



CORPORATE PLAN

2021
2026

PEOPLE.
PLACES.
PROSPERITY.
PERFORMANCE.



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Southern Downs Social Profile 2

CEO, Mayor & Councillors 3

Structure 4

Corporate Plan - People 5

Corporate Plan - Places 7

Corporate Plan - Prosperity 10

Corporate Plan - Performance 13

SOUTHERN DOWNS
SOCIAL PROFILE

Estimated Population:

35,407

Regional Area:

7,120 km²

*Source: Community Profile www.sdrc.qld.gov.au

Encompassing the rural centres of Warwick and Stanthorpe, Southern Downs is conveniently located within two hours’ drive from Brisbane and in the high growth region of Southern Queensland.

The region services a growing population of approximately 35,407* and covers an area of approximately 7,120 square kilometres.

From magnificent historic sandstone buildings to sophisticated wine cellars and areas of outstanding natural beauty, Southern Downs offers an annual calendar filled with internationally renowned events and attractions to satisfy all interests.

The region is renowned for producing high quality agricultural products and offers an ideal environment for business and industry growth.

With clean, crisp country air, a low crime rate and a wide range of educational, medical and other community facilities, Southern Downs offers a terrific lifestyle in a welcoming regional community.



Cover: The Head, Condamine River, Southern Downs, Queensland
Back: Maryvale, Southern Downs, Queensland

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CORPORATE PLAN STRUCTURE



EACH THEME IN THE CORPORATE PLAN NOMINATES:

**A Statement
of Intent**

**Over-arching
Outcomes**

**Corporate Plan
Strategies**



PEOPLE



Stay

STATEMENT OF INTENT

OUR PEOPLE live in diverse urban and rural communities where varied cultures are recognised and celebrated for their differences.

OVER-ARCHING OUTCOMES

As a local government we will support community wellbeing and capacity for self-help and mutual collaboration by a range of community services and initiatives that promote the quality of life and opportunity for all to grow, learn, create, care and connect.

STRATEGIES

FOCUS AREA = COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Review engagement and communications strategies to improve trust and joint advocacy in the interests of residents, our communities and the region as a whole.

Deliverables	Outcomes
1. Review and update the Shaping Southern Downs strategy in consultation with key stakeholders including residents, ratepayers and the community.	>> Update complete and consultation constructive. Progress made in achieving key strategic targets.
2. Review Council's Media and Communication Engagement Strategy to increase its effectiveness in improving trust with the community and building Council's brand.	>> Improved community sentiment through survey. Continued good relationships with local and regional media.
3. Advocate for Councillor, staff and community representation on government, non-government committees and task forces relevant to the region.	>> Number of committees with Councillor, Council staff and community representatives.



FOCUS AREA = LEARNING AND DEVELOPING

Engage with communities and advocate on their behalf for greater educational, development and community capacity building opportunities while maintaining connections to Council.

Deliverables	Outcomes
4. Engage with target groups within the community including young people to identify programs that will assist them to develop skills to enhance employment opportunities.	>> Engagement outcomes reported.
5. Lobby education providers to offer increased training and learning opportunities for members of the community.	>> Skills gap completed. Number of agencies consulted to achieve growth in training courses and spaces for learning across a range of programs.
6. Engage with community groups to assist them to increase their connection to Council and their effectiveness and sustainability.	>> Number of targeted consultations undertaken and their effectiveness. Number of programs undertaken. Increased awareness of Council's operations.
7. Offer contemporary library services across the region that reflect the needs of the community.	>> Increased library patronage. Review undertaken as to whether libraries can include and Innovation/Incubation Hub.



FOCUS AREA = WELLBEING AND DIVERSITY

Partner with external agencies and encourage active and healthy lifestyles celebrating cultural diversity.

Deliverables	Outcomes
8. Partner with relevant sport and recreation stakeholders to encourage active lifestyles throughout the region.	>> Number of targeted consultations undertaken and their effectiveness. Number of programs undertaken.
9. Develop and promote our unique artistic and cultural diversity whilst acknowledging and maintaining local heritage.	>> Increased number of events and programs. Increased visitation. Local Heritage Register reviewed and updated.
10. Actively support community initiatives to enhance general community wellbeing.	>> Facilitation of community activities/projects within the region e.g. community garden. Community grants program provides tangible benefits.



Live

STATEMENT OF INTENT

OUR PLACES serve the needs of our people, providing attractive environments for living, working, playing and staying. Our places are accessible, protected, fit for purpose, safe and sustainable.

OVER-ARCHING OUTCOMES

As a local government we will ensure that the built and natural environments are based on a foundation of assets that will be strategically planned, effectively maintained and managed to support the lifestyle of the community and that our parks, waterways and environmental reserves are protected, celebrated and well managed.

STRATEGIES

FOCUS AREA = SAFETY AND PLANNING

Plan and prepare for safe, well managed and maintained, liveable areas minimising adverse outcomes from crime, injury and disaster events.

Deliverables

Outcomes

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Partner with relevant agencies to develop a proactive approach to community safety and resilience in relation to Disaster Management, Bushfire preparedness and other natural disasters. | >> Improved response, recovery and coordination. |
| 12. Rewrite the Planning Scheme in consultation and partnership with the community to ensure sound social, environmental and economic outcomes. | >> New Planning Scheme successfully implemented.
Orderly and balanced development within the region.
Good social/environmental/economic outcomes. |
| 13. Ensure flood data and mapping is readily available to enable appropriate decision making. | >> Residents have access to up to date flood data and mapping. |
| 14. Review the Urban Design Framework program. | >> Urban Design Frameworks' implementation progressed and critical aspects captured by the new Planning Scheme. |



FOCUS AREA = ACCESSIBILITY AND SERVICES

Provide sustainable and cost effective services and facilities to our communities and advocate to State and Federal Government on behalf of our residents.

Deliverables

Outcomes

- | | |
|---|---|
| 15. Lobby and plan for practical and cost effective solutions that provide safe and accessible infrastructure for air, road and rail transport corridors, housing and health services for the community, visitors and industry. | >> Improved transport networks including the New England Highway, the Cunningham Highway, rail links and regional airports. Improved housing and health infrastructure. |
| 16. Advocate for greater regional accessibility to essential services for all residents and visitors. | >> Essential services defined.
Increased number of alliances and partnerships.
Improved access to social housing and health services. |
| 17. Through meaningful community engagement, review Council's level of service to the community, including consideration of needs, wants and resourcing. | >> Service levels defined and adopted by Council. |
| 18. Focus funding and grant opportunities to critical services and infrastructure. | >> Increased funding as a percentage of budget allocated to critical services and infrastructure. Major grants focussed on critical services and infrastructure. |



FOCUS AREA = SUSTAINABILITY

Adopt good practice approaches to environmental management to educate, protect, conserve and sustain our region.

Deliverables	Outcomes
19. Further develop regional waste facilities in accordance with the Waste Management Plan.	>> Waste management plan outcomes are achieved.
20. Implement innovative and affordable waste management 'good practice'.	>> Adoption of innovation within the waste business resulting in an affordable service.
21. Develop and implement a package of water security programs and strategies that ensures a sustainable and reliable water supply for the region.	>> Community confidence improved through educational programs. Appropriate and community acceptable water restrictions. Improved water security.
22. Promote, educate and implement awareness programs in relation to water conservation, waste management, wastewater recycling and environmental health and associated services.	>> Number of effective programs implemented around the achievement of water conservation and waste minimisation targets.
23. Develop policies to enhance our agricultural sector and protect priority agricultural land from invasive pest animals and pest plants and non-rural development incursion.	>> No increase in area of impacted land due to pest animals and plants. The new Planning Scheme adequately protects agricultural land and enterprises.
24. Manage our natural environment and facilitate planning that ensures ecological corridors are recognised and that Council owned and controlled land and open spaces are strategically planned.	>> Environmental Sustainability Strategy adopted by Council and key agreed actions initiated. Desired outcomes incorporated into the new Planning Scheme.



PROSPERITY

Play

STATEMENT OF INTENT

OUR PROSPERITY is supported by a constructive inter-relationship of public infrastructure and private investment, to facilitate sustainability and growth of the local economy.

OVER-ARCHING OUTCOMES

As a local government we will advocate for and support initiatives to create local economic conditions conducive to the attraction and development of an educated, skilled and well remunerated local workforce, a productive and sustainable rural sector and profitable commercial and industrial enterprises.

STRATEGIES

FOCUS AREA = POPULATION GROWTH

Grow our population to improve our long term sustainability whilst maintaining our unique character.

Deliverables

Outcomes

25. Develop and implement a Residential Attraction Strategy and a Job Creation Strategy to attract a diverse range of new residents to the region.

>> Strategies developed and first year action plan implemented.
Second, third and fourth year action plans finalised at annual review.

26. Encourage residential and commercial development by implementing user friendly and proactive practices to make doing business with Council easier.

>> Processes streamlined and more efficient use of staff resources.
Reduced timeframes for assessment.

FOCUS AREA = COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Encourage technology providers to improve services that attract and retain businesses and advocate to other levels of government for nation building infrastructure.

Deliverables

Outcomes

27. Lobby telecommunication and technology providers to improve the quality and depth of services which will assist in the attraction of sustainable businesses within the region.

>> Number of lobbying activities conducted to encourage improved accessibility to high quality services.

28. Implement an effective advocacy program and a plan for securing increasing support for infrastructure investment across the region.

>> Development of an advocacy plan and number of activities resulting in increased support for infrastructure investment across the region.

29. Continue to provide quality core services/functions to the community in the following areas, whilst ensuring that Council's legislative obligations are met:

>> Participation in the development of the Regional Infrastructure Plan.

Services meet legislative requirements.

Level of service maintained.

- libraries and galleries
- building certification
- plumbing certification
- cemeteries
- development assessment
- community/youth services
- parks and gardens
- pools/fitness centres
- waste
- roads and drainage
- water and sewerage
- environmental protection
- pest management
- saleyards





FOCUS AREA = ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Implement Economic Development and Tourism Strategies with a focus on making Southern Downs a destination of choice for businesses and visitors.

Deliverables	Outcomes
30. Progress prioritised initiatives from the Southern Downs Economic Development Strategy under the key sectors of Agriculture & Processing; Industry & Innovation; Tourism & Events and Population Attraction & Retention.	>> Strategy developed, projects prioritised and first year action plan implemented. 2nd, 3rd and 4th year action plans finalised at annual review.
31. Establish an Economic Development and Innovation Committee and investigate the viability and potential benefits of an Innovation / Incubation Hub.	>> Monitor and report on Committee outcomes and Hub viability.
32. Engage with business stakeholders and representative groups in relation to employment and expansion opportunities.	>> Meetings held and supply chain mapping completed.. Local businesses be identified and supported wherever possible for the provision of goods and services.
33. Review infrastructure charges and developer incentives to provide a balanced and supportive approach to investment.	>> Development incentive strategy completed. Number of Lots developed. Infrastructure Charges Register updated and charges recovered.



PERFORMANCE

Work

STATEMENT OF INTENT

OUR PERFORMANCE as an effective local government – striving for excellence in every way – is underpinned by our values which we seek to demonstrate in all we do: Success, Determination, Resilience, and Commitment.

OVER-ARCHING OUTCOMES

As a local government we will seek – in the context of available resources and the demands of our core business – to demonstrate integrity and good governance, an orientation toward quality results through innovation, pursuit of excellence in service provision and continual engagement and communication with our communities and other stakeholders.

STRATEGIES

FOCUS AREA = CUSTOMER FOCUS

Continue a strong commitment to customer service regularly seeking feedback to enhance performance across the organisation.

Deliverables

Outcomes

- | | |
|---|---|
| 34. Monitor and evaluate Council operations and conduct surveys of customer satisfaction levels. | >> Customer surveys completed and data analysed.
Implementation of strategies to address issues identified in the customer surveys to optimise service delivery. |
| 35. Be a 'Customer Led' organisation and embody excellence in customer service, interaction and positive outcomes for our customers. | >> Customer Charter created, implemented and measured.
Customer service training provided to staff. |
| 36. Be a high performing organisation by having high performing and empowered staff through personal and professional development, wellness programs and proactive support. | >> Effective training and wellness programs identified and implemented.
Staff surveys undertaken and improvement strategies developed.
Focus Groups formed and operating effectively. |

Work



FOCUS AREA = ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Continue to pursue good governance, be an employer of choice, leverage technology and manage all assets responsibly.

Deliverables	Outcomes
37. Become an employer of choice – appropriate training, innovative leadership and improved career pathways.	>> Wider range of training offered to staff. Staff surveys completed which reveal an increased satisfaction with Council's approach to organisational development.
38. Invest in smart technologies to deliver better services to the community.	>> Undertake reviews of technology services utilising industry experts. Contemporary technologies used to improve service delivery and communications.
39. Complete, review and continuously improve Asset Management Plans and use them as the basis for prioritising investments in infrastructure renewal, repair and maintenance.	>> All Asset Management Plans completed and reviewed and a robust ten year financial plan including external peer review is prepared.
40. Promote a proactive approach to risk management, including business continuity.	>> Appropriate risks identified and training provided. Regular risk reporting completed and changes to practices introduced if required. Risk register critically reviewed and updated as required.
41. Implement and promote a strong Governance Framework.	>> Audit and Risk Management Committee functional and Internal Audit Plan implemented.
42. Identify core business responsibilities and allocate resources to core business over non-core business.	>> Organisational Structure aligned and resource allocation monitored. Core business and services clearly articulated and funding as a percentage of budget increases.
43. Provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors to the workplace so far as it is reasonably practicable.	>> Compliance with legislative requirements. Safety KPIs reported on.



FOCUS AREA = ENERGY INITIATIVES

Seek opportunities to increase renewable energy sources and reduce Council's carbon footprint.

Deliverables	Outcomes
44. Consider implementing innovative measures to reduce Council's energy use and seek grant funding for alternate energy systems.	>> Reduction in Council's energy usage.
45. Encourage the use of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power.	>> Community uptake of renewable energy sources is increased.
46. Explore pathways to reduce our carbon footprint whilst reducing expenses or generating income.	>> Relevant outcomes considered as part of the new Planning Scheme process. Innovative ideas developed for further investigation. Relevant SD Environmental Sustainability Strategy actions implemented.

FOCUS AREA = FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Pursue efficiency and economy in all activities and seek to improve non-rate revenue sources.

Deliverables	Outcomes
47. Review and maintain strategies to ensure Council's long term financial sustainability and continuous improvement through embracing innovation.	>> Financial statistics demonstrate improvement.
48. Identify and optimise Council's core business requirements in relation to infrastructure and assets to ensure value for money whilst maintaining community support.	>> Core business infrastructure and assets identified and optimised.
49. Actively seek alternate revenue sources and operational savings including accessing grants.	>> Alternative revenue sources explored.
50. Undertake Council's commercial activities in order to maximise revenue streams.	>> Increased return on investment.



FOCUS AREA = PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Continue effective partnerships with the community, neighbouring Councils and Government agencies and strengthen internal coordination and collaboration.

Deliverables

Outcomes

- | | |
|---|--|
| 51. Commit to strategic alliances between Council, other local governments and key agencies. | >> Current strategic alliances are maintained and new alliances are formed. |
| 52. Commit to strong collaboration between Council's organisational units to integrate service and connectivity with the community. | >> Number of internal processes reviewed and customer service improvement initiatives implemented. |
| 53. Proactively engage with media outlets to promote information that is accurate and beneficial for all stakeholders. | >> Document regular interactions with the media. |



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Southern Downs

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

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