



ATTACHMENTS TO MINUTES GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

25 JULY 2018

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19 July 2018

Transport and Public Works Committee
Email: tpwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Submission Inquiry into Transport Technology

The Southern Downs Regional Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Transport and Public Works Committee which has resolved to undertake an *Inquiry into Transport Technology—the challenges and opportunities which technology will bring to the transport sector in coming years*.

Southern Downs Regional Council notes that the terms of reference are as follows:

- identifying trends and changes in fuel type usage in the sectors of personal transport, freight transport and public transport, such as the increasing uptake of hybrid and electric vehicles
- examining the readiness of the transport network for increasing electrification of vehicles in coming years
- identifying other emerging technological factors which will impact on transport networks into the future, such as driver aid technology and 'driverless car' technologies
- examining how technology is affecting employment arrangements in the transport industry, particularly in the food delivery area.

Recently, Southern Downs Regional Council approved a large scale solar farm that will be operated by the University of Queensland. This is one of a number of solar farms that have either been approved or are planned for the Southern Downs Region. It is envisaged that the project is expected to generate a range of significant benefits for the Southern Downs, including jobs, educational opportunities and investment in the region.

The 150ha solar farm will be constructed at Sladevale near Gleasons, Jensens, Robinson and Freestone Roads, and will generate about 160,000 megawatt hours of clean energy (MWh) each year, enough to power 27,000 average homes. Construction is planned to start by the end of 2018, directly creating more than 100 jobs during construction and several ongoing employment opportunities.

As part of a Memorandum of Understanding between Southern Downs Regional Council and the University of Queensland there are a number of opportunities that will support the use of electric vehicles. The Memorandum states that the parties will seek the,

- *Development of visitor information facilities on the site, as well as the undertaking of regular guided tours of the facility.*
- *Establishment and operation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure on or nearby to the site, with the facilities being free to use for the general public.*

- *The possible supply to SDRC of clean energy from the project at a competitive price to power Council's facilities and to help reduce Council's operating costs.*
- *Jointly create an annual scholarship program to encourage high achieving students from the Southern Downs Municipal Region to undertake studies in an energy or engineering related field at UQ.*
- *Consider the undertaking of joint research that that may lead to innovation in the use of renewable energy for activities associated with local government.*
- *Consider the provision of support for funding applications that would be of benefit to each of the parties.*

Southern Downs Regional Council believes that the objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding could contribute to the trends and changes in fuel type usage in the sectors of personal transport, freight transport and public transport, such as the increasing uptake of hybrid and electric vehicles, as well as examining the readiness of the transport network for increasing electrification of vehicles in coming years. Council believes that it would be appropriate for the State Government to support additional research in these areas using the solar farm and the expertise of the University of Queensland and the potential practical application of innovation through Council's light and heavy fleet. It is also noted that Warwick's Morgan Park Raceway offers world class infrastructure for the testing of vehicles.

The Southern Downs Regional Council supports the further development of infrastructure to allow for the charging of electric vehicles along key transport routes and would like to work with the Queensland Government in encouraging the uptake of Electric Vehicles in Australia and the continual development of the Queensland Electric Super Highway, which will run through the Region. Council has already been briefed on this exciting opportunity and is considering how it can best leverage economic development options and capture additional tourism expenditure. The tourism sector in the region accounts for approximately 6% of the economy. The region is a recognised short-break destination for South East Queensland, particularly during the colder months. Opportunities exist for the region through the attraction of more visitors and events to the region. The Region also accommodates those travelling from Melbourne to Brisbane / Gold Coast and it is important to continually develop product and infrastructure that will cause these travellers to stop and contribute to the local economy.

Council recognises that communities that adapt quickly to this new technology will have the potential to leverage additional economic benefits from increased visitation from tourists, who recognise the importance of strategically located charging stations that are linked to renewable energy facilities.

In addition, the Southern Downs Regional Council believes that renewable energy facilities located in the Region will attract start-up businesses, new forms of commerce and entrepreneur activities, as well as offering the opportunity for more retail expenditure as people wait for their vehicles to be charged. Council believes that in the longer term this retail expenditure may have the potential to exceed the income gained from expenditure on energy. Potentially, Council in partnership with local businesses for example explore the opportunity to offer customers free charging, when they can demonstrate spending of over '\$x' amount in the central business district. Some customers in the United States are currently able to operate their Electric Vehicles totally free of charge, by utilizing free charging points and by discounts offered by local businesses. This may be an opportunity that needs to be further explored in the future.

Within the Southern Downs and beyond, Warwick is recognised as a transport and logistics centre. Council believes it has the capacity to become a pilot site for larger scale electric powered freight transport to demonstrate new technologies. Transport, Postal and Warehousing is the region's 7th largest employer and 5th largest contributor to economic output. The Southern Downs is well located on the crossroads of the New England and Cunningham Highways; it is two hours from Brisbane and one hour from Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport. There is an existing support industry for transport and logistics in the region.

In the near future Council will also give consideration to changes in both its light and heavy fleet to access hybrid and electric vehicles, thereby lowering operating costs and reducing costs to ratepayers.

Council is already seeking electric car and battery manufacturers to consider the Southern Downs as a location for these industries to develop and thrive. Council has the opportunity to work with local agricultural businesses as both John Deere and Caterpillar are currently manufacturing electric tractors and earthmoving equipment. The electric vehicle application to the agricultural industry in Australia still has so much growth and the possibilities are endless for farmers, noting that agriculture is the major contributor to the Southern Downs local economy.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the region's primary industry across employment, exports, industry growth and economic value. It employs 17.4% of the workforce and accounts for 22.5% of the region's economic turnover. The sector has many industry-leading operators located in the region and accounts for almost half of the value of the region's exports. Southern Downs is well positioned to supply increased demand for agricultural produce with capacity to expand. Furthermore, there is strong growth in demand for higher value food products to come from the growing and middle and upper class in Asia. Premium foods grown in the Southern Downs, such as meats and fruits, can expect increased demand over the longer term, domestically and internationally.

It is noted that in 2012 the Illinois Caterpillar factory in the United States sold their 500th D7E dozer. It is estimated that customers using the D7E have saved 5.3 million litres of diesel to date. John Deere released its first electric high-power tractor in 2016. The company says a full battery charge lasts for approximately four hours of normal use and requires three hours of charging time. The lifespan of the battery is approximately 3100 charge cycles. It is likely technology will improve the duration of the battery power in the near future creating more opportunities for the agricultural sector.

In the future Council may go down the path of establishing a driver education facility for young people and it may be that many of the vehicles in this facility could be electric vehicles.

Southern Downs Regional Council would be interested to explore pilot programs that relate to public transport, especially in assisting residents to commute between the principal population centres of the Southern Downs to the smaller villages and hamlets of the area. If social isolation or access to employment can be overcome by cost effective sustainable transport then this is an option that requires further investigation. Council believes there is a genuine opportunity to see how affordable public transport can be implemented in areas experiencing social isolation.

Potentially another avenue for exploration may be the use of solar passenger trains on existing rail infrastructure to improve connectivity between small towns, villages and hamlets to allow people to have access to medical, retail and recreational facilities. The Southern Downs Regional Council welcomes future developments into renewable energy and will look at further applications for solar panels on top of civic facilities and the

potential to follow Lismore City Council, who have installed floating solar panels on their waste water ponds.

At present Southern Downs Regional Council is involved with a Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Project, which involves Strategic Assessment of Service Requirement for renewable energy projects including hydropower, within the Southern Downs Region. The outcomes of this Assessment will inform Council as to the next steps that are to be considered in the development of renewable energy options in the future.

Therefore, with regard to identifying trends and changes in fuel type usage in the sectors of personal transport, freight transport and public transport, such as the increasing uptake of hybrid and electric vehicles, Southern Downs Regional Council believes that through its existing relationship with the University of Queensland and national recognition as a freight and distribution centre, it is well positioned to become a major destination for research and development in the renewable energy transport sector.

In relation to the readiness of the transport network for increasing electrification of vehicles in coming years, Southern Downs Regional Council submits that with the impending construction of the University of Queensland solar farm and the high number of visitors to the municipality, the Southern Downs is an ideal location to trial charging stations and ancillary infrastructure for Electric Vehicles, whether they be light or heavy fleet.

Furthermore, it is submitted that the Southern Downs region could potentially provide suitable environment for vehicle testing and driverless technology research. It is noted that there are already businesses on the Southern Downs producing technology for driverless vehicles.

Finally, given the large number of transport based industries, based in the Southern Downs (Wickhams, Lindsay Brothers, Hardy's Haulage, to name a few) Council believes that there would be the opportunity to examine how technology is affecting employment arrangements in the transport industry, particularly in the food delivery area utilising practical data and demonstrated experience.

It is important that Transport and Main Roads start planning to accommodate electric vehicles into their regional road strategies and the planning of their long term freight networks.

Southern Downs Regional Council thanks the Transport and Public Works Committee for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into Transport Technology*.

**Southern Downs Regional Council
2017/18 Operating Budget**

Current Actual to Period 12 \$	Description	Adopted Current Budget 2017-18 \$	Revised Budget 2017-18 \$	Change \$ (Proposed less Current)	Change % (Proposed less Current)	Notes
	Revenue					
	Operating revenue					
	Rates and Utility Charges					
30,897,491	General rates	30,863,950	30,863,950	0	0.0%	
285,382	Rural fire brigade levy	284,901	284,901	0	0.0%	
12,264,019	Water	11,922,910	11,922,910	0	0.0%	
8,529,468	Waste water	8,484,939	8,484,939	0	0.0%	
4,324,961	Waste management	4,321,926	4,321,926	0	0.0%	
110,695	Invasive Pest Control Separate Rate	209,330	209,330	0	0.0%	
56,412,016	Total rates and utility charges	56,087,956	56,087,956	0	0.0%	
(1,805,644)	Less: Discount	(1,802,011)	(1,802,011)	0		
54,606,372	Net rates and utility charges revenue	54,285,945	54,285,945	0	0.0%	
	Other Operating Revenue					
4,553,801	Fees and charges	3,936,501	3,936,501	0	0.0%	
1,573,881	Interest Income	1,055,000	1,055,000	0	0.0%	
509,274	Leasing and rent	499,132	499,132	0	0.0%	
7,741,536	Operating grants and subsidies	7,765,167	7,765,167	0	0.0%	
2,001,687	Recoverable works	2,260,000	2,260,000	0	0.0%	
451,352	Other revenue	333,809	333,809	0	0.0%	
71,742,909	Total operating revenue	70,135,554	70,135,554	0	0.0%	
	Operating expenses					
21,805,539	Employee costs	22,079,234	22,079,234	0	0.0%	
(1,199,115)	Employee ancots / (recoveries)	(1,324,750)	(1,324,750)	0	0.0%	
759,646	Councillors' Expenses	788,880	788,880	0	0.0%	
1,136,626	Community Grants	1,078,260	1,078,260	0	0.0%	
10,857,553	Contracts and Services	14,056,757	14,056,757	0	0.0%	
12,874,645	Materials	13,573,027	13,573,027	0	0.0%	
1,542,896	Finance Costs	1,676,380	1,676,380	0	0.0%	
347,711	Other Expenses	392,715	392,715	0	0.0%	
14,707,900	Depreciation	15,526,095	15,526,095	0	0.0%	
(2,084,405)	Plant Hire / (recoveries)	(2,002,651)	(2,002,651)	0	0.0%	
602,154	Rates on Council Properties	553,122	553,122	0	0.0%	
61,412,143	Total operating expenses	66,397,068	66,397,068	0	0.0%	
10,390,760	Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	3,738,486	3,738,486	0	0.0%	
	Capital amounts					
1,592,221	Capital contributions	1,294,317	1,610,753	316,436	24.4%	
14,724,842	Capital grants	19,707,198	19,277,496	(429,702)	-2.2%	
11,674	Capital Income other	522,766	522,766	0	0.0%	
(1,003,415)	Profit/ (Loss) on disposal	(120,000)	(120,000)	0	0.0%	
15,325,322	Total of capital amounts	21,404,281	21,291,015	(113,266)	-0.5%	
25,656,081	Net Result surplus / (Deficit)	25,142,767	25,029,501	(113,266)	-0.5%	



23 July 2018

Submission

Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee

1. What are the main barriers to people in regional communities increasing their use of digital technologies and possible solutions for overcoming these barriers?

The main barriers people in the Southern Downs Region currently have with digital technology is the lack of infrastructure and poor planning in some parts. Council believes that's when the opportunity arises extra conduit should be laid when completing major projects. By having this existing infrastructure already in place it promotes future development to those areas.

Other barriers affecting regional communities are socio-economic status and affordability of products offered by telecommunication companies. A majority of companies will only accept online employment applications, which makes submission difficult should their home or area have poor coverage.

The Southern Downs Council, like all other local government authorities, seeks to offer free WiFi to the community and visitors to the region, but acknowledges that there is a substantial cost to the community to accommodate this service. As part of the services delivered by local government, Southern Downs Regional Council remains unclear if this is part of Council's primary service delivery. In the past Southern Downs Regional Council has been quoted figures of in excess of \$200,000 to establish free WiFi networks in Warwick and Stanthorpe, with additional ongoing fees.

The importance of free WiFi cannot be underestimated. For example there is an expectation from backpackers that work in and around Stanthorpe that there will be free internet services. Access to WiFi promotes local businesses, as well as marketing the region to an international audience.

Southern Downs Regional Council would submit that there should be Federal Government funding above and beyond Blackspot Funding that supports free WiFi in the central business districts of towns and villages.

With half of Warwick currently connected via fibre-to-the-node, there is still a high demand for cable to be laid in the industrial estate, which accommodate some of the Region's biggest companies.

The NBN should consider businesses when laying fibre cable, so as to ensure equal opportunities for both businesses and consumers to access broadband services. There is currently a mixture of technologies planned for the Warwick Industrial Estate.

2. How are people in regional communities currently using their broadband service and how might they increase the benefits of using this technology?

People and businesses in regional communities are limited to their take up of online services based on the availability of broadband services. Many homebased and small businesses are

limited in their potential to run additional software such as MYOB, video conferencing programs and Cloud services as there is limited bandwidth available.

The main industry of the Southern Downs Region is farming and agriculture. Some of these farming companies who have limited broadband coverage suffer from not being able to benefit from the latest farm management and accounting systems available, such as Agrimaster, Mistro or Phoenix which are tailored for the agricultural industry.

Households in regional areas are often unable to enjoy luxuries such as Netflix, Stan, Live Streaming and YouTube, because of poor coverage and limited data available from their service providers.

The Southern Downs Regional Council uses SCADA systems at a number of the water and wastewater plants including the Killamey Water Treatment Plant. The SCADA software is crucial to help maintain efficiency, process data for better decisions, and communicate system issues to engineers and plant operators to help alleviate downtime. Currently SCADA sends alerts via the 3G/4G network, however with extremely poor or next to zero coverage in the Killamey area, there is a history of lengthy delays when receiving these messages, raising concerns of reliability for ground staff.

When staff members receive these alerts from SCADA, they are able to remotely access the system to check issues. However, with inadequate coverage this process is often slow and ineffective, forcing staff to travel to the plant, sometimes in the early hours of the morning to rectify issues. There is then a concern for staff welfare as the plant is located in a rural area, where staff mobile phones generally receive no coverage.

3. How can regional businesses better utilise digital technologies to maximise economic benefits?

The Australia Government offers people in telehealth eligible areas access to specialist video consultations under Medicare. This service is to provide patients, who are unable to travel into major cities easier access to doctors and specialists. However, without adequate digital technology and infrastructure this service is not possible for these small rural townships.

4. What skills do people need to get the most from their digital technologies, and where can they learn these skills?

A majority of digital technology skills are acquired through school based programs and TAFE. The Southern Downs Regional Council library offers 'Tech Savvy Senior Classes', which is a program operated in partnership with the Queensland Government and Telstra. This program is aimed at enabling older people, particularly those in remote areas to develop the skills and confidence to use technology for socialising, accessing important services or conducting personal business.

5. Have you had ongoing issues affecting your satellite broadband service? If so, how have you overcome these issues?

Council currently use satellite broadband services at a number of the remote treatment plants and experience no major issues with this service.

6. What economic or social indicators could be used to guide investment to further improve mobile coverage?

It's unfortunate that the main indicator to establish whether further investment to improve mobile coverage is often emergency response time, serious injury or death. An example of this would be Gap Creek Motorbike Park at Maryvale, located 25 minutes from Warwick. The park is a 650

acre property offering camping, 3 motocross tracks and a mix of enduro and trail rides to visitors. The park attracts hundreds of riders every weekend and with very low to zero mobile coverage available, there is a history of extensive delays for emergency services, as riders need to travel back to office to alert staff members.

The Southern Downs Regional Council has renowned black spots along the New England Highway between the two major townships Warwick and Stanthorpe, which cause numerous problems for emergency services, which are faced with delayed response times when reaching patients.

In 2016 the Southern Downs region received three new mobile base stations at Goomburra, The Summit and Yangan, through the Mobile Black Spot funding program. The telecommunications towers provide faster data and better mobile coverage for businesses, residents and tourists travelling through the region.

Initially Council prioritised 15 locations in the region for funding in its submission to the Mobile Black Spot Program, which indicates the need for further investment to improve mobile infrastructure in the region.

Killamey is also a popular tourist destination located just 25 minutes from Warwick. The local community and businesses all suffer from the lack of telecommunication infrastructure in the area. Killamey hosts a number of large events, such as the Rodeo and the Bonfire Night, which attract thousands of visitors and campers to the area.

Killamey also offers various recreational activities such as hiking, 4WD'ing and mountain biking, where there is always the risk of serious injury. With inadequate mobile coverage there are always major concerns when needing to contact emergency services.

7. Is information readily available regarding how to use devices to improve mobile reception in areas with poor coverage? E.g. information about external antenna equipment?

Council does not believe that telecommunication companies openly advertise information about external antenna equipment, possibly because they do not want to promote poor coverage in the surrounding areas. However, the information is available if requested.

8. What emerging technologies will be of most benefit to regional businesses and what are the data needs of these technologies?

5G is an emerging technology offering new frequency and better penetration to improve coverage issues; however it is unknown what the range will be and cost to users.

9. What broadband services are people using other than those available through the NBN?

ADSL and cellular would be the only other options available to the community.

10. How can more competition be encouraged in the provision of broadband services in regional Australia?

Currently the only broadband options for some regional communities is Sky Muster, and even though they offer reasonably competitive rates, they do not offer unlimited data, which almost all other providers offer.

SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL Case Study | Morgan Park Complex

The Morgan Park complex is situated on the south east edge of Warwick, Queensland, only few minutes from the Warwick town centre. Southern Downs Regional Council is the Trustee of Morgan Park which is a major sports and recreation facility. The Complex hosts a range of clubs and events including horse trials (equestrian), polocrosse, dirt bikes, drag racing, circuit racing, model aircraft and high speed driving.

Morgan Park is the home of "horse power" and hosts an event nearly every weekend. Morgan Park has become well known for its international events, including the Inaugural Polocrosse World Cup, Horse Trials World Cup Qualifier and state championships in motor racing.

The Warwick District Sporting Car Club boasts a 3.1km sealed circuit track and conducts motor sport events every weekend of the year, attracting crowds of in excess of 15,000 people.

The Warwick District Drag Racing Association has developed a 200m drag strip with a 550m secondary braking area.

The Warwick and District Dirt Bike Club have built a motocross track with large pit areas and host increasing numbers of participants and spectators for their events.

The Warwick Horse Trials Club manages infrastructure which includes 200 steel yards, 2.5km of water pipe, a club house, a toilet block and a new competition surface. In more recent years, the Club's grounds have played host to regular clinics and competitions and was selected as the venue for the 2013 and 2014 Queensland International Three Day Event. The course continues to improve with fence upgrades and additions and there is a renewed focus to provide consistent and safe footing around the cross country track and in the competition arenas. In October 2016, the Club hosted the Prydes Easfeed International Three Day Event.

Through the Warwick Polocrosse Club, Morgan Park has hosted the most prestigious polocrosse events in Australia and the world including the first ever World Cup in 2003, the subsequent World Cup in 2007 and several National Championships. The facilities offered by the Warwick Polocrosse Club include, seven fully turfied playing fields, one floodlit field for night matches, two grassed practice fields, six toilet blocks/one disabled toilet/four shower blocks, permanent spectator seating for 2,500, club house featuring food and beverage outlets catering for 250 seated/600 stand-up, private corporate entertaining area, private meeting rooms, car parking for more than 1000 cars, 450 covered stalls and 50 day yard, vet facilities with horse enclosure and concrete floor, ambulance/first aid room and electronic scoreboard. The Polocrosse World Cup will be held again at Morgan Park 22- 28 April 2019 and is forecast to attract more than 90,000 visitors to the event.

The level of connectivity at the Morgan Park Complex is very low. At present Council is working with Telstra to determine a solution either through the installation of fibre or a microwave link.

It is disappointing that Telstra has indicated that it potentially needs to rely upon State Government Grants to possibly bring fibre out to the facility or create a system that will deliver a higher level of connectivity.

As indicated both the Warwick Polocrosse Club and the Warwick District Sporting Car Club have major events planned. Connectivity is integral to the success of each of these events and also plays a role in encouraging repeat visitation from local, domestic, interstate and international visitors to the Morgan Park Complex.

Additionally, the Warwick Polocrosse Club has indicated that it is in discussion with Fox Sports in relation to telecasting the event. Telecasting of the event would be a huge coup for the region and would promote the region globally. This is unlikely to occur without improved levels of connectivity.

The Warwick District Sporting Car Club has also indicated that there is the potential for the streaming or telecasting of the Super Bikes and many of the other motorsport events, however the major inhibitor to this occurring is the lack of connectivity.

Putting aside the need for telecommunications infrastructure for promotion and visitors, each of the sports undertaken at the Morgan Park Complex has the potential for serious injury or accidents for those actively involved, as well as those attending the event. Inadequate levels of connectivity increases the risks associated with responding to any emergency or accident that may occur at the Complex. This is a serious and recognized risk that needs to be acted upon by all parties that have an involvement in the Morgan Park Complex.