

Experience Western Downs

It's the
people that
make it.



WESTERN DOWNS

SHOWGROUNDS STRATEGY

2023–2038

Mayor's Foreword

Welcome to the Western Downs, where we value a quality lifestyle for our residents and take pride in our active, vibrant communities.

An important part of ensuring our quality lifestyle is about making sure our region's showgrounds and reserves are the best they can be and are suited to our communities' needs.

We value the importance of our showgrounds and reserves in the Western Downs – as social meeting hubs, places of recreation, sport, business, or more.

Showgrounds play an important and changing role in the liveability and prosperity of our growing communities. That's why Council is proud to present its Showgrounds Strategy 2023–2038.

This Strategy will help guide Council's investment in our showgrounds and supporting amenities to ensure they are well planned, well used, well governed, and well maintained for all members of our communities for generations to come.

Councillor Paul McVeigh

Mayor



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Acknowledgement of Country

Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Barunggam, Iman (Yiman), Bigambul, Wakka Wakka, and the Jarowair people, as the custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.

Introduction

Showgrounds are critical local assets that reflect the identity and vibrancy of our region. Western Downs Regional Council will support showgrounds as they grow and adapt.

This *Showgrounds Strategy* guides the future direction of showgrounds across the Western Downs, delivering benefit to the community by balancing priorities and needs across the region. This Strategy therefore reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community, as well as material and financial realities.

The development of this Strategy provides an overarching direction for showgrounds in the Western Downs, marking the beginning of a multi-year commitment to develop individual master plans for each Council-owned showground. This Strategy is necessary to ensure that we adapt to future needs by:

- Guiding Council's future capital development of showgrounds assets
- Maximising community benefits in a way that aligns with appropriate standards of service
- Ensuring the changing needs of residents and visitors are acknowledged and reflected

Extensive engagement informed the development of this Strategy, including the creation of our vision and aspirations for showgrounds across the Western Downs. Rigorous best-practice research processes were employed to identify industry-leading showground management practices.

This Strategy will inform the governance, management, and operational planning to address key areas of risk, and support future master planning of showgrounds in our region (for the benefit of all residents and visitors who enjoy them).



Our Showgrounds

The current state of showgrounds in the Western Downs was reviewed and assessed in development of this Strategy.

With the exception of the Chinchilla Showgrounds, all showgrounds in the Western Downs are currently directly or indirectly managed by Council, with various management models and tenure arrangements employed throughout the region. A snapshot of key attributes of each facility is provided below.

The statistics below give insight into the use of showgrounds across the Western Downs. Some showgrounds hold more events throughout the year, while others attract more attendees both on an absolute basis and relative to the size of the local population. These figures speak to the important and different role each showground plays in its respective community. This Strategy will help us plan for the future, ensure our users and visitors have access to showgrounds that support recreational, sporting, and community opportunities.



Bell Recreation Reserve
Local committee management

Annual average attendance: 4,464
Annual average events held: 28
Ratio of attendees to population: 10.6
 (given a local population catchment of 421)¹



Dalby Showgrounds
Council management

Annual average attendance: 16,118
Annual average events held: 87
Ratio of attendees to population: 1.2 (given a local population catchment of 13,219)²

1. ABS 'Census All Persons QuickStats', 2021 2. Forecast.id, 2023



Jandowae Showgrounds
Local committee management

Annual average attendance: 5,693
Annual average events held: 44
Ratio of attendees to population: 5.7
(given a local population catchment of 1,004)¹



Miles Showgrounds
Local committee management

Annual average attendees: 1,400
Annual average events held: 6
Ratio of attendees to population: 0.8
(given a local population catchment of 1,841)²



Tara Showgrounds
Council management

Annual average attendees: 6,074
Annual average events held: 8
Ratio of attendees to population: 3.0
(given a local population catchment of 2,034)²



Wandoan War Memorial, Racing and Recreation Reserve
Council management

Annual average attendees: 3,334
Annual average events held: 20
Ratio of attendees to population: 5.0
(given a local population catchment of 666)¹

Showgrounds Strategy On a Page

Vision >

Showgrounds and recreation reserves in the Western Downs play a pivotal role in the community as spaces that support recreational, sporting, and community opportunities.

They will continue their transformation to become thriving hubs of community and commercial activity. Our showgrounds and recreation reserves help foster a sense of community and support the economic development of our region.

Conversations with our Community have shaped our Strategy >

What we heard from the community

- Strengthening and supporting the management of showgrounds
- Highlighting the community development role and future potential for showgrounds in the community
- Using showgrounds to showcase the best of the Western Downs

What we identified through research

- Showgrounds can harness their potential to offer diversified uses (This aligns to the national and international trend, with showgrounds globally incorporating more innovative or commercial ventures on site)
- Showgrounds are finding it increasingly difficult to find volunteers

Our Guiding Principles >



Well planned



Well governed



Well used



Well maintained

Key strategic options and undertakings

This Strategy outlines our commitment to:

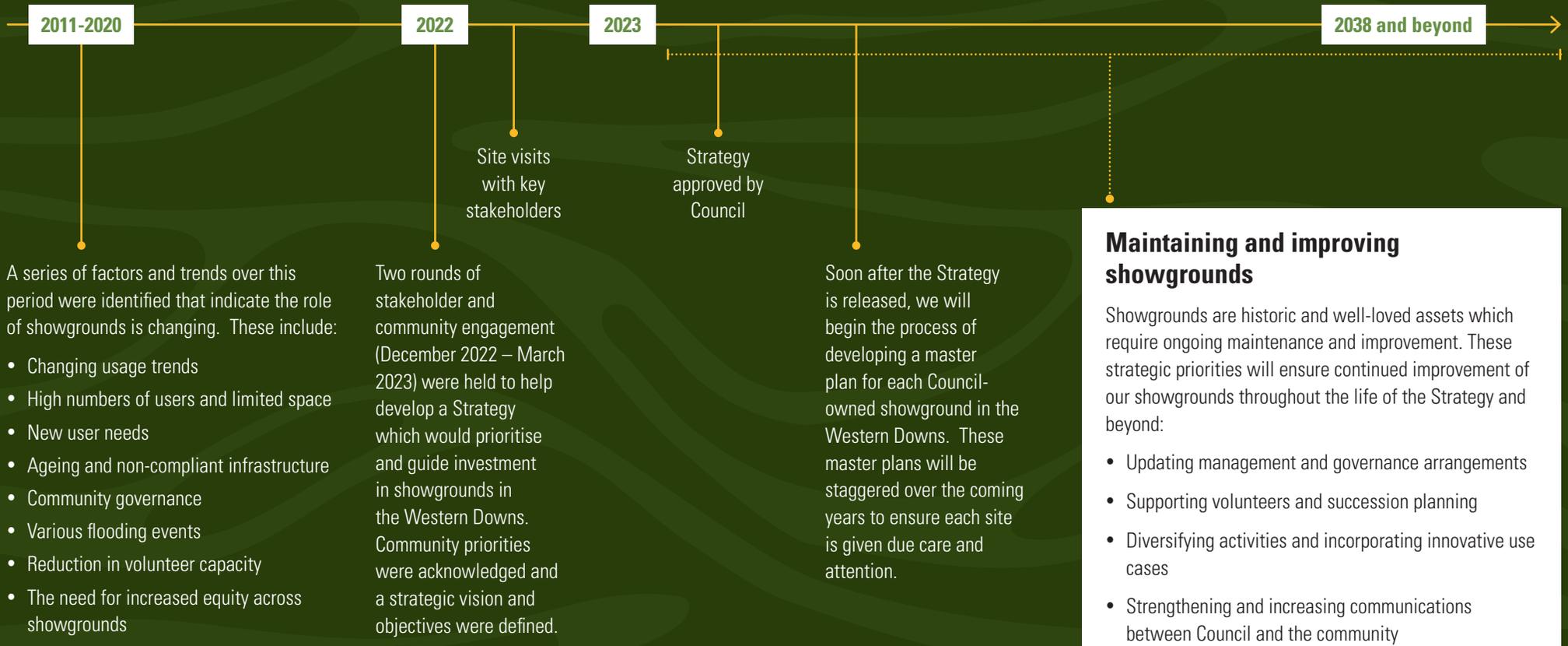
- Continue engagement and dialogue with the community to plan, govern, use and maintain showgrounds in the future
- Consider future needs for our changing population
- Enhance management and governance arrangements to support community needs
- Adequately fund the management of community service delivery
- Improve showground accessibility (in all its forms)
- Explore potential to support innovative uses, ventures, and initiatives at showgrounds

This Strategy also outlines our commitment to specific showgrounds, including the:

- Bell Recreation Reserve
- Chinchilla Showgrounds (privately owned)
- Dalby Showgrounds
- Jandowae Showgrounds
- Miles Showgrounds
- Tara Showgrounds
- Wandoan War Memorial, Racing and Recreation Reserve

Strategy Evolution

This Strategy is the culmination of extensive research, analysis and community engagement, a process which has helped to identify priorities for future investment. The timeline below tells the story of this Strategy's evolution and next steps.



What We Saw

This section presents a small sample of the many statistics, indicators and research findings uncovered through the development of the Showgrounds Strategy.

Use Analysis

	Average Annual Number of Attendees (to the nearest whole number)	Average Annual Number of Events (to the nearest whole number)
Bell Recreation Reserve	4,464 2016-17 to 2020-21	28 2016-17 to 2020-21
Dalby Showgrounds	16,118 2016-17 to 2021-22	87 2016-17 to 2021-22
Jandowae Showgrounds	5,693 2016-17 to 2017-18 and 2019-20 to 2021-22	44 2016-17 to 2017-18 and 2019-20 to 2021-22
Miles Showgrounds	1,400 2017-18 to 2021-22	6 2017-18 to 2021-22
Tara Showgrounds	6,074 2016-17 to 2021-22	8 2016-17 to 2021-22
Wandoan War Memorial, Racing and Recreation Reserve	3,334 2016-17 to 2021-22	20 2016-17 to 2021-22

Across the Western Downs, Showgrounds are used to varying degrees. While the Dalby Showground remain most popular on an absolute basis, the Jandowae Showgrounds and the Recreation Reserves in Bell and Wandoan continue to draw large crowds relative to the size of local populations.

Note. Data represents collective total of usage measured. It is understood that current data collection methods do not include all events, and part of this Strategy is to improve and uplift data collection over time.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Showgrounds attendance in the Western Downs is dependent on many factors including the kinds of events being held and the types of users catered for at each facility.

Demographic profile³

The demographic profile of the Western Downs is forecast to change over the next few decades. This will have impacts on Showgrounds which must adapt to service future needs. A snapshot of statistics forecasting varying population changes over the next 25 years is presented below.



7%

ESTIMATED POPULATION GROWTH

between now and 2046 in the Western Downs Region

12.7% Dalby **3.2%** Tara **6.0%** Chinchilla **10.5%** Miles⁴



5-9 & 25-29 AGE COHORTS

predicted to grow fastest between now and 2036 in the Western Downs



75+ AGE COHORT

predicted to grow fastest between 2036 and 2046 in the Western Downs

³. Forecast.id, Western Downs 'Population Forecast 2023 – 2046'

⁴. Data specific to Bell, Jandowae, and Wandoan is not available

It is important for us to understand how our community will change so that our current decision-making is appropriate. For example:

- Between now and 2036, decision-makers may have to consider the needs of a growing population of young children and families. This may include initiatives to support the next generation of showground volunteers and users, or employment or skills pathways to increase interest in showground activities.
- Whereas, between 2036 and 2046 population ageing may be a key consideration. Catering to an ageing population may drive opportunities for showgrounds to continue to be social meeting hubs for people of all ages.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The steady population growth forecast in the Western Downs should in theory gradually increase general demand for showgrounds - but only if active measures are taken to ensure the next generation of users are involved in the management and operation of showgrounds. This Strategy will look to support succession planning and volunteer groups wherever possible.

Crucially, some geographical areas will experience more population growth than others. This Strategy appreciates these trends and will ensure that future demand is appropriately managed and investment is directed where its most needed.



Managing Showgrounds

The development of this Strategy was supported by a research suite and case studies which identified how showgrounds in the Western Downs could adapt to changing trends and drivers from across Australia and internationally.

Trends & Drivers

 <h3>Ageing Facilities</h3> <p>Showgrounds across Australia are ageing. For example, the Dalby Showgrounds have been operational since 1870, during this time the infrastructure at these sites has undergone change, reflecting how facilities have been more multi-purpose (with events centres, stages, and other amenities which support new uses.⁵</p>	 <h3>New Users and a Growth in Equine and Equestrian Sports</h3> <p>Equine and equestrian events and their value to regional economies are growing fast. The growth of events, such as camp drafting, amongst others reveals an opportunity for the Western Downs to capitalise on this growth, through the promotion of its sites as potential event spaces.</p>	 <h3>Commercial Ventures</h3> <p>From saleyards to arts and crafts, showgrounds are increasingly being used for commercial ventures which breathe new life and opportunity to regional economies.</p>	 <h3>Declining Volunteerism</h3> <p>Volunteerism across Australia have been declining since 2006.⁶ This national trend has affected the management and operation of showgrounds in the Western Downs, and poses a future challenge for the ongoing operation of these community assets. This Strategy has a role to play in developing the next generation of showground volunteers.</p>
 <h3>Community Development</h3> <p>Research from across Australia has highlighted the importance of showgrounds in community development. For example, showgrounds are increasingly being used as social enterprise spaces, with the Maydale Social Garden at the Horsham Showgrounds providing a space for school students to learn about a market garden environment.</p>	 <h3>Relocation</h3> <p>Due to the legacy of history, showgrounds are often located in town centres, making the case for relocation to larger spaces that are not impacted by the development of the towns around them. For example, the Ballarat Showground has opted to move to a new site to make use of existing infrastructure and additional space in Mount Rowan.</p>	 <h3>Rise in Agri-Tourism</h3> <p>Agritourism is predicted to be a key part of the future economy of regional Australia. Demand for agritourism is expected to reach \$18.6 billion by 2030, at a steady 5% growth rate per year.⁷ Given the Western Down's strong agricultural sector, showgrounds across the region can be enhanced and supported by new tourism opportunities in this area.</p>	<h3>KEY TAKEAWAY</h3> <p>By staying abreast of the emerging national trends and opportunities this Strategy will ensure our showgrounds remain viable for years to come and prepared for future changes.</p>

5. Dalby & District Show Society 2023
6. Australian Institute of Health & Welfare 2021
7. CSIRO, 'Growth opportunities for Australian food and agribusiness'

Case Studies



Clermont Saleyards & Showgrounds Revitalisation Project, Isaac Regional Council

- Isaac Regional Council's master plan for the showgrounds was developed in 2019
- This project reveals the large variety of opportunities available for showgrounds to expand their uses
- For example, the master plan included direction to develop a 'heritage walk', using bollards at the pedestrian entrance to signal and showcase historical information around the showgrounds. Another key output of the plan was for a dedicated public open space suitable as a live music venue, an outdoor cinema, function space or market.



Maryborough Showgrounds and Equestrian Park, Fraser Coast Regional Council

- Fraser Coast Regional Council developed a strategic plan for the Maryborough Showground and Equestrian Park in 2020 to ensure it develops in a way that meets the changing needs of the community
- The facility had seen a significant increase in use over the previous 20 years
- Similar to showgrounds in the Western Downs, engagement with the community and users highlighted the value, importance and growth of equine sports and their ability to provide a 'point-of-difference' for this facility

Our Engagement Method

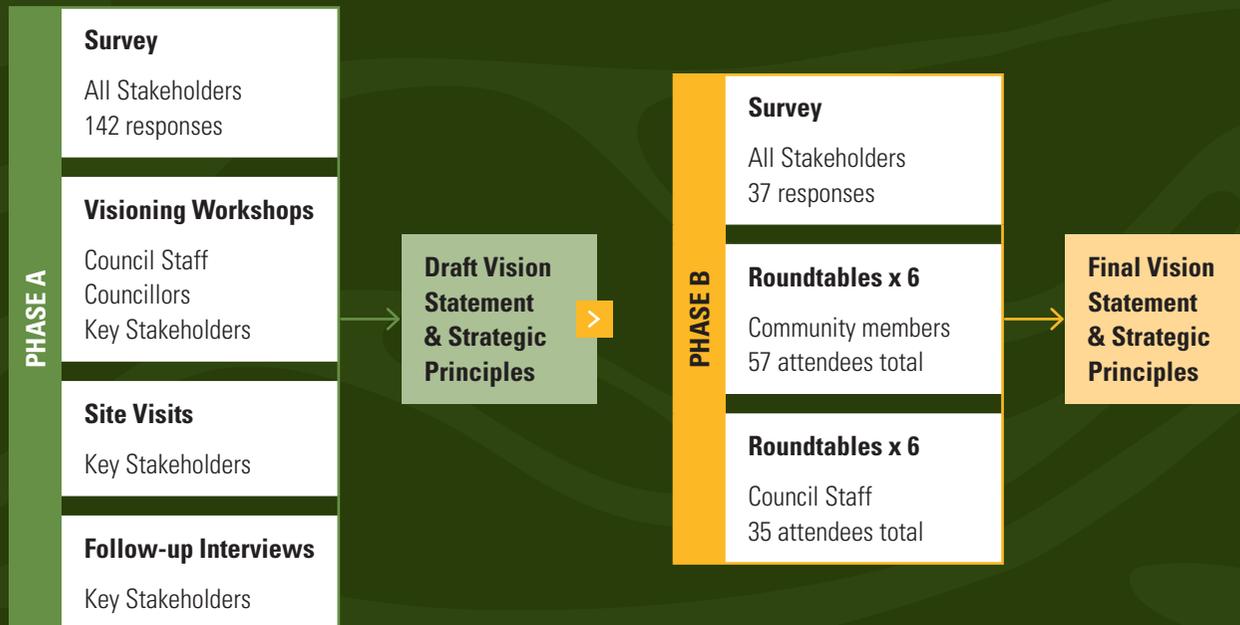
By undertaking extensive engagement, we have tailored this Strategy to local needs. To achieve this, Western Downs Regional Council drew insight from community members, staff, and other key stakeholders across two phases of engagement.

Phase A December 2022

A range of key stakeholders (such as management committees and user groups), community members, Councillors and Council staff were engaged through a variety of approaches. This process established a common vision for showgrounds in Western Downs and identified key principles that will guide future investment in a way that acknowledges the respective strengths and challenges of each facility.

Phase B March 2023

A broader set of stakeholders were engaged to test the strategic core developed following Phase A, ensuring it aligns with their aspirations for the region's showgrounds.







What We Heard

Stakeholders place great value in their local showgrounds. With careful planning, the region can continue to derive health, economic, community and social benefits from these changing assets.

The below summarises key regional priorities distilled from the engagement process.

Key Regional Insights

Master Planning our Showgrounds

- Stakeholders were keen to contribute to the future master plans for showgrounds in the Western Downs
- Master planning can help each showground identify its strengths, prepare for future trends, and mitigate disagreement between user groups

Showcasing the Region

- There is desire for the Strategy to identify and promote the unique features of the region, including its culture, heritage and agricultural roots
- 'Showcasing arts and culture' was the 2nd highest survey priority chosen by 15% of survey respondents as 'one of the most important contributions showgrounds can make to the region'

Supporting Volunteers and Succession Plans

- A shortage of volunteers was a key theme of engagement across the region
- The community was interested in supporting the next generation of showgrounds enthusiasts

Commercialising and Supporting Business

- Across the Western Downs there was a desire for showgrounds to help facilitate commercial activity, thereby generating revenue for local businesses and supporting the growth of new and existing industries

Strengthening Governance and Management

- Across the region, the community identified the ongoing management and governance of showgrounds as a key consideration for this Strategy
- Communities in Bell, Jandowae, and Miles noted the strengths and challenges of their unique governance arrangements

Diversifying Site Uses

- Stakeholders repeatedly highlighted their preference for showgrounds which incorporated a range of new as well as existing events and uses
- Survey respondents identified a range of innovative initiatives to consider at showgrounds in future including sports and recreation facilities, local farmer's markets, music concerts and festivals

Local Insights

This Strategy appreciates that each showground plays an important and unique role in the communities they serve. In addition to region-wide insights, the below summarises key local priorities as voiced by the community during the engagement process:

Bell Recreation Reserve

- Examining the possibility of an independent body to assist in decision-making and management, for example by exploring opportunities to use the 30-acred paddock and woodland scrub area
- Identifying ways to formalise the existing management and governance structure to ensure risk is appropriately managed

Chinchilla Showgrounds

- Exploring opportunities for information sharing and data exchange between Council and showgrounds management
- Supporting community development and encouraging volunteerism
- Increasing use of the Capital Reserve Allocation

Dalby Showgrounds

- Upgrading assets and infrastructure to be all-weather resistant and accessible to suit the scale of events being held (particularly toilets, shower, arena surfaces, laundry, and cattle yards)
- Promoting the Events Centre and other events space to encourage use and hiring
- Exploring the possibility of including a specialised equine and equestrian centre
- Formalising user group governance procedures and site rules

Jandowae Showgrounds

- Exploring opportunities to develop existing strength in commercial camping and the visitor experience
- Identifying and exploring alternative uses for the showgrounds
- Strengthening governance processes, particularly in relation to camping
- Recognising volunteers as key to current management and supporting effective succession planning

Miles Showgrounds

- Exploring opportunities to specialise (cattle shows, dog training etc.)
- Identifying ways to upgrade the existing management and governance structure
- Supporting community volunteers and caretaker succession planning

Tara Showgrounds

- Identifying opportunities to host larger events (through infrastructure investment)
- Developing additional flood mitigation measures (e.g. levee bank)
- Exploring opportunities to consolidate infrastructure and develop a multipurpose shed for events and activities

Wandoan War Memorial, Racing, and Recreation Reserve

- Exploring opportunities to integrate a site caretaker to help manage camping
- Identifying ways to formalise the existing management and governance structure
- Upgrading and maintaining amenities in collaboration with the showgrounds improvement group (including through connection to the town sewerage, lighting for the show ring and a toilet block for the rodeo ring)



Strategic Alignment

This Strategy was developed in alignment with Council’s strategic priorities for the 2021-2026 period. Elements within each strategic pillar of the Corporate Plan that are clearly targeted within this Strategy are presented in the table below.

Strong Diverse Economy 	Active Vibrant Community 	Quality Lifestyle 	Sustainable Organisation 
<p>PROGRESS</p> <p>We aggressively attract business and investment opportunities</p> <p>We proactively advance our region as a tourism destination</p>	<p>PEOPLE</p> <p>We are a happy community, proud of where we live</p> <p>Our parks, open spaces, and community facilities are alive with activities and connect our communities</p> <p>We are a strong sustainable community supported by volunteers</p> <p>We actively support local event initiatives</p>	<p>PLACE</p> <p>Our residents are provided with modern infrastructure and quality essential services across our region</p> <p>Our recreational spaces and community facilities are attractive, safe and accessible</p> <p>We attract families to live, work, prosper and play in our region</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE</p> <p>We are recognised as a financially intelligent and responsible Council</p> <p>We focus on proactive, sustainable planning for the future</p> <p>Our effective asset management ensures that we responsibly maintain our community assets</p>
MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			

Our Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision

Showgrounds and recreation reserves in the Western Downs play a pivotal role in the community as spaces that support recreational, sporting, and community opportunities.

They will continue their transformation to become thriving hubs of community and commercial activity. Our showgrounds and recreation reserves help foster a sense of community and support the economic development of our region.

Guiding Principles



Well Planned

Showgrounds will be master planned to ensure upgrades and development are adaptable and proactively aligned with future needs and innovative best practices.



Well Used

Showgrounds will attract and host a variety of both large-scale and more intimate events to the region that are sustainable and supported by appropriate infrastructure and amenities.



Well Governed

Showgrounds will be managed in a way that ensures knowledge is shared, lines of responsibility are understood, risks are managed, volunteers are supported, clear communication channels are developed, and funding is allocated fairly.



Well Maintained

Showgrounds will be maintained and upgraded to a standard that reflects their social, economic and cultural importance to the people of the Western Downs.

Regional Perspectives and Action Areas

Each showground in the Western Downs is unique, with specialisations and points of difference that should be developed through master planning and future development.

However, there are activities and roles common to showgrounds across the region that can be explored to help realise this Strategy's vision.

For example, engagement revealed the importance of showgrounds as social community hubs, meeting spaces for business and community activity, and refuges for disaster management purposes.

This Strategy aims to target opportunities across the breadth of showground functions as important multi-use community assets. A sample of core showgrounds activities that could be targeted is highlighted below:



A Master Plan for the Future

Council is committed to developing a master plan for each of Council’s showgrounds in the Western Downs.

The development of these master plans will ensure that each showground is given the attention it deserves, supported by funding. Over the coming years, an extensive engagement process will guide the creation of each master plan to ensure local priorities and concerns are reflected in decision-making.

An overview of the five key stages of the master plan development process are presented below:



Council’s Role in Master Planning

Council recognises Showgrounds in the Western Downs are community assets run by community groups. Council has a role supporting governance and funding, but will do so in consult with other priorities and community needs.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Each showground will require master planning. A staggered approach to master planning will ensure that each showground is given the time it needs for extensive engagement with the community and key user groups.

Each showground in the Western Downs is unique, with different needs and circumstances. While all master plans will set up each showground for long-term success, the specific opportunities and issues that need addressing vary from site to site. The rationale for why master planning is required at each specific site has been summarised below:

Bell Recreation Reserve

- Highest number of buildings / structures with a remaining life of 20 years or less
- Opportunities for additional commercial development
- Opportunities to consider innovative uses of the 30-acre paddock and natural woodland
- Need to consolidate individual user group capital development plans

Dalby Showgrounds

- Opportunities for commercial development (including the Events Centre)
- Need to unlock adjacent land or consider continued site suitability
- Need to build all-weather resilience into infrastructure to mitigate flooding
- Opportunities to support and develop high-quality state-leading equine and equestrian facilities

Jandowae Showgrounds

- Need for an infrastructure response to the growth in camping business
- Opportunities for camping specialisation
- Existing governance and succession issues
- Underutilised space (racetrack centre)

Miles Showgrounds

- Strong forecast population growth
- Need to boost attendance figures
- Opportunities to specialise towards smaller-size events

Tara Showgrounds

- Need to identify and develop additional flood mitigation measures (e.g. levee bank)
- Opportunities to consolidate and upgrade infrastructure to host larger events

Wandoan War Memorial, Racing, and Recreation Reserve

- Need to connect the Reserve to the main sewer system and explore opportunities to remove existing tank system
- Opportunities to develop a facility capable of hosting national events

From Conceptual Plan to Master Plan (Site Specific Specialisation)

Through extensive research, demographic forecasting and community engagement, this Strategy has helped to identify future possibilities for each Council owned showground in the Western Downs.

These conceptual plans reflect the unique character of each community and showground through their 'specialisation' or site-specific future vision.

In support of these specialisations, the conceptual plans also highlight a range of potential opportunities that could be pursued at each showground to improve event attendance, boost the local economy, and ensure long-term success. These actions are a sample of the measures that could be explored. Master planning will test these findings and uncover new ideas, ensuring that all plans for growth, development and infrastructure investment are supported by the local community.

The table below shows the breadth, diversity, and balance of the Western Downs showgrounds. It highlights the strengths, possibilities, flexibility and the distinguishing aspects of our asset portfolio.

Engagement and research revealed these opportunities

<p>Bell Recreation Reserve</p> <p><i>'A thriving hub for commercial activity and innovation'</i></p>	<p>Dalby Showgrounds</p> <p><i>'Showcasing the region as a centre for events and equine excellence'</i></p>	<p>Jandowae Showgrounds</p> <p><i>'Supporting the community through camping and caravanning'</i></p>	<p>Miles Showgrounds</p> <p><i>'Supporting niche or specialised events and attractions'</i></p>	<p>Tara Showgrounds</p> <p><i>'Building local capacity for larger events through upgrades and enhancements'</i></p>	<p>Wandoan War Memorial, Racing, and Recreation Reserve</p> <p><i>'A multi-use facility that champions local identity'</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional economic development for the community in Bell (with commercial and non-commercial events held at the showground to support local business) and the possibility for more success in this area • Leveraging the current use of the showgrounds as a regional focal point, while providing more space for diverse users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional exploration of commercial opportunities at the showgrounds • Leveraging the growing popularity of equine sports and clubs • Further developing Dalby's ability to showcase the best of the Western Downs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional exploration of new uses for the racetrack centre and other under-used areas for new events and uses • Building on the showgrounds' camping success, great facilities, and ability to attract travellers from across the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting specialised and small-scale events reflecting the smaller capacity of the showground • Exploring new events (e.g. working dog competitions) and other agricultural display and cattle shows as a point-of-difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing larger events to Tara to support the local economy • Ensuring long-term success through flood prevention infrastructure and upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging existing success and reputation for running a wide number of events for the community (camel races, polocrosse, camp drafts, rodeos, races, and social occasions in the function area)

Our Focus

There are a series of recreation reserves that are not heavily or directly influenced by Council.

For the purpose of this document, deliberate focus is given to showground assets where Council has a clear and defined role.

More broadly, Council will continue to work with all partners in the Western Downs to drive the best economic, social, community and environmental outcomes.



Enhancing Governance, Management and Operations

Governance, management and operations are critical components to consider at any showgrounds.

This section provides a summary of the region-wide and site-specific actions we will pursue to improve management, governance and operational outcomes at our showgrounds, as well as other actions that will support community development and volunteering efforts. It is important for us to acknowledge the intent behind these actions is primarily to:

1. Improve customer outcomes and service levels
2. Support the use of showgrounds as multi-user facilities
3. Ensure assets and services are provided in the most financially efficient way

KEY TAKEAWAY

Region wide and site-specific activities in the Western Downs will strengthen the management and governance of showgrounds ensuring they operate in a way that best aligns with community needs.

The overarching intent behind our enhancements to management and governance procedures and protocols is to improve customer outcomes and service levels, while also ensuring assets and services are provided in the most financially efficient way.

	High-Level Actions	To	Location
Governance	Clarifying and defining user group liabilities, privileges, rights, risks, and responsibilities	<i>Reduce user group friction, improve functionality and reduce risk</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Developing mechanisms for user feedback to Council and management	<i>Improve functionality and service levels</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Routinely reviewing showgrounds governance arrangements and site rules	<i>Identify strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Undertaking three governance review projects to further identify and document existing governance arrangements, handshake and other informal agreements	<i>Ensure transparency and reduce risk</i>	<i>Bell, Miles, Jandowae</i>
	Progressing three governance review projects to change and update existing governance arrangements, handshake and other informal agreements		
	Reassess the Capital Allocation Reserve	<i>Fairly optimise benefit across the region</i>	<i>Regional</i>
Management and Operations	Reviewing management arrangements with third-party volunteers	<i>Ensure transparency and improve accountability</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Exploring options to strengthen data collection processes at showgrounds	<i>Ensure future decision-making is better supported by consistent data</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Formalising management arrangements where necessary	<i>Improve accountability and functionality</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Reviewing site location suitability during master planning	<i>Ensure continued site suitability and appropriateness</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Exploring implementation of a biannual Showgrounds Regional Forum	<i>Identify opportunities for combined efforts and/or attract larger events to the Western Downs</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Coordinating or supporting grant-funding applications and intermediating discussion between users	<i>Improve grant application coordination and reduce user group conflict</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Exploring options for community development and volunteering	<i>Ensure the next generation of showgrounds users and volunteers and build skills pathways for young people</i>	<i>Regional</i>
	Considering options for retention or future adoption of a caretaker model	<i>Improve functionality and mitigate future succession issues</i>	<i>Jandowae, Miles, Wandoan</i>
	Considering special measures to support showgrounds management in the absence of dedicated master plan	<i>Enhance collaboration and optimise benefit across the region</i>	<i>Chinchilla</i>

Implementation and Next Steps

This Strategy marks the beginning of a multi-year process to strengthen governance and management procedures and master plan future investment in showgrounds across the Western Downs. These opportunities are pursued recognising the financial constraints which necessitate the prioritisation of master planning across the region.

As a next step, Council will begin to implement a range of recommendations to improve the operation of our showgrounds, supported by existing research and engagement. Strategic undertakings will be implemented through Council's annual budgetary processes, and continually reviewed to ensure their suitability to address community needs and future demand.



Next steps

A summary of key dimensions that will be pursued as next steps is provided below. It is noted that these outcomes will be pursued simultaneously, together working towards the continual maintenance and improvement of showgrounds in the Western Downs.

1

Major project designs

- 23/24 – Two master plans proposed for initial consideration
- 23/24 – Master planning engagement processes undertaken
- 24/25 – Projects commenced
- 24/25 – Two additional master plans proposed for consideration
- 27/28 – Two additional master plans proposed for consideration

2

Proactive projects and maintenance to improve amenity, accessibility, and usability

- 23/24 – Planning and funding
- 23/24 – Delivery of ongoing maintenance CRMs and other elements including resurfacing, power pole inspection and replacement, minor site improvements

3

Governance and management

- 23/24 – Arrangements reviewed, action plan implemented

Decision-making Guidelines

As part of the evolution of this Strategy, Council has developed guidelines for future decision-making related to key investment topics, innovations, and national trends. The purpose of these guidelines to ensure these important issues are given due consideration in any investment decisions. In sum, the desired effects of these guidelines, and the factor that it responds to, are highlighted below.

Key Factor	Effect
Historic agreements, service levels, access, utilisation and tenure	Document the various historic informal governance arrangements at showgrounds across the Western Downs
Council investment, grants, and public/private partnerships	Maximise Council's ability to attract outside investment
The Showgrounds Capital Allocation	Review the process by which funds are allocated to, and accessed by, each showground
Risk and risk management	Improve risk management processes and manage volunteer liability
New facilities, upgrades, renewals, and reationalisation	Encourage a positive and pragmatic approach to showground improvements through master planning
Approach to fees and fee collection	Improve fee collection processes
Accomodation options	Encourage a breadth of accommodation options in alignment with tourism and visitor economy objectives, and in acknowledgement of potential legislative, regulatory, and planning limitations.
Community groups and governance	Promote the positive outcomes delivered by community groups across the portfolio of showgrounds and support community governance through the provision of capability and capacity.



Staying Involved

Our recent *Communications and Community Engagement Strategy* marked a turning point in Council's approach to engaging with the community.

This Showgrounds Strategy integrates the key objectives of this refreshed approach to community consultation, including our commitment to:

- Increase awareness and understanding in the community of Council's programs, services and decision-making processes
- Develop and maintain opportunities for local people and groups to inform policy, service delivery and what happens in their communities
- Improve responsiveness to existing queries and feedback channels
- Build the capacity, confidence, and competence within Council to communicate, engage and deliver this Strategy.

For more information head to haveyoursay.wdrc.qld.gov.au/aquatic-showgrounds-strategies

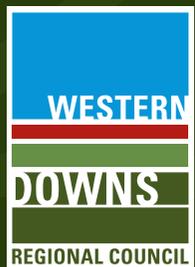
This Showgrounds Strategy represents the culmination of extensive:

- Community and key stakeholder engagement;
- Comparative research and analysis, and;
- Best practice case study review



A man wearing a cowboy hat and a plaid shirt is seen from the side, holding a banner. The banner is white with black text. The background is a blurred arena with a metal fence.

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