS meeting.

After the event has been held, the assessment panel will convene to reflect on the program for that particular year and document through the Chair any learnings and/or opportunities for inclusion in future years.

5.1.2 NOMINATIONS

All nominations for the Awards must be lodged on the official nomination form by the closing date and time.

Nominations that do not meet the eligibility and selection criteria or are not submitted on the official nomination form will not be considered. The nomination closing date may be extended if Council deems it beneficial to the number and quality of nominations. Advice of closing date extension must be made available to the public.

Late nominations are also considered ineligible.

The panel may consider nominees, other than winners, from the prior year.

5.1.3 NUMBER OF AWARDS PERMITTED IN EACH CATEGORY

Only one award is to be granted for each Award category. In the event of a tie in any category, an additional Award will be presented in that category only. It is preferred to grant an Award only once to any individual in each year.

5.1.4 INELIGIBLE PERSONS

- Present Local Government Elected Members (Councillors), and Federal or State politicians.
- Present members of the Australia Day Assessment Panel.
- Individuals that nominate themselves.
- Previous recipients of Australia Day Awards will not be eligible for an award in the same category for a period of five (5) years. A person whose residential address is located outside of the Southern Downs Local Government Area (students studying externally may still be considered, as well as

Southern Downs locals who are living elsewhere due to the nature of their community contribution

5.1.5 SELECTION CRITERIA

- The award must be for community work performed principally within the Southern Downs Local Government Area.
- Consideration may be given to a nominee’s community activities and work undertaken in the years prior to the nomination year.
- Referee supporting statements must be provided with any nominee submission

5.1.6 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The nominee:

- Has been an inspiration/positive role model for their peers/community/region.
- Has shown a significant and outstanding contribution to the community.
- Has demonstrated a high level of personal, academic or professional achievement with demonstrated benefits for others.
- Shows vision, leadership, innovation or creativity.

5.1.7 SPORTSPERSON, SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR, SPORTS TEAM OR SPORTS EVENT OF THE YEAR

The nominee:

- Is an outstanding sports person, - sports administrator, sports team or sports event with a noteworthy record of achievement in sport.
- Has represented their sport fairly and positively

5.1.8 CULTURAL CITIZEN, CULTURAL ORGANISATION OR CULTURAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

The nominee:

- Has provided outstanding contributions bringing long or short term- benefits to the arts and/or cultural community.
- Shows vision, leadership, innovation or creativity in the arts and/or cultural community

5.1.9 COMMUNITY EVENT OR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

The nominee:

- The social, cultural and/or economic benefits the contribution has brought or will bring to the region;
- Significant volunteer involvement.
- Excellence in their field or previous awards or recognition received.
- Brings recognition or credit to the community or region.

5.1.10 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A nominee:

- must be an Australian Citizen (except where the nomination is for Community Event or Organisation of the Year). must be a resident of the Southern Downs Local Government Area (students studying externally may still be considered, as well as Southern Downs locals who are living elsewhere due to the nature of their community contribution i.e. Olympians, community advocates, Australian

ambassadors).

- must not have received an Award in the same category within the previous five (5) years.
- must meet the age criteria where applicable. For Young Citizen of the Year Awards, the nominees must be over 12 and under 25 years of age as of the 26 January in the year that the award will be presented.
- cannot apply on their own behalf.

Nominations must:

- be submitted on Council's official nomination form.
- be received by Council by the advertised closing date and time. Late nominations will not be considered.
- include the name and contact number of at least one referee that can provide supporting evidence for the nomination.

5.1.11 TIMELINE FOR AWARDS

February – Nominations Open

- Award nominations open with public advertising to invite nominations.

November – Nominations Close & Award Recipients Determined

- Nominations close at 4pm on the specified closing date. Council will allow 7 business days for postal nominations to be received, pending the Nomination Form is dated prior to the closing date.
- Closing time for nominations passed
- Council Officer to determine eligibility of nominations.
- Australia Day Awards Assessment Panel to determine final award recipients from eligible nominations received within the applicable time frame.

December – Award Recipients Notified

- Council Officers to notify award recipients and send out a formal invitation to attend a Civic Ceremony.

January – Event Held: Australia Day Civic Ceremony

- Media release announcing award recipients for awards;
- Nomination Certificates presented to all nominees at the Civic Ceremony
- Awards are presented at the Australia Day Civic Ceremony;
- The Civic Ceremony is to be held on Australia Day, January 26, or the three days prior or the three days after Australia Day, as per the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code.

5.1.12 AWARD RECIPIENTS

The award recipients will be determined by the Assessment Panel from the eligible nominations received during the nomination period.

The Awards will be presented to the recipients at a Civic Ceremony to be held in the Southern Downs region.



During their tenure as award recipients, the region-wide Southern Downs Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year northern and southern may be invited to attend and/or speak at Council Civic events such as Citizenship Ceremonies.

Local community groups may also be encouraged to invite the annual Award recipients to attend and/or speak at local functions and events.

5.1.13 ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Australia Day Award recipients will be notified by Council in advance of the civic ceremony.

5.1.14 COMMUNITY AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Council will hold one major event to award the Australia Day Award Recipients, and to conduct the annual Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony (referred to in this policy as the Australia Day Civic Ceremony) in accordance with the Australian Citizenship Act 2007. This event will be open to the public to attend and celebrate. This event will move venues each year and be held in one of the following towns with the host location to be determined by Council:

Allora, Dalveen, Killamey, Leyburn, Maryvale, or Wallangarra.

Council will also provide guidance and non-financial support to community organisations across the Southern Downs region in relation to the conduct of their local Australia Day celebrations, and will work with those organisations to guide their Australia Day Local Community Awards.

5.1.15 MORE INFORMATION


Information on the Australia Day Awards and Nomination Forms will be available on Council's website www.sdrc.qld.gov.au or by contacting Council by phone on 1300 MY SDRC (1300 697 372) or via email: mail@sdrc.qld.gov.au

6 DEFINITIONS

TERM	MEANING
Young	To classify for the Young category, the nominee must be over 12 and under 26 as of the 26 January in the year the award will be presented.

15.2 Southern Downs Youth Council Meeting - 26 February 2026

Document Information

 Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL	Report To: Ordinary Council Meeting	
	Reporting Officer:	Meeting Date: 22 April 2026
	Sport and Recreation Officer	ECM Function No/s:

Recommendation

THAT Council receive and note the minutes from the Southern Downs Youth Council Induction Day on 26 February 2026.

REPORT

Background

Southern Downs Youth Council (SDYC) has a role to represent the voice of young people who live, work, study or volunteer in the Southern Downs region, and provide input into Council activities and decisions.

The SDYC program aims to provide young people with opportunities to:

- develop a better understanding of the role and function of local government, our community and local issues
- 'have a voice' - raise issues, exchange ideas, discuss community issues, provide input into Council planning, programs and services and influence local government decision-making processes
- have genuine and regular communication about issues that are important to them directly with the Council.

Report

On 26 February 2026, the Southern Downs Youth Council met at the Stanthorpe Civic Centre from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm.

This was the first meeting of the new cohort for 2026 and past Youth Council members from 2025 were invited to attend. The group was led through the Leading a Legacy Induction Day Program presented by Peer Power Pty Ltd.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025/2026 budget includes \$7,500 for Youth Development.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY

Risk

Southern Downs High Schools do not want to participate in the Youth Council Program.

Opportunity

SDYC Program is a conduit for input into Council activities and decisions from young people within the region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal Consultation

Ordinary Council Meetings
Cr Harslett – Portfolio Councillor
Council Staff

External Consultation

Southern Downs High Schools

LEGAL / POLICY

Legislation / Local Law

Local Government Act 2009

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.

1.1.3 Build confidence in our communities by being visible, empathetic and by actively listening.

Policy / Strategy

PL-CS077 – Southern Downs Youth Policy

Legal

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

A Human Rights assessment has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Southern Downs Youth Council Minutes - 26 February 2026 [↓](#)
2. Peer Power Information Graphic - 26 February 2026 [↓](#)



SOUTHERN DOWNS YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES

26 FEBRUARY 2026

STANTHORPE CIVIC CENTRE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1 PRESENT

Allora P-10 State School – Caitlyn Hoey and Sophie Masters
Assumption College Warwick – Amber Petersen, Lachlan Kajewski and Rose Walsh
Killarney P-10 State School – Ella-Louise Galloway and Leroy Brown
Scots PGC – Benn Hunter and Charlotte Stevens
School of Total Education (SOTE) – Tucker Sullivan and Carmella Jones
Stanthorpe State High School – David Moss and Vanilia Eunson
St Joseph's School – Kayleb Spiller and Margaret O'Dea
Warwick Christian College – Abigail Geraghy, Luca McKenzie and Matthew Hinkley
Warwick State High School – Liam Wren and Sophie Day

Southern Downs Regional Council – Maggi Stanley (Facilitator)
Southern Downs Regional Council – Sue Organ (Minute Secretary)

Observers:

Warwick State High School – Leanne Waples
Warwick Christian College – Naomi Thomas
Assumption College Warwick – Brett Hay

2 MINUTES FROM PERVIOUS MEETING

There are no Minutes from the previous meeting as this was the first meeting of the new Youth Council for 2026.

3 NEW ITEMS

The Manager of Community & Customer Services, Maggi Stanley welcomed the new Youth Council students and last year's Youth Council members to the Induction Day. The traditional *original* custodians of the land were acknowledged.

Fire evacuation procedures, housekeeping and health and safety processes were also presented.

The Manager introduced herself and the Minute Taker, Sue Organ.

The students were then given a brief introduction about the Leaving a Legacy Program that was being presented by Peer Power.

Peer Power Leading a Legacy Program Induction – Youth Council Students

The Manager of Community & Customer Services then introduced the team from Peer Power. An outline for the day was provided and the students were informed that the Mayor and Councillors would be joining them for morning tea.

The students were led through a number of games and ice-breakers. The following was discussed:

Specific Skills:

1. Show up on time (means a bit early)
2. Know the text (know the role you play)
3. Have an idea (about your local issues and have the grit to speak about issues with your Councillors)



They then broke down the discussion points:

- Educate yourself on topics you want to share with Council
- Be passionate about what you are saying
- Know the context around the issue beforehand
- Get to know the Councillors so you can communicate better
- Be confident and engaging

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am for morning tea with the Mayor, Councillors and Senior staff. After morning tea a group photograph was taken. The meeting resumed at 10:50am.

The Youth Council were then asked to list the issues important to them within the Southern Downs region:

Local Youth Issues

1. Want more outside interactions – not online
2. More involvement in the community (more events)
3. Walking from school – pathways not big enough (better walkways)
4. Bats in the park are destroying the trees
5. Destruction of property and littering
6. More benches in the parks
7. Public Safety at night
8. Target advertising more to young people not parents (kid friendly targeted advertising)
9. More ways for young people to engage with older people
10. Road conditions better for young people learning to drive
11. More social events
12. Mental health opportunities to talk to other people
13. More activities outside of school for better health
14. Finding alternative coping mechanisms for mental health
15. Outside of school activities other than sport
16. Giving back to the community and charities
17. More education on waste

Exercise on Names

- Acknowledgement as a person
- Confidence
- Coincidence – two first names
- Strong name
- Break the ice

The meeting adjourned at 12:10pm for lunch and resumed at 12:30pm.

Council's Community Engagement Officer was introduced and gave a presentation to the students on *Renewable Energy on the Southern Downs* discussing the new State Planning Legislation and Community Benefits System.

The students were informed that Council is seeking to better understand community views about renewable energy development across the region including:

- How informed the community feels
- Key concerns
- Where community members see potential benefits, and
- Overall levels of support, opposition or uncertainty.

At the end of the presentation the students had the opportunity to ask questions. The following questions were asked:

Q1. What percentage of farms in Australia have wind turbines?

A1. Though it is hard to estimate a percentage of farmland with turbines, we know that approximately 100 wind farms are operational with more than 200 additional sites being investigated.

Q2. What is the goal number of wind farms for Australia?

A2. Though there is no set goal for wind farms, renewables broadly contribute to the Australian Government's goal of reaching Net Zero by 2050. This means that by 2050, the Australian Government would like the country to collectively off-set 100% of emissions produced by Australia.

Peer Power Session - Definition of Grit

The students came up with their own definition of Grit when talking to adults:

- Having a drive for achievement regardless of your upbringing or situation.
- Earning success through hard work.
- Possessing a strength of character and a spirit that cannot be dampened.
- To have determination and courage to push through any challenge or obstacle thrown your way until you succeed.

The students were asked what they would take away from the Induction Day?

- Need to work together as a group so we can achieve something significant.
- Young people can talk to adults.
- Make the connection with Councillors to build a community that really matters.

Prior to Peer Power finishing their session the students were asked to provide confidential feedback.

The below is a small sample of what was captured:

Students feedback:

Today I learnt that I really like being on Youth Council and I still want to change the future for the better. Thank you so much!

The skills and the knowledge I have gained today will help me become more confident when putting forward ideas to other leaders and the Council in the future. Thank you!

I really enjoyed the ice-breakers even though it was way out of my comfort zone – and also that you kept all of the information clear and engaging. I think it helped me to open up to meeting people and introducing myself.

I found the simple act of introductions and telling other people things about myself was helpful as it made me feel more confident in speaking to people I do not know.



The Manager thanked Peer Power for their professional delivery of the 2026 Induction Day. The students were also thanked for pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone and for their genuine contributions.

The students were reminded that the next meeting will be held on 26 March 2026 at the Warwick Town Hall and they will receive their SDYC badges. Families will also be invited to attend the Ceremony and morning tea afterwards.

4 NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 26 March 2026 at the Warwick Town Hall from 9.30am to 2.00pm.

5 CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 2.00pm.



Leaving a Legacy

Building Greater S.D.R.C. Community

Follow Up - Infographic

26th Feb 2026
 Southern Downs Regional Council
 Year 10's & 11s

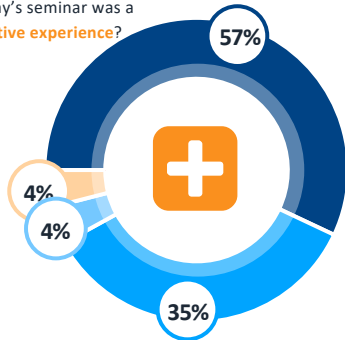
We're adolescentologists @ Peer Power
 (those who study to understand adolescents)

We aspire to learn *with* & *from* you, so that what we have learnt in our lives can be available to you.

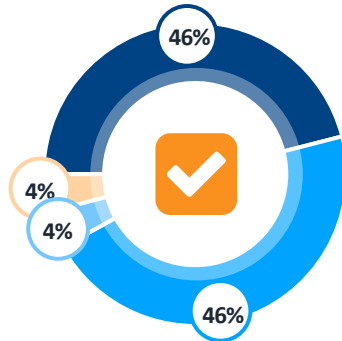
Student Feedback:

Not At All A Little Quite Very Extremely

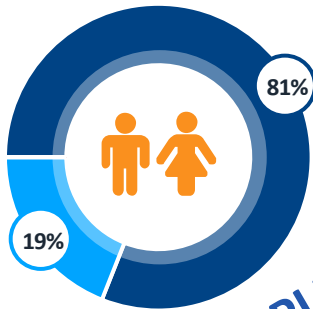
Today's seminar was a positive experience?



Today's seminar's content was relevant and helpful?



The presenters were engaging and communicated well?



PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE VALUABLE

= GREATER THE



Southern Downs REGIONAL COUNCIL

COMMUNITY

Actioning Your Local 'Youth Issues'



Grit Feedback

The Johari Window



Using Johari Window

Appreciative & Grit Feedback

Growth Mindset through Feedback

Learning Names



Name Memorisation

Asking Questions



Social Capital:

[Social Capital and Why it Matters](#)

Local Youth Issues?

3 Things?

LEGACY

"Our national myths often exaggerate the role of the individual heroes and understate the importance of collective effort." Robert D. Putnam

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Leaving a Legacy

Building Greater S.D.R.C. Community



PPA Whiteboard/Butchers Paper



27th Feb
2025



Southern Downs
Regional Council



Year
10's &
11's

We're adolescentologists @ Peer Power
(those who study to understand adolescents)

We aspire to learn *with* & *from* you, so that what we have learnt in our lives can be available to you.

THREE THINGS:

- 1) Show up on time
Means a bit early
- 2) Know the text
Know the role you play
- 3) Have an idea
Speak about 'youth issues'

LOCAL "YOUTH ISSUES?"

- * LACK OF CONFIDENCE
- * MENTAL HEALTH
- * OUTSIDE SCHOOL INTER-ACTIONS - NOT ON-LINE
- * MORE INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY/EVENTS
- * WALK WAYS - NEXT TO ROADS
- * BATS IN THE PARK, DESTROY TREES
- * DESTRUCTION PUBLIC PROPERTY & LITTERING
- * SAFETY @ NIGHT - OTHER THAN SPORT
- * MORE BENCHES

- * BETTER ADVERTISING OF COMMUNITY EVENTS - KIDS FRIENDLY TARGETED
- * MORE WAYS YOUTH CAN ENGAGE/MUSIC FESTIVAL
- * POT HOLES/ROAD CONDITION
- * MORE SOCIAL EVENTS
- * MORE OPS TO TALK ON M.H.
- * CO-CURRIC ACTIVITIES FOR FITNESS
- * PLY COPING FOR M.H.
- * MORE ACTIVITIES OTHER THAN SPORT
- * GIVING BACK TO COMMUNITY
- * MORE ED' ON WASTE SMART

SDRC "YOUTH COUNCIL"

"INDUCTION DAY"

WITH Josh & Mick
M.T 10:30 - 10:45
L 12:15 - 12:40
F.S. 2.00 SELF KNOA (WEEK)

"LEAVING A LEGACY" WITH SOCIAL CAPITAL

HELLO SYSTEM

LEARN NAMES

LEARN THEIR INTEREST

Grit

DETERMINATION & STRENGTH WITH OPINIONS

SOHARI WINDOW

APPROPRIATE DECISIONS

APPRICATIVE & GRIT FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK THAT IS

GENERIC, VAGUE = BLAH-BLAH-BLAH

GRIT = SPECIFIC & DETAILED

"ENGAGING COUNCILLORS WITH GRIT"

SOCIAL CAPITAL = PEOPLE & RELATIONSHIPS ARE VALUABLE

SOCIAL CAPITAL IMPROVES COMMUNITY

IE: HOW MANY NAMES YOU KNOW

- WE FUNCTION MORE EFFECTIVELY
- OUR ACADEMIC RESULTS IMPROVE
- OUR BULLYING/CONFLICTS REDUCES
- CRIME RATES DECREASE

Grit: DETERMINATION & STRENGTH WITH OPINIONS

- * HAVING A DRIVE FOR ACHIEVEMENT REGARDLESS OF UPBRINGING OR SITUATION. EARNING SUCCESS IN THE TRENCHES THROUGH HARD WORK, POSSESSING A STRENGTH OF CHARACTER & A SPIRIT THAT CANNOT BE DAMPENED
- * TO HAVE THE DETERMINATION & COURAGE TO PUSH THROUGH ANY CHALLENGE OR OBSTACLE THROUGH YOUR WAY UNTIL YOU SUCCEED

SESSION OUTLINE

The primary goals of the session were to enable students to:

1. Be ready to attend and contribute ideas about 'youth issues' to their first meeting on 27th March
2. Become aware of Tom Hanks '3 things' (skills he learnt about acting)
 - Show up on time – Know the text – Have an idea
3. Consider the benefits of leading a legacy based on Robert Putnam's **Social Capital**, (communities improve by simply learning others names, the community functions better, academic results can improve and conflicts reduce).
4. Practice the skills of learning name recall techniques
5. Exploring the 'youth issues' others are interested in addressing through 'asking questions'
6. Developing confidence exploring skills of 'feedback' specifically appreciative and grit feedback
7. Experience 'Constructive Convos with Councillors' pitching several local 'youth issues', receiving feedback from Councillors about the pitch, then 're-pitching' with increased Grit to another Councillor building on that feedback to improve pitch.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Leadership:** the deliberate choice to take responsibility and the initiative to inspire others to realise their potential and capacity individually and collectively within the community.
- **Local 'Youth Issues':** areas of concern, Youth Council members are passionate about addressing.
- **Social Capital:** People and Relationships are valuable. The more you add value to people you don't know and the more you add value to the people you do know will create a greater community i.e. how many names you know
 - We function more effectively
 - Our academic results improve
 - Our bullying/conflicts reduces
 - Crime rates decrease
- **Asking Questions:** skills to express and expand on 'youth issues' by using open questions like, 'who, what, when, where, how and why'.
- **Johari Window:** Window for seeing your relationship with others.
 - **Appreciative Feedback:** Havin a drive for achievement regardless of up bringing or situation. Earning success in the trenches through hard work. Possessing a strength of character and a spirit that cannot be dampened. To have the determination and courage to push through any challenge or obstacle thrown your way until you succeed.
 - **Grit Feedback:** Being specific and detailed, than generic and vague (blah-blah-blah) when responding to a person's ideas regarding 'youth issues' for their encouragement & growth.

"Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people."
Peter Strople

"Legacy. What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see."

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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 Appointment of Audit and Risk Management Committee Chairperson

Reason for Confidentiality

This item is considered confidential in accordance with section 254J(3)(i) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, as it contains information relating to a matter the local government is required to keep confidential under a law of, or formal arrangement with, the Commonwealth or a State.

18. GENERAL BUSINESS