

2019 EDITION

LIVE

RRP \$795

Western Downs

EXPLORE
THE REGION'S
GROWING
LIFESTYLE
ATTRACTING
FAMILIES AND
BUSINESS

LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

LIFESTYLE, JOBS AND COMMUNITY COMBINE TO MAKE
THE WESTERN DOWNS THE IDEAL PLACE TO CALL HOME

The Western Downs

Just two and a half hours' drive west of Brisbane and an easy three hours from the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, the Western Downs combines the charm of country living with the ease of access to metropolitan centres. It's a rare mix.

Many people are discovering the combination of good professional opportunities and a great lifestyle, with our population continuing to grow, currently sitting at almost 34,000 in an area that covers the size of Switzerland.

With many positive things going for us here on the Western Downs, one of our key strengths

is a resilient and diverse economy supported by a skilled workforce and thriving jobs market.

As the energy capital of Australia, we continue to attract national interest for our wide open plains and abundance of sunshine. Coal, gas, ethanol, wind and solar energy generation form the cornerstone of our economy, reinforced by our traditional agriculture, intensive agriculture and manufacturing industries.

But we're not all solar and sorghum on the Western Downs. From camel racing in Tara to watermelon skiing in Chinchilla,

our region has a reputation for a strong cultural scene, stunning natural beauty and parklands and for hosting fantastic events. The newest addition to our lineup, the Big Skies Festival, celebrates all that makes us great — attracting visitors from across Australia to enjoy all our region has to offer.

The Western Downs - an affordable place for families to live, work, prosper and play.

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CONTRIBUTORS

LIVE Western Downs magazine is produced with the help of the region's best photographers **Dan Proud** of Dan Proud Photography and **Melissa Batterham** of MiaMia Photography. Additional photography has been provided by **Western Downs Regional Council** and **Linda Mantova**.

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ABOUT 'LIVE WESTERN DOWNS'

Welcome to **LIVE Western Downs**, highlighting the best the Western Downs has to offer.

Talking daily to new and long-term residents of the Western Downs the story is always the same: they love where they live and want to share the best kept secret in Queensland with other potential new residents interested in making the Western Downs home.

It is our pleasure here at TSBE, in partnership with Western Downs Regional Council, to launch **LIVE Western Downs** and shine a spotlight on the enviable lifestyle and career opportunities on offer for those considering a 'tree change'.

The Western Downs spurred by sound economic growth and investment enjoys consistently low unemployment which means that excellent career and business opportunities exist across numerous industries. Combining these opportunities with affordable housing and friendly, open communities means new residents are often blown away by how easy it is to settle into the region.

It's a district known for welcoming industry and innovation and a stronghold for sectors including agriculture, energy, manufacturing and tourism. At TSBE, we link business with opportunity and we can help you establish or expand your enterprise in the region that's home to almost 5,000 local businesses.

We hope this publication has inspired you to explore what life could be like in the 'Big Skies' region.

Ali Davenport
TSBE CEO

TSBE is an independent, business-led organisation working actively in the Western Downs and surrounding regions to help local businesses and promote the area so that our regional economy can continue to thrive and grow. For more information about TSBE's activity in the Western Downs please contact us on 4639 4600 or www.tsbe.com.au.



The Sky's the Limit

Region thrives as economy continues to perform

PHOTOGRAPHY DAN PROUD

The Western Downs' economy is achieving significant growth as the net wealth generated by the local economy increases at an impressive rate. The cornerstones of the economy are made up by their agriculture, intensive agriculture, manufacturing and energy sectors.

In the year ending 2017 alone gross regional product increased by 14.2%, now that's a lot of very productive local businesses and industries!

In the last Agricultural Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2016, agricultural output in Western Downs totalled \$892 million. Broadacre farming including cereal crops totalled 49.4% of the production with intensive livestock accounted for 47.7% of the remainder of output in value terms. This is not surprising with companies like the Sunpork Group continuing to grow their assets in the region.

The Tong Park piggery near Warra is the second largest in the country and is evidence of the scale of the local industry.

Agriculture remains the region's largest employer however it is closely followed by the construction and mining sectors.

Known for good reason as the Energy Capital of Australia, the Western Downs is home to many major projects forming 'five pillars' of energy in the region namely: coal, coal seam gas, ethanol, wind and solar.

Renewable and coal seam gas projects are in the media regularly announcing investments. With 18 solar farm developments approved and the country's largest windfarm on their doorstep, not to mention the multibillion-dollar investments that have been made over the last decade into the region's ongoing and long-term coal seam gas industry, it's evident that the region is financially strong

and full of diverse and exciting employment opportunities.

Manufacturing in the Western Downs is growing too as many businesses perform well in local, national and even global export markets. Businesses like Dalby-based White Industries, a metal fabrication company with a vast array of products for industry and niche international markets, are exporting turbocharger cylinder heads and other products to markets in Japan and America (think NASCAR racing!). This is just scratching the surface with many similar examples of local innovation across food, machinery and equipment manufacturing.

The Western Downs has the lowest unemployment rate in regional Queensland and with all this activity it is unsurprising that they are warmly welcoming new residents chasing fresh country air and affordable living without having to compromise the next step for their careers.

READY TO HARVEST

Broadacre farming is not only lucrative for the economy, it also creates some stunning scenery. Here a sea of rusty red sorghum stretches to the horizon.

G'DAY WESTERN DOWNS

WHAT THE LATEST CENSUS REVEALS ABOUT US

PHOTOGRAPHY DAN PROUD AND MIAMIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Ask one of your 34,000 neighbours that live here what makes the Western Downs so special and you'll hear it's the opportunity to grow your own business, know your neighbour and raise a family in stunning surroundings.

The latest Census data shows that this is a region to admire, with cheaper and more expansive housing than capital cities, a multicultural community and plenty of jobs on offer.

» On average we're 37, have two cars at home and pay about \$200 a week in rent. Compare that to Brisbane's weekly rent of \$355, or the state average of \$330.

» This means you can afford to settle down right here. We're spread out across 15,000 homes, with one-in-four residents working towards the Australian dream of paying off their mortgage. Our average repayments are about \$1400 a month which is also cheaper than the state average of \$1733 or the nation's \$1755. And needless to say there's plenty more bang for your buck in the Western Downs

» More than 61% of us are working full-time, much higher than the state and national average of 57%.

» We have about the same number of managers and professionals (30%) as we do labourers and tradies. We work hard and play hard, with half of those employed clocking more than 40 hours a week

» An Englishman, Irishman and Scotsman walk into a bar ... Add a touch of German to the story and you've covered the major ancestries in the region.

» Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up more than 5% of the population.

» There's 8,188 families living here, and for those with kids, there's two at home. That's the perfect number to avoid the age-old problem of who sits in the middle seat in the back on long drives.



Around the Region

There's more to the Western Downs than the stunning landscapes. Whether it's adventure sports or captivating history you're after, we've got it all.

PHOTOGRAPHY DAN PROUD, MIAMIA PHOTOGRAPHY



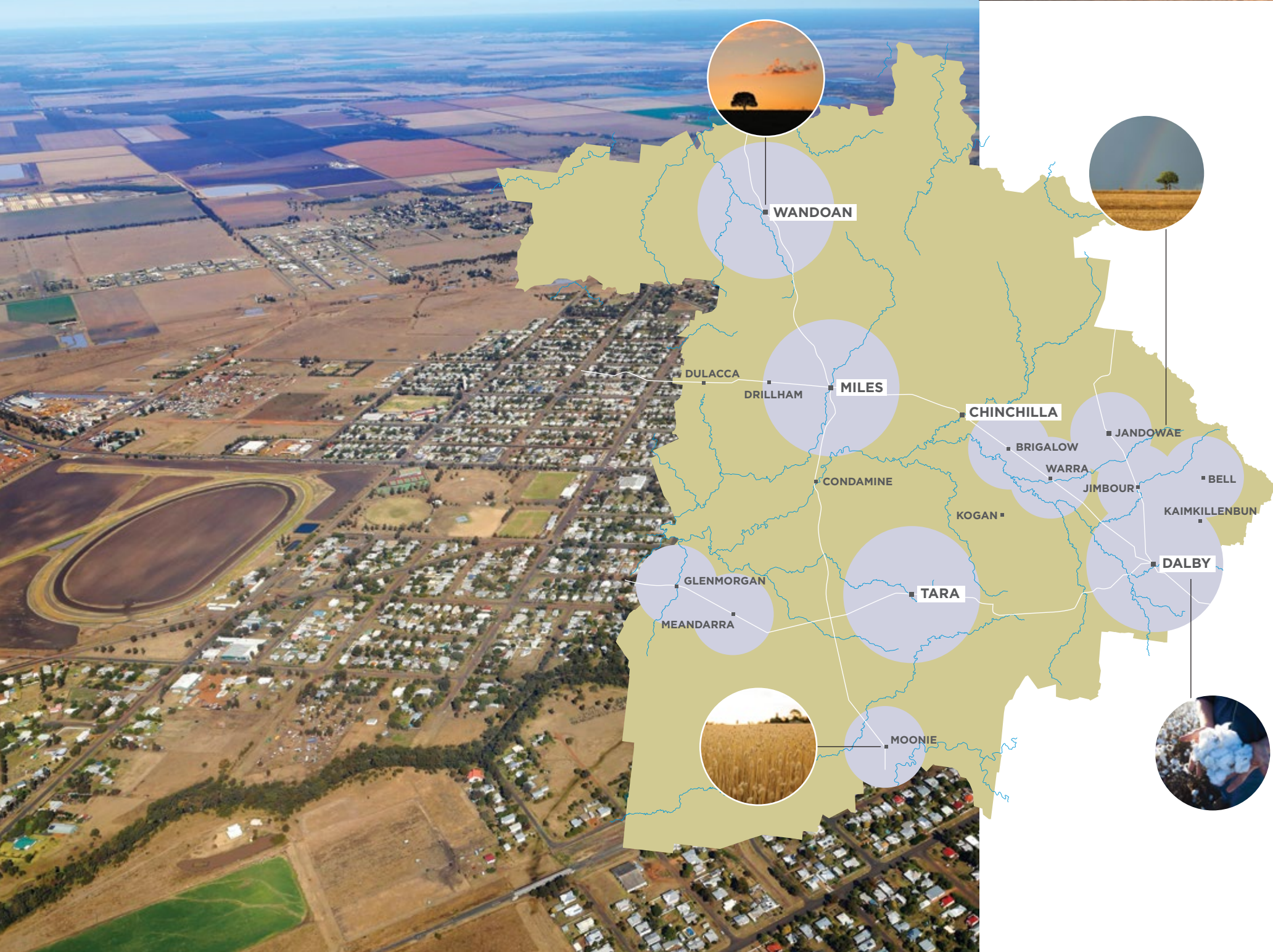
Chinchilla Weir



Prickly Pear, Western Downs



Sorghum on the Western Downs



The Western Downs leads residents and journey-makers on a tour of sprawling country in every direction. Across the region there's an all-in country spirit that shines through a backdrop to exploration and adventure, with the perfect mix of pubs, restaurants and hidden cafés to treat yourself as you go.

The Cunningham, Leichhardt, Warrego and Moonie highways link a variety of unique destinations and local tourism hotspots.

WEST

Many move west from Toowoomba along the Warrego Highway, through the major towns of Dalby, Chinchilla and Miles, with plenty of stops enroute.

Brigalow's general store is often the first stop on the way, both Brigalow and **Macalister's** landmark silos on display that locals may one day see painted with stunning murals like the adorned silos at Thallon, south of St George.

Visit **Dalby's** Pioneer Park Museum which has one of the largest working pioneer tractors and agricultural

machinery collections in Queensland, along with authentic colonial buildings and heritage artefacts. If tractors aren't your thing then why not immerse yourself in local art and culture at the MyALL 107 precinct instead, or simply take a stroll along the banks of Myall Creek.

The **Warra** Hotel is a majestic pub that's been lovingly restored to its early days in 1906. It's a part of a historical area in the town that includes a pedestrian underpass linking the two sides of Warra separated by the railway.

Early explorer Ludwig Leichhardt and his party set out from the Darling Downs in the mid-1840s. In one expedition members of his party disappeared without a trace. Now a popular fishing hole, Charley's Creek in **Chinchilla** was named after aboriginal tracker Charley Fisher, who saved Leichhardt and his party, tracking them on horseback for 70 miles.

For licensed fossickers, Chinchilla offers a trail through rural properties in search of petrified wood, ending at a

monument dedicated to the Cactoblastis moth, whose larvae eradicated the invasive prickly pear cactus that was destroying valuable farming land.

The **Miles** Historical Village Museum is an iconic centre in the region. Established in 1971, locals and visitors alike can take a step back in time exploring the more than 30 buildings in the turn-of-the-century village including a hospital, café, bank, post office and bakery.

Craft beer can be hard to find on tap outside of major cities, but the Windsor Hotel in Miles has been named the first pub to stock Pirate Life beers on tap in Queensland, with a dark ale being served to patrons. Co-owner Jaimee Neilsen said the decision to add the keg to the line-up was to serve fly-in-fly-out workers. 4 Pines Draught also features on the pour list at the pub.

Take a weekend to check-out Possum Park, about 20km north of Miles, where you can stay in underground bunkers that were once part of RAAF Kowguran, an explosive storage site used in World War Two.



SAVE THE DATE



Time your trip and you could include a day out to see the annual Opera at Jimbour in July hosted at the iconic local Homestead or spend a fashionable weekend trackside in Dalby by day.



CHINCHILLA'S BOTANIC PARKLANDS SET TO FLOURISH

TAKE TIME OUT TO ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Hot summer days in Chinchilla are set to be cooled off with construction underway on the largest parklands project in the region, an almost \$6 million Botanic Parklands.

The parklands ties the town's tourism attraction as the home of the watermelon, and will bring families together with a waterpark and recreational space. Indigenous cultural history, the railway heritage at the site and a Megafauna Discovery Space pays homage to Chinchilla's 'giant wombat' mega-marsupial are all included in the design.

Like many major projects to boost tourism and liveability, the Parklands have been talked about since the 1970s, finally finding a home on the 4.2 hectare site. Stop in off the highway and enjoy a break with the kids.

Welcoming major performances in the future, the site will also house an amphitheatre for up to 1500 revellers.



NORTH

From Dalby head north to hike or camp at the stunning **Bunya Mountains** at the edge of the Western Downs, or explore small towns like **Jimbour** and **Jandowae**, or **Bell** and Kaimkillenbun. The Bun pub is well-known, along with Jimbour's historic homestead.

For those headed north from Miles along the Leichhardt Highway, stop in at **Wandoan** to visit the Juandah Head Station.

SOUTH

Or take the southern route from Miles through **Condamine** to explore **Tara**, **Meandarra**, **Moonie** or **Glenmorgan**.

The Tara and District Historical Museum houses much of the town's heritage, from a 1929 fire engine to shearing mementos, Blue Moon picture theatre projection equipment, and an authentic 1912 'Brauers' slab

hut. The museum also has Tara's original police station jailhouse and court house.

The **Meandarra** ANZAC Memorial Museum celebrates the bravery and sacrifice of the first Anzacs with memorabilia collected by locals over 30 years.

Glenmorgan's Myall Park Botanic Garden Gallery is dedicated to Dorothy Gordon, housing a collection of her original wildflower paintings and is a host to touring and local exhibitions with a botanical focus. Montys Garage Vintage Car Museum is a 1940s-style auto garage with 70 restored vehicles.

The tiny settlement of **Moonie**, where the Leichhardt and Moonie Highways intersect, is home to Australia's first oil field established in 1961 and is still operational today. The town is also home to the now biennial Yabbie Races which are set to be held in March 2019.

Something Tasty

LOCAL'S GUIDE TO DINING IN, FROM
HIGH-TEA TO STEAK SANDWICHES

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Local produce is the secret ingredient behind the fresh flavours and gourmet offerings in restaurants across the Western Downs. From traditional pub fare to authentic cuisine, the region has mouth-watering menus to suit every taste, with many entrepreneurs looking to stake their claim in the industry.

PIPS'N'CHERRIES, BELL

TRY: Steak sandwich

Annette and Kate's destination café is a scenic 30-minute drive from Dalby. The renovated Freemason's hall is filled with vintage furniture and displays to match the feel of the café with sweets in store.

WANDOAN CAFÉ AND COFFEE SHOP, WANDOAN

TRY: Fish, chips & salad

Stop in at the gorgeous coffee shop in Royds Street, 45 minutes north of Miles, and try out a coffee and cake, smoothie, salad wrap or a fruit platter for a healthy way to hit the highway.

JAMPACK'D CAFÉ, JANDOWAE

Sample a range of flavours. Cara is making her mark on Jandowae. Make sure you stop in for breakfast or coffee and try a slice of homemade cheesecake with flavours like Lamington or Mocha at the family run café.

THE CREEK CAFÉ, MILES

TRY: The Eggs Benny

Hiding just off the main highway, the café encompasses a florist and gift shop. Catering to paleo and gluten-free and serving fresh juices, decadent breakfast options and lunches on the go, this cafe is well-known.

TRY THESE

ON FOR SIZE



RESTAURANTS

For ethnic cuisine in Dalby, try out the recently opened **Lum's Chinese Restaurant's** sweet and sour pork, or try a dish from their menu, including gluten-free. **Lotus River Chinese Smorgasbord Restaurant** and **My Noodle Box** are some of Dalby's diverse dining options. There are also Thai and Indian restaurants offering something delicious.

Chinchilla's **Masala Hut** offers an Indian menu with curry, korma and tandoori meals that can be enjoyed in-store, takeaway or delivered. **Thai Delicious** and **Cheong Kong Chinese restaurant** offer delicious flavours.

KATTY CAKES, DALBY

TRY: The chocolate

Katrina's main street café offers a rotating menu of stunning cupcakes from Lemon Curd to Tiramisu, delicious lunch options including toasted paninis, and a range of sandwiches for those on the run. Looking for something special? She creates cakes for special occasions.

URBAN PADDOCK, DALBY

TRY: Quambi Rueben

Transforming the historic Quambi House just off the highway, Urban Paddock offers sunny verandas, a gift store and most importantly, seasonal menus. An outdoor playground encourages families to take time out together.

THE DOWNTOWN CAFÉ, CHINCHILLA

TRY: Chicken Parmi

Giving the café new life in early 2017, owner Jatinder has revamped the former Rustlers Espresso Bar to open The Downtown, offering new menus, world flavours and his own twist on favourite recipes.

MOONIECROSSROADS, MOONIE

TRY: Pork Belly

A roadhouse with the lot, Moonie Crossroads offers locals and weary travellers alike, country hospitality with a fuel station, hotel, bottle shop, caravan park, and an art gallery, this is the one local hotspot.

PLENTY TO CELEBRATE

Thousands of visitors and families flock to towns across the Western Downs to celebrate the historical, cultural and agricultural success. Grab the swag or campervan because once you set up at the camp grounds, you'll struggle to leave!



Had a great time at any of these events? Share your story at @WesternDownsRC and don't forget to #LoveWesternDowns



FEBRUARY 14 – 17, 2019

CHINCHILLA MELON FESTIVAL

Bring a change of clothes! Once you see the melon skiing and bungees, you'll be ready to get messy.

Thousands of melons are chased down the main street, carved up and trampled on at the all-in biennial festival for the senses. Jump on the bus for a farm tour or watch the rodeo, biggest melon weigh-in, cooking demos and even a beach party at the pub that gives the festival its well-deserved reputation.

TARA FESTIVAL OF CULTURE AND CAMEL RACES

If you haven't seen a jockey saddle up a camel then try and race them down the final furlong, this is the event for you.

The biennial Festival of Culture and Camel Races is a three-day event for the senses, with the Tara Camel Cup, multicultural shows and dancers, busking, bus tours and food from all over the world on offer.



AUGUST 2 – 4, 2019

BIG SKIES FESTIVAL

Western Downs Regional Council's newest festival kicked off in 2018 and showcases the best of the west.

Joining the inaugural week-long Big Skies Festival, locals and visitors went trackside for the Dalby Picnic Races, stayed out under the stars for the Camp Oven Experience, and went on a guided tour of the galaxy with Big Night Sky.

The Day on the Plain music festival at the iconic Jimbour House amphitheatre topped off the showcase with massive artists. Get ready to do it all again in 2019.



27 APRIL – 5 MAY 2019



AUGUST 17, 2019

DALBY'S DELICIOUS AND DELIGHTFUL FESTIVAL

A one-day spring festival celebrating Dalby's rich multi-cultural community, the Delicious and DeLIGHTful Festival brings together a year's worth of themed lantern workshops, with 2017 hosting a dinosaur theme and 2018 showcasing under the sea creations.

The lantern parade is the festival's signature event throughout the town with hundreds of huge creations floating along the streets, capping off a day of performance, workshops, markets and international flavours.



JUNE 2020

JANDOWAE TIMBERTOWN FESTIVAL

The Timbertown Festival brings the streets of Jandowae to life every two years, celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2018.

Barrel racing, chainsaw sculpting, busking, wood chopping, artist and photography exhibitions, the sausage king competition and the signature street festival and grand parade draw thousands to the town and a boost to locals and the local economy. The festival has been held every second year since 2002 as part of what used to be the June long weekend in Queensland.

MILES BACK TO THE BUSH FESTIVAL

Miles residents show off life in the bush at the biennial hometown festival.

Those attending the festival are given a glimpse of yesteryear at the Miles Historical Village Museum's bygone era streetscape, while the CBD experience is supercharged with a street parade. Country hospitality comes forward as pubs and hotels fill out, high teas are hosted, and events including tractor pulls and a bush obstacle course get under way over four days.



SEPTEMBER 2020

OPERA AT JIMBOUR

Pack a bottle of wine, some nibbles and grab your picnic blanket as you head to the sprawling historic Jimbour House to watch the Opera at the massive amphitheatre.

Staged by the Queensland Music Festival and the Western Downs Regional Council, this event attracts up to 10,000 visitors. The first performance was held in 2003 hosting the Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra and rising stars of Australian opera, with the internationally acclaimed festival that travels the state.



27 JULY 2019



ANNUALLY

TOWN SHOW SCHEDULE

Each regional town celebrates its talent and success at the local show.

The show schedule across the year offers each town the chance to highlight the diverse skills of their community, while opening the region up to tourism. For those living in the Western Downs, be sure to head out when shows are on to get a true feel for the community you live in and a chance to get to know your neighbours.

BIG DREAMS

PETRINA O'SULLIVAN IS
BRINGING HIGH END
FASHION TO CHINCHILLA

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

A newly purchased shop has given downtown Chinchilla something that rivals the boutiques in bigger cities.

This new store is providing a place for fashionistas.

Petrina O'Sullivan is the owner of a new boutique in downtown Chinchilla, Petunia's Fashion. Petrina purchased the shop in July 2018 and couldn't be happier with how the community has embraced her shop.

"I have lived in Chinchilla all of my life and went to both primary school and high school in town," said Petrina.

"I am a wife and a mother to four boys between the ages of 14 to 20 so it is nice to be surrounded by such pretty and feminine things at work."

"Being local I have had great response from the residents in Chinchilla, Miles and surrounding areas," she said.

Being involved over the years in many sporting

clubs and being active in the school community have given Petrina an insight into the demands of the ladies of the region.

"Chinchilla is a great friendly town to live in and it is wonderful to have the support of the people that live here."

Petrina has big plans for the future of Petunia's Fashion and will introduce more homewares and gifts ideas in the coming months. "Since owning the store I have introduced local candles, scrunchies, jewellery and cowhide bags from the Sunshine Coast and this is just the beginning," she said.

"I also really love the racing fashions and I will definitely be prepared with plenty of stock for the racing calendar meaning locals don't have to travel to get their fashionable racewear."

Petunia's Fashion owner, Petrina O'Sullivan has big plans for her business.

AHEAD OF THE PACK



Petunia's Fashion stocks brands including:

- » Cooper St
- » Elliatt
- » Threadz Australia
- » Sunny Girl
- » Little Lies
- » Wish

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



BUSINESS OWNERS
TAKE THE PLUNGE

Taroom, north of Wandoan, is open for business, with four new shops highlighting the success of an entrepreneurial spirit in the town. These new businesses can set the example for the continued growth in other small towns, with a homewares store and coffee lounge, a clothing store, shoe shop and butchery all opening in 2018.

» Andrea Beard, along with her husband Justin, a fifth-generation butcher, opened AJ's Country Meats in mid-May.

» Deberella Shoes owner Deborah Graham had waited many years before taking the plunge to open her retail store.

» Clothing store HB Styles is run by Taroom's Hayley Bennett, and

» Tania Kerlin's My Country Lane has been humbled by the local support from residents.



NAVIGATOR PROGRAM BUILDING WESTERN DOWNS BUSINESS

Supporting regional innovators

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

The Western Downs Business Navigator Program is helping develop new business opportunities in the region to capture the next big idea.

The program, which is an initiative of Shell's QGC and delivered by Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise, offers consultation and guidance to business owners and entrepreneurs.

Two full-time coaches support 45 small to medium business owners or entrepreneurs in the region over the three-year program.

The coaches provide individual, face-to-face coaching to help locals evolve fledgling ideas into commercial products and thriving businesses.

These coaches bring extensive experience and expertise in financial planning, business development, innovation and entrepreneurship support to their role.

Shell's QGC Operations Manager, Nagaraj Ramaraj, said the program aims to diversify the region's business sector.

"Through the Business Navigators Program, we want to provide local businesses with more opportunities to connect and grow their ideas and to remain sustainable well into the future," he said.

"This will support a thriving regional economy, making businesses more viable and creating jobs for local people.

"We are looking forward to seeing what new and innovative ideas are developed in the region."

Many business owners and entrepreneurs have already submitted their ideas to the coaches in a pitch challenge in a bid to win one of the big cash prizes on offer.

For more information about the program contact Neil Daly, Lead Business Navigator at neil@navigatorwesterndowns.com.au.



REAL ESTATE ON THE RISE

IT'S A GREAT TIME TO OWN YOUR OWN PIECE OF THE DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

The great Australian dream to own your home is made easier on the Western Downs, with property prices well below capital city counterparts.

From massive blocks of land at a steal to the claim to fame of having the country's cheapest house and land sold in Dulacca for \$25,000 in 2018, now is the perfect time to jump into the housing market.

Prices slumped in many Western Downs towns following the end of the construction phase of the resources boom. The tightening of lending criteria and market changes also affected prices.

In the past five years towns in the region have seen price drops of about 40 per cent across the Western Downs, with Chinchilla hit the hardest as some prices drop by 50 per cent in five years.

With such harsh falls, real estate agents are now beginning to see the trends toward returned optimism, with positive growth in the region. Higher clearance rates are showing signs of the market picking up, with Dalby recording its highest number of residential sales in 2018 at 190.

The affordable house prices continue to attract buyers, with first home buyers and new residents to the region able to secure their future in the buyers' market. Real estate agents are seeing clearance rates returning to pre-boom numbers.

The median price of a home in Dalby is now around \$210,000, with prices closer to \$300,000 in the pre-boom period. With Dalby now hosting a Bunnings store, DIY weekend home-fixers are looking to be the next *House Rules* winners, just like Luke and Cody Cook, who took out the competition in 2016.

The market for commercial real estate is also growing, with sites across the Western Downs bought and sold to investors looking to the future of the region, as major infrastructure projects get underway.

New infrastructure, industry and housing affordability is enticing families and business to the South West region, attracting people who want a country lifestyle and professional rewarding career.

LJ Hooker is just one of many residential and commercial real estate companies to specialise in the Western Downs. The team cover an area of 8000 sq kms to find the best buys and leasing arrangements on offer.

Other agents include Ray White, Fitzsimmons Real Estate Dalby, RuralCo, Surat Basin Real Estate and Dalby Real Estate and Rentals.



These rebuilds, renovations and new construction projects are injecting millions of dollars into the Dalby economy.

In the past 12 months Dalby has seen a huge boost in development, with major retailers joining the town. Residents have watched as the huge construction projects behind hardware retailer Bunnings and supermarket giant ALDI take place. The price tag for the Bunnings store build is \$12 million, bringing with it jobs during construction.

These businesses add to a competitive retail market in the town, that supports Foodworks, Coles, Woolworths and Betros Bros for fresh food and vege, as well as Home Timber and Hardware and Sunshine Mitre

10 already in the market. These rebuilds, renovations and new construction projects are injecting millions of dollars into the Dalby economy.

Travellers driving through Dalby will see the major facelift of not only the Warrego Highway, but the former RSL building that has been transformed into office space. Accounting business Crowe Horwath has moved into the centre, with more spaces available to create a new bustling business hub. The tired site was empty for more than four years after the RSL closed its doors, before being revamped as the

retail and commercial hub by owners and businessmen Ian Tresillian and Bruce White.

The Country Club Hotel that sat empty after a fire in has reopened with a stunning renovation that maintains the building's heritage after being bought in 2017 by new owner Keith and Anne Beer for \$810,000. The Beer's previously ran the Dalby McDonald's for a number of years. Dalby State School that fronts the highway is also undergoing a major \$6.6 million build after a devastating fire on Anzac Day in 2017. This will see a two-storey building with five classrooms built.



Brand new carpark & travelator entrance off Marble Street
Over 40 Specialty Stores
Undercover Parking *with more than 450 Carparks*
220 seat Foodcourt
5 Star Parents Room
Free Wifi

17-67 Cunningham St, Dalby QLD
dalbyshoppingworld.com.au

DALBY SHOPPINGWORLD
OPEN 7 DAYS

FOR THE ART LOVERS

TAKE A STROLL THROUGH EXHIBITIONS TO REVEAL HIDDEN TALENTS IN WESTERN DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPHY WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The region mixes its heritage and creativity to showcase a vibrant art scene hosted throughout each town's art galleries, museums and historical villages.

The two-level purpose-built Gallery 107 in Dalby has maintained the site's history as an indoor sports centre, keeping the timber floor and walls of the squash courts to create a unique and engaging exhibition space to rival metro art centres. The building which was the town's former council chambers, often hosts touring exhibitions for art lovers in the Western Downs. The gallery is part of the cultural precinct MyALL 107 which includes a cinema, library and radio station.

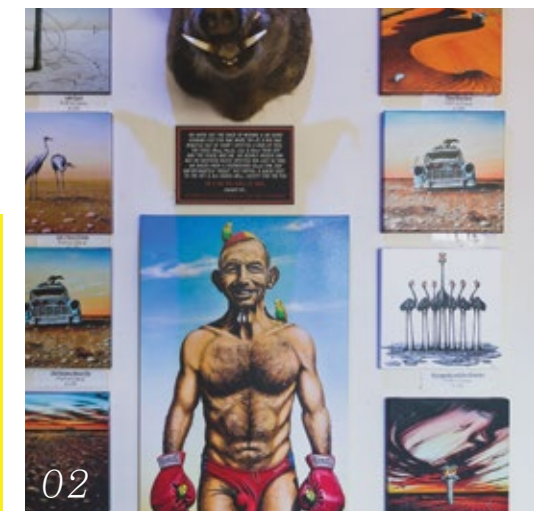
Community-run Lapunyah Art Gallery in Chinchilla offers two exhibition spaces – the Heartwood and Outer Wood, for touring works as well and to display the Community Collection with a range of well-known artists including botanist Grace Lithgow.

Wandoan's Leichhardt Gallery is housed within the town's library, regularly hosting exhibitions from Wandoan's Arts Council. Bluebelles Art Gallery in Bell hosts monthly exhibitions of local artists and members of the Bell Art Group.

Dogwood Crossing in Miles is a jewel in the region's exhibition crown, with a curved wall gallery used for curated shows as well as a traditional exhibition space and collections. Touring exhibitions of emerging and established artists are opened at the gallery to a wide audience. Dogwood Crossing is also home to the town's library and other services.

Historical slab hut, Athlone Cottage, circa 1890, was restored and moved to its current site in 2001 in Jandowae by the local progress association. The cottage originally had an ant bed dirt floor, with visitors exploring how settlers lived. Its original home is now the site of the town dam.

Original buildings, as far back as the 1850s, still stand at the Juandah Historical Site that became the town of Wandoan. Immerse yourself in the station's past with a folk museum, check out the old Juandah Store and stroll the site that once ran up to 50,000 head of cattle.



CHECK IT OUT



01 Chinchilla artist, Syliva Secombe with her art for the Western Downs regional Artists' Exhibition at Dogwood Crossing Regional Artists Exhibition.

02 The Moonie Crossroads hosts an eclectic mix of art in its gallery.

03 Miles Historical Village Museum takes you to a bygone era with a heritage streetscape to explore.

04 A Dingo sculpture in Jandowae marks the start of the 5,400km dingo barrier fence to keep them out, as well as a replica of a piece of the original fence from 1948.

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CHINCHILLA TO HONOUR FORESTRY HISTORY

FIRE TOWERS HELD IN HERITAGE CENTRE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

PHOTOGRAPHY LINDA MANTOVA

Drones, survey technology and satellite systems may have rendered the need for fire spotters redundant, but for forestry employee Frank Truscott, the job was vital to protecting the Barakula State Forest.

The forest spans more than 280,000 hectares from north east of Chinchilla to Brigalow, and for decades spotters watched from lookout towers for the early warning signs of danger.

The Chinchilla Museum stepped in to preserve history, creating the Fire Tower Interpretive Centre.

Mr Truscott now volunteers teaching the next generation on how the forest was protected in the past.

Chinchilla Historical Society volunteer Frank Truscott, president Cath Brandon and fellow volunteer Charles Hazard with the last remaining three-legged fire tower in Queensland housed at the Chinchilla Museum.



"We will have one of the last standing fire towers in existence at our museum," Mr Truscott said.

"Fire spotters would climb the dizzying heights alone every day during fire season, and spend up to eight hours in solitude peering across the forest with binoculars at the ready."

Another museum volunteer and fire spotter Charles Hazard spent more than 40 years scaling the towers to keep watch during fire season, from the months of September to March.

"Sometimes I'd work seven days a week particularly during storm season due to lightning strikes that start wild fires. I was in the tower

in the early hours looking for a puff of smoke," he said.

It wasn't unusual for him to spot two or three small fires in a day.

The Chinchilla Museum is home to one of the largest collections of forestry and sawmill memorabilia in Australia.

The fire towers were in state forests across Queensland for many decades to spot potential bush fires, which saved the valuable timber resources from wildfires for about 70 years.

One of the unique features of this region's fire towers is their three-leg construction, like the Coondara fire tower that stood for 40 years, traditionally tours had four legs.

To ensure their preservation, the museum partnered with Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) in 2016 to preserve the region's fire towers, with two towers already installed on the grounds.

Chinchilla Museum president Cath Brandon said with the centre's design ready, it was now down to sourcing funding for the build.

"It is hoped we'll attract forestry buffs from around the country, as there are very few places you can see a similar display," she said.

Ms Brandon said once the centre was complete, it would create a new tourism opportunity and attraction for Chinchilla.

DID YOU KNOW?



Fire tower builder Arthur Leis constructed 28 fire towers from 1957 to 1987.

He built the first three-legged tower in Queensland at Mount Binga, in the Yarraman area in 1967. Leis is also believed to be behind the design.

Chinchilla Museum

The extensive grounds of the Museum has a collection of buildings that have many stories to tell, including the first State School with wall charts, handy crafts by students and much more.

There is a 1890's slab hut and community halls show casing the life style of local communities. The sheds have a large and varied collection of farm machinery.

The Cypress Pine Centre alongside the steam saw mill documents the history of the timber industry in Chinchilla.

The miniature train runs the first Sunday of every month and is available for birthday parties.



OPENING HOURS
Thursday to Saturday 9:00am to 4:00pm
Sunday 10:30am to 4:00pm
Monday 9:00am to 4:00pm
CLOSED Tuesday and Wednesday

Wongongera Cottage

The Chinchilla Men's Shed is also located at the Museum and is open every Thursday from 9:00am to 12:00pm.

www.chinchillamuseum.com.au

WE ARE SHINING!

WESTERN DOWNS PROVES IT'S THE ENERGY CAPITAL OF AUSTRALIA

PHOTOGRAPHY WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

More than \$5.5 billion in renewable energy projects are in the pipeline, including AGL's \$820 million Coopers Gap wind farm, and 15 approved solar projects and counting. During the construction of Australian largest wind farm, massive turbine blades will be headed to site, as well as the parts needed to set up the site at Cooranga North, near Bell.

These projects offer short and long-term work within the region, with residents already noticing

and taking advantage of the ramp up in activity at a number of solar farm sites in the region.

A whole range of industries and local businesses support these developments, creating strong flow-on effects throughout the supply chain. Hotels and motels have benefited from workers driving in and out of the region, as well as local contractors over a diverse range of services picking up contracts which support construction and operational services.

BUSINESS PROFILE

TRAINING CENTRE SCALES HEIGHTS OF SUCCESS

Diamond Protection Chinchilla is giving residents and resource workers the opportunity to be trained in vertical rescue, HAZMAT and firefighting as part of its training arsenal, keeping employees and jobs in the region.

This reduces the need for employers to send staff to Brisbane for training, reducing time spent away from work sites as well as fatigue for those travelling return by car. The centre can host sessions for schools, emergency services groups like QFES and the SES, as well as community groups.

The network power grid capacity has also grown, thanks to the renewable sectors inputs in the region, with 10 coal fired power stations sharing the grid with gas and renewable energy developers.

Another key strength of our region is our skilled workforce which soak up construction roles that have emerged in the past decade, with manufacturing and haulage companies also benefiting from the growth in projects.

WHAT'S IN THE REGION:

» Project Charlie: QGC's \$1.7 billion coal seam gas development near Wandoan creating close to 1600 jobs during its two year construction phase, and up to 400 wells.

» AGL's wind farm is expected to have a capacity of up to 460MW, with plans to add electricity to Queensland's power grid by 2020. This wind farm could supply up to 240,000 households and generate up to 200 jobs.

» Glencore is set to establish a \$7 billion coal project in Wandoan, potentially producing up to 22 million tonnes of thermal coal annually when operational. Before this project can begin, it will require a rail link to the Port of Gladstone for export.

» The \$500 million Western Downs Solar Energy Farm at Kogan marked the 10th approval of a solar project in the region. Tilt Renewables and Yellow Solar submitted plans for up to 900,000 solar panels on land surrounding the Powerlink Western Downs sub-station near the Kogan Creek Power Station in Hopeland.

» Other companies in the region include APLNG, Yancoal's Cameby Downs Mine, APA's Darling Downs Solar Farm and Beelbee Solar Farm, Gladstone LNG, QCLNG, Senex Energy's Western Surat Gas Project, Stanmore Coal and Equis Energy.



Developments totalling billions of dollars are taking place or are in the pipeline, which bodes well for future prosperity on the Western Downs.

WESTERN DOWNS IS A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG WORKERS

Western Downs Regional Council is at the forefront of offering young people the opportunity to start their careers

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Many have prospered from a traineeship or apprenticeship according to Mayor Paul McVeigh.

"In the Western Downs, we have many school leavers who are eager to start their careers," he said.

"At Council we want to foster their ambition and talents to help our community.

"We take on new trainees and apprentices every year who provide a fresh

and dynamic element to our workforce."

Council currently has 30 trainees and apprentices across a diverse range of departments.

Karsha Dewis started her business traineeship with Council in February 2018.

The 18-year-old works in the Tara Customer Service Centre and said starting her professional career with Western Downs Regional Council was a great decision.

"Taking the business

traineeship with Council has given me the chance to become independent, be part of a great organisation and do a job I really enjoy," she said.

"There are so many opportunities at Western Downs Regional Council, you can set yourself up for a great career from business to working in our parks and gardens.

"I love coming to work each day because there is a great atmosphere, everyone is willing to help out and give you a fair go."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



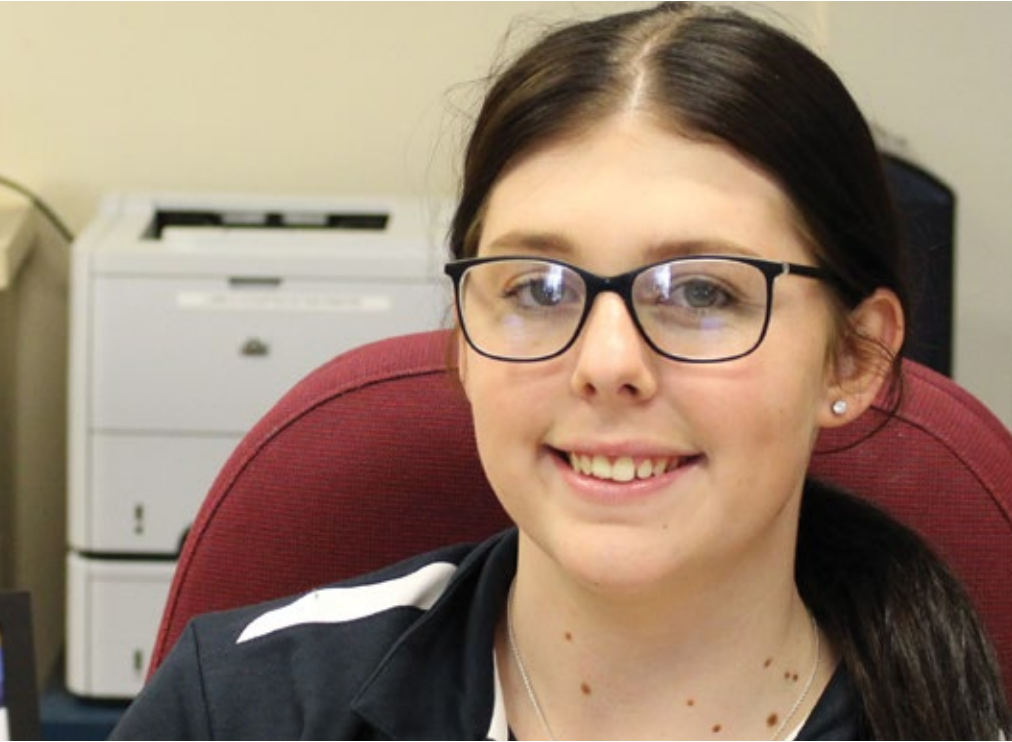
JOBS, TRAINEESHIPS, & APPRENTICESHIPS

Growing and training the workforce in the region is a key avenue to retaining local professionals and maximising local procurement and opportunities in the Western Downs. Thanks to a range of training providers already established across the region, as well as traineeships on offer at businesses like Western Downs Regional Council, graduates and those looking for a career change can stay where they live, or join the lifestyle on offer.

Tertiary training organisations like TAFE QLD and the University of Southern Queensland provide futures to students across the region. There are TAFE campuses located in Chinchilla, Dalby and Roma.

WHERE TO GO TO FIND EMPLOYMENT

- » Golden West Apprenticeships
- » Celotti Workforce
- » Busy at Work
- » MAX Employment
- » Classic Recruitment
- » GO2 People



FOLLOWING THE WIND

What it's like to work on Australia's largest windfarm project

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

When Tim Knill decided to pack up his life as a Civil Engineer 14 years ago to embark on a Master's degree in Science at the Danish Technical University, he didn't think it would lead to managing the construction of Australia's largest windfarm. But he wouldn't have it any other way, working between Dalby and Kingaroy in regional Queensland, overseeing the Coopers Gap Windfarm Project.

"I've had an amazing career since returning from Denmark. I've been working in the renewable energy sector ever since," Mr Knill said.

Tim is well known at the Cooranga North Hall, where he meets regularly with locals, and on site at one of the 10 host properties for the 123 turbines. Construction has begun on the 850 million dollar project and Tim is keeping a close eye on the progress.

"This project is intended to be the second greenfield project developed by the Powering Australian Renewables Fund (PARF) and is an important innovative piece within their portfolio," Mr Knill said.

PARF is a landmark partnership created by AGL and Queensland

Investment Corporation (and its clients) to develop, own and manage approximately 1,000 MW of large-scale renewable energy infrastructure assets and projects.

Tim finds working on the Coopers Gap project a deeply rewarding experience.

"It has been a long time coming and projects of this magnitude don't just 'happen'; it is a result of an incredible amount of work and communication with key stakeholders.

"Everyone believes in what we are accomplishing, and everyone is aligned to that goal; it's a very collaborative space."

A consortium between electrical giant, GE, and civil engineering construction company, CATCON, won the

contract to design and build the windfarm.

Tim said GE-CATCON will be responsible for a 'whole of project' solution.

"GE-CATCON are responsible for the engineering, procurement and construction of the project and this includes supply, transportation, and erection, fit-out and commissioning of the wind generation turbines.

"Things are well on the way now and soon people will be seeing large turbine components, including the 67 metre long blades, being transported to site," he said.

"They will be pretty conspicuous on the local roads and will spark a lot of interest," he said.

Tim said the project is on track to be completed by June 2019.



The Coopers Gap Wind Farm will have a capacity 453 MW and produce around 1,510,000 MWh of renewable energy, powering approximately 264,000 average Australian homes.



"What I am really loving about the project is the drive and motivation I see from everyone associated with Coopers Gap." Tim Knill

WELL CONNECTED

Residents are never far away from their desired destinations

With the Western Downs accessible via road, rail and air, residents find themselves more connected than ever to the rest of Australia and the world.

Within a few hours drive of most of the region, drivers can make their way to multimillion shopping centres in Toowoomba, dinosaur fossil exhibits in far western Queensland at the Eromanga Natural History Museum or a number of picturesque coastal towns along the Sunshine Coast.

Why not try something different and hop on a train to

explore the outback via rail? The Westlander passenger rail takes passengers to Charleville twice weekly stopping in Dalby, Chinchilla and Miles.

This is certainly no isolated region in fact, thanks to Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and its direct passenger flights to hubs such as Sydney, Melbourne and Townsville, residents can literally be transported anywhere in the world from an airport less than an hour from Dalby.

For those heading to or from Brisbane for work or play, your journey will be more efficient thanks to the \$1.6 billion

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, also affectionately referred to by locals as the Western Downs Connection Road. This is good news especially for our regular road users the 'truckies' who deliver big equipment to the mines and agricultural product to the Port of Brisbane as well.

With the sheer majority of local residents travelling to work by road it is pleasing to note that by June 2019, a \$635 million upgrade of the Warrego Highway from the west of Miles to Toowoomba will be complete making weekly or daily commutes even easier.

Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport and its direct passenger flights to hubs such as Sydney, Melbourne and Townsville [means that] residents can literally be transported anywhere in the world from an airport less than an hour from Dalby.

FROM TOOWOOMBA TO THE WORLD

Photo credit: Lucy RC Photography

It's easier to fly local when you fly direct from Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport - connecting the Western Downs to Sydney, Melbourne, North Queensland and Western Queensland.



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WATER SPECIALISTS

H2O haulage service delivers local business success

PHOTOGRAPHY CMT HAULAGE



CMT Haulage owners Craig and Mandy Turner knew Miles, in the heart of the Surat Basin's resources powerhouse, was the perfect home base to set up their water haulage company.

The saying "without trucks Australia stops" rings true for the family-owned and operated logistics company, with CMT staff knowing how great the outback landscape can be from the long hauls behind the rig.

CMT specialises in water cartage services for the coal seam gas and construction industries.

It's not just the size of the machinery and rig support services that CMT offers, it's the speed, a critical factor for production and extraction needs.

The water tankers provide one of the industry's fastest loading and unloading rates at 2,000 litres a minute, and a 12-minute

loading time. The round-the-clock service offered makes sure the projects get done.

As well as providing haulage services, CMT is part of grass-roots discussions on improving safety when it comes to the oil and gas industry. Holding a high safety standard, CMT Haulage are recognised as the preferred supplier of rig support, water and in-field wash down services in the Western Downs region.

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LOCAL SCHOOLS CHALLENGE NEXT GENERATION

School's the life in the Western Downs

PHOTOGRAPHY WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

More than a quarter (28%) of the population on the Western Downs population are aged between 0-18 years, making school aged education campuses vital for teaching the next generation growing up in the region.

With schools dotted around the region, students are given the best start in life and a chance to study where they live. Some attend the nearby Toowoomba boarding campuses, while other students make the long bus trip each day to their local state or private school gates

Friendly competition across the campuses is encouraged, with schools

regularly competing in sports, science, maths, events and academia, creating a cohesive and interactive learning environment.

Musician Josh Arnold has spent time at many of these campuses, leading workshops to develop a music video to highlight the unique successes of the school and region. Check them out on YouTube.



OPPORTUNITY

KNOCKS



The Chinchilla TAFE campus, located in the grounds of the Chinchilla State High School, is a hub for the agricultural, resources and construction industries in the region.

The Dalby TAFE campus, located a five minute drive from the town centre, offers courses in several study areas including aged care, agriculture, automotive, crime and justice, child care, engineering, first aid, general education, and hospitality. The campus has fully-equipped trade workshops for automotive and engineering students.

TAFE PATHWAYS BEGIN IN WESTERN DOWNS HIGH SCHOOLS

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR STUDENTS

LOOKING TO STUDY A TRADE

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

There is plenty of opportunity in the Western Downs for students who wish to pursue their careers through TAFE.

TAFE Queensland operates two campuses in the Western Downs at Dalby and Chinchilla.

TAFE opportunities for young people in the Western Downs can begin in High School through the Try-A-Trade program.

The program offers Year 10 students the chance to experience up to seven different trades and learn the manual aspects of apprenticeships.

TAFE Queensland collaborates with engineering and construction businesses in the Western

Downs to offer students at Dalby State High School and Chinchilla State High School the opportunity to be part of the program.

Faculty Director of Manufacturing of TAFE Queensland Southwest Region, Michael Lehman, said offering school students the chance to develop their skills through trade programs was a great pathway into further education.

"The Try-A-Trade program gives students the opportunity to experience, in a condensed format,

the various skills required in the engineering and construction trades," he said.

"It gives them first-hand experience of the type of work conducted in trades focused on engineering and construction.

"These programs are a precursor to the VET in School programs which are a pathway to an apprenticeship for Western Downs students when they leave school."

The trades on offer as part of the program focus on engineering and construction.



Catholic Schools

Students reach their full potential as Catholic education campuses foster bright minds

WORDS DR PAT COUGHLAN: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
– CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA

Toowoomba Catholic Schools has a proud history of delivering high quality educational opportunities for students from Prep to Year 12 across Toowoomba and South West Queensland. From Roma in the North to Stanthorpe in the South; Quilpie in the West to Toowoomba in the East.



At the heart of Catholic education is a fundamental belief in the unlimited potential of every student. This belief, supported by Gospel values, inspires our mission to form men and women of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment.

For Toowoomba Catholic Schools this mission has two pillars which support and guide how we envisage our work. The first

is that schools are exemplary places of learning where every student experiences academic success. The second is that schools are exemplary places of spiritual life and Catholic faith where every student comes to know and experience the loving presence of Jesus in their lives.

By working in partnership with parents, parishes and the broader community our schools deliver a world class education that prepares

each student for a rich and fulfilling life.

Discover what makes a Catholic school community unique. Whether you are a parent or caregiver looking for a quality education for your child, a prospective teacher or school officer who'd like to join our dynamic team, or you'd like to volunteer to support our students in reaching their full potential, we'd love to hear from you. Visit our website or contact your local Catholic school.



Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools

Our Lady of the Southern Cross College | Dalby
St Joseph's Primary School | Tara
St Joseph's Primary School | Chinchilla

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QUALITY LEARNING

Ag college on site
breeds bright futures

PHOTOGRAPHY LINDA MANTOVA

One of the best school-based agriculture facilities in the country is found right here at Dalby State High School (DSHS) with teachers leading the way to deliver innovative programs for students.

As one of only two state schools in Australia that have boarding facilities, DSHS took over the former Dalby Agricultural College site seven years ago, and now operate their Agricultural Science and Ag Futures programs known as the DSHS Bunya Campus.

DSHS Science and Agriculture Department Head Peter Donnan said there were currently 60 boarders at the Bunya campus, with the majority choosing to board to ease the daily school commute. The campus also welcomes students from far north Queensland, Canberra, and Thargomindah to learn about agricultural practices.

"Dalby is the only state school in Queensland with an Ag Futures Program, and our all-day delivery is quite unique," Mr Donnan said.

"Our ultimate goal is to become a model school for Ag teaching, with a very high-profile Ag syllabus, which allows students a broad knowledge across all facets of agriculture."

"No other school offers

two full days of hands-on agriculture, as well as a full day of engineering at the schools' Trade Centre, and two days of core senior subjects."

Classes on soil testing, cropping, and cattle farming are held to teach students the first step in running a farming enterprise.

Graduates of the program come away with a Certificate II in Agriculture as well as a Certificate II in Engineering that places them in a prime position when they leave high school to continue studying at one of the tertiary institutions.

Ag Futures Program student Tayla Carlin said coming from a non-rural background, and as a mature age student she found Dalby's Ag program the most appealing.

"I did a lot of research before I enrolled, and it is the best facilitated ag school farm in Australia," Tayla said.

Senior Agriculture teacher Janine Milne said learning off the land was made possible with the Bunya campus spanning 404 hectares at the former Dalby Ag College site, and a second site at 120

hectares, known as Moola, gifted to the campus.

Ms Milne said the school operated two herds of commercial Lim-Fleck/Simmental cross cattle on their two farms, including 40 breeders. The program also run cropping and breeding programs.

"We have a selective breeding program for our stud and commercial flock of Dorper sheep, running 64 breeding ewes at the Bunya campus," she said.

"We were given a \$2000 sale credit from the Curtis family's Bellevue stud at Millmerran, which has allowed us to purchase a quality ram to put over our ewes."

The school also fields a competitive steer team who have tasted success at shows throughout the Western Downs, as well as the Brisbane Ekka.

For some, the next step after secondary education is to stay in the region and attend the Queensland Agricultural Training College in Dalby, where students can take on a traineeship, focusing on agriculture, cropping and energy industries.



Dalby State High School Ag Futures Program students (from left) Marlee Grady from Dalby, Tayla Carlin and Henry Marks, both from Canberra, with DSHS Ag subject co-ordinator Janine Milne. Together, they're processing some of the school's flock of dorper sheep.





BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Getting connected with your business community

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Finding success and opportunities for business is always easier with help from your local chamber or progress association.

The Western Downs has many great community and business groups available to residents' keen to get involved in their local communities. However, when it comes to networking opportunities and getting to know local businesses then you can't go past the Chamber of Commerce in your town.

Not-for-profit business chambers are dotted throughout the area, in Dalby, Chinchilla, Jandowae, Miles, Tara and Wandoan and all share one universal goal. That is to work for, and with, businesses and individuals to promote and share the region's diverse industries. Whether it's Agriculture, Energy, Manufacturing, Tourism, Transport and Logistics or Health all business types are welcome.

These passionate, volunteer-driven organisations are well known for hosting regular events where

business people gather together. They also provide a strong voice for the business community and exist to lobby and raise the concerns of local businesses with all levels of government and major businesses.

Joining the local chamber is a cost-effective investment into your career/business and among other benefits members typically receive discounted event tickets, access to newsletters and the ability to raise their concerns on local issues. For those seeking a membership that stretches further afield they can also consider joining the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE) which hosts a selection of conferences and events throughout the Western Downs and surrounding regions as they strive to link businesses across Agriculture, Construction, Mining and Health with growth opportunities in their sector.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



To find out more about your local Chambers, please consult the directory provided.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE DIRECTORY

Dalby Chamber of Commerce
P 07 4662 4050
E admin@dalbychamber.com.au
www.dalbychamber.com.au

Chinchilla Community Commerce & Industry Inc
P 0407 554 862
E manager@chinchilla.org.au
www.chinchilla.cciq.com.au

Jandowae Business and Community Group
P 0400 720 469
E jandowae.bcg@gmail.com

Miles and District Chamber of Commerce
P 0415 122 320
www.miles.cciq.com.au

Tara Futures Group
P 07 4665 3465
E tarafuturesgroup@ymail.com.au
www.tara.cciq.com.au

Wandoan Community Commerce & Industry Inc
P 07 4627 5200
E wandoansurfclub@bigpond.com
www.wandoan.cciq.com.au

Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise
P 07 4639 4600
E membership@tsbe.com.au
www.tsbe.com.au

On the Land

AGRICULTURE THRIVING WITH A HEALTHY MIX OF TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

PHOTOGRAPHY DAN PROUD

Fertile black soil plains have been the lifeblood of the Western Downs' rich agricultural economy worth more than \$500 million.

The region delivers some of Australia's finest wheat, sorghum, cotton and cereal crops, producing 38% of Queensland's cereals and legumes.

More than 196,000 cattle are sold through the Dalby Saleyards each year – the second largest saleyard in Queensland, shoring supply routes and market access for the 4,600 beef producing properties in the Western Downs.

But it's the intensive animal industries and processing facilities that are driving

agriculture's economic boom, with 170 registered cattle feedlots, two million meat poultry birds, 78.6 million eggs produced annually, and 120 registered piggeries caring for 430,000 pigs.

The figures speak for themselves. The gross annual production value of pigs tallied at \$67.7 million and the region processes 409,000 cotton bales, helping drive the 4.75% agriculture growth.

Some of Australia's biggest feedlots have established strong businesses in the Western Downs including

Sandalwood, Bottle Tree and Aronui.

Innovation is the key strength across agricultural pursuits, with the region welcoming the burgeoning Algae production industry and freshwater fish farming at Condabilla Fish. This adds to the diversity of the region's offerings and opportunities.

But just as the region thrives, its men and women of the land have a strong social licence and back good causes – keep an eye out for the pink bales for breast cancer on the horizons!





JANDOWAE MEDICAL CENTRE

New Medical Centre means increased services on offer

The Jandowae community has welcomed the opening of a new medical centre, Wambo Medical, add to the services available in the town, catering to an aging as well as growing population.

The former Wambo Medical Centre has been revamped to offer greater services.

The new centre in High Street Jandowae has a dedicated ambulance parking bay and room

for up to three doctors to service the community and reduce the need for patients to travel long distances for care.

The new centre has six consulting rooms, two treatment rooms and two nurse consulting rooms.

Regional healthcare services are bridging the gap for health and allied health services as well as greater choice and improved health outcomes by being seen in the town.

Opportunities for training the next cohort of doctors and specialists has also opened up with the larger centre.

Before the new centre opened, Jandowae was serviced only by Dr Luke Dwyer as well as Director of Nursing Leesa Deacon.

Outside of the new centre, the Jandowae Hospital has 12 beds, including five beds for 'long-stay' residential aged-care residents.



Quality services at your doorstep
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Urology
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+ More



Healthy Life

KNOW YOU'RE LOOKED
AFTER ACROSS THE REGION

PHOTOGRAPHY MIAMIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Five hospitals are spread across the Western Downs region servicing the health needs of an aging but active population.

Under the State Government's Darling Downs Hospital and Health System, the Western Downs have hospitals in Chinchilla, Dalby, Jandowae, Miles and Tara, with an outpatient clinic in Wandoan.

These hospitals effectively deliver accessible health services to the far reaches of the region and are operated by passionate staff with a love of rural living and patient care.

Wandoan Health Auxiliary president, Cecelia Donohoe, whose passion for regional health care has seen allied services expand from the town's clinic, to host a visiting doctor twice a week, and

operate telehealth services to give rural patients access to care without travelling.

As the auxiliary's inaugural president from 2013, Mrs Donohoe said services keep patient care front of mind.

"We are a small but very dedicated group of 10 and have organised an annual Rural Health Night to raise awareness of health issues and related programs," Mrs Donohoe said.

"To date these events have focused on prostate cancer and diabetes and emergency services."

Twelve aged care providers in the region have a combined 345 operational places which equate to \$15.2 million in Federal funding.

This funding supports the aging

population in the area, where 26% of residents are aged over 55.

To that, Western Downs Regional Council has developed its Age in Place initiative, a planning scheme that identified then supported health precincts for the co-location of public and private health infrastructure.

In Tara, two aged care facilities operate, with Carinya Aged Care and the Tarcoola Aged Care Facility available.

World-class health facilities and specialist treatment is also available on the district's doorstep with Toowoomba Hospital, St Andrew's Private and St Vincent's Private working collaboratively in Toowoomba and the wider Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service.



LIFE IN THE REGION

A LOCALS INSIGHT INTO LIVING IN THE WESTERN DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Zita Stark experiences the best a rural lifestyle has to offer, finding friendships and rich cultures in Chinchilla through the Conversations in English group she facilitates.

Ms Stark immigrated from Budapest, Hungary, moving first to Brisbane in 2012 before settling in the Western Downs the following year. She shares the warm welcome she received with others, while learning from the land between shifts at the local library and cinema.

“When I moved here, leaving a city of more than two million for a town of around 5000 residents was a big change,” she said.

Ms Stark soon turned around her initial feelings of isolation by joining as a volunteer to a number of groups including gardening, church, aged care and events, immersing herself in the region.

“I was overwhelmed at how lovely people are here, and I wanted to give back to the community.”

Joining the *Conversations in*

English class, and later taking over the Chinchilla branch of the group, that also has a branch in Dalby, Ms Stark found her passion.

She believes once the confidence barrier is broken, many of the participants become more active in their community.

“It’s very hard when you don’t also speak English. A lot of migrants are highly educated, they just lack the daring and courage to go out and make friends.

“This group is a huge passion for it fills my heart with warmth. I’ve been on the other side and I know what it’s like to not yet have the confidence, but once you find it, it’s amazing.”

She said while the Chinchilla group was social and family orientated, the Dalby group was more about workers getting the English they need to maintain jobs. The

groups host events, share dinners and learn from each other’s cultures and backgrounds. At one time more than 17 nationalities were represented by the group’s attendees, showing the strength in diversity.

Ms Stark’s other love is for nature and the land, and how it shapes the community.

“Chinchilla is such a unique town, it’s a strong town culturally and is big enough to have everything you need – a community centre, the big food chains, and facilities like the cities have, we aren’t missing out,” she said.

“Farming in our region is very different than in Europe, and I’m blessed to learn about farming life. It’s physical and hard work, but it’s so amazing to experience.”

Join *Conversations in English* at the Chinchilla Library on Wednesday’s from 1pm until 3pm.

CONVERSATIONS

IN ENGLISH



Zita highly recommends ‘Conversations in English’ - an award-winning, free friendship group for those who have English as a second language.

Designed to help participants practice their English in a friendly and supportive environment this project is a joint initiative by Chinchilla Library and the Chinchilla Family Support Centre.

ROOTS RUN DEEP IN CHINCHILLA

Sturgess family’s sweet secrets
to growth across region

PHOTOGRAPHY LINDA MANTOVA

Chinchilla’s Sturgess family know how to carve up the competition at Chinchilla’s biennial Melon festival. If you’ve ever bitten into a fresh slice at the event, chances are Murray Sturgess grew it on his Evandene property.

He’s been involved with the festival since it began in 1994, and still remembers when he was outdone by one of his sons, Kyron in 2011. Kyron’s melon was 6kg heavier than his, tipping the scales at 50kg, and one of three Big Melon Weigh-In titles he’s won. However Kyron also remains beaten, with the 87.5kg record set by Bernie and Matt Davies in 2007.

Great quality soil has enriched the watermelon yields on Sturgess Farming that, at its peak, has previously produced 1,500 tonnes in a year.

Murray’s wife Wendy shares his life on the land, with the duo celebrating almost 40 years together. Four generations have lived on Evandene, after Murray’s parents Jean and Bill first purchased the property 50 years ago. Murray later acquired three neighbouring properties.

“The property was a dairy farm when mum and dad bought it,

but they stocked it with Shorthorn cattle, bought in with them from their previous property, which weren’t suited to this country, and they started growing wheat,” Mr Sturgess said.

He said his dad grew his first melons at Evandene in 1973 after clearing some of the heavily timbered land.

“We grew dryland melons for 16 years, before building a ring tank, and ever since we have been growing seedless melons under irrigation, producing 860 tonne last season,” he said.

Murray was just a child himself when they moved to Chinchilla. A love of the farm led to him studying animal husbandry, a skill he uses to breed more than 500 cows on the property alongside the fruit.

Murray’s other passion is polocrosse, with three terms under his belt as the Chinchilla Polocrosse Club president. He’s represented the state more than a

dozen times, and is a familiar face around the dusty grounds.

Murray says he loves watching his sons and grandchildren play the sport with his sons Kyron, Cameron and Bryce all having played locally for Chinchilla and the state.

Murray said for him, polocrosse stood out as a sport that brought excitement and a genuine family friendly atmosphere to the competition. There’s a big family mentality that comes naturally to the pitch, and is something that keeps him coming back every season.

A 15 year racehorse training career is also thrown into the mix of Murray’s career highlights, with a 1983 win in Ipswich.

As a true Chinchilla local, Murray has watched the town grow, particularly in the past decade. He said while the dynamics have changed, it remained a warm, friendly country town, perfect to settle down and raise a family



Family future: Murray and Wendy Sturgess know how to grow a winning watermelon at Evandene, north of Chinchilla.





WE'VE GOT IT ALL COVERED!

Check out just some of the sports clubs on offer in the region below.

NAME	SPORT
Chinchilla Fishing and Restocking Club Inc	Fishing
Chinchilla Netball Inc.	Netball
Chinchilla River Rats	Rugby Union
Chinchilla Tennis Association	Tennis
Chinchilla Polocrosse Club	Polocrosse
Dalby Diehards	Rugby League
Dalby Gun Club	Shooting
Dalby Kart Club	Karting
Dalby PCYC Basketball Association	Basketball
Dalby PCYC Netball	Netball
Dalby Pistol Club	Shooting
Dalby Tara Rifle Club	Shooting
Dalby Volleyball	Volleyball
Jandowae Junior Rugby League Club	Rugby League
Jandowae Pony Club	Equestrian
Jandowae Race Club	Horse racing
Meandarra Bowls Club	Bowling
Miles and District Amateur Race Club	Horse Racing
Saints Weightlifting Club, Miles	Weightlifting
Wandoan Polocrosse Club	Polocrosse
Tara Polocrosse Club	Polocrosse

BREEDING GROUND FOR CHAMPIONS

SPORTS ARE A BIG PART OF LIFE IN THE REGION

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTED

Many of our elite and beloved sporting champions have had their start on the hallowed fields of the Western Downs.

Former Queensland State of Origin and Bulldogs great, Steve Price, hales from Dalby, as well as popular Broncos player, Andrew McCullough.

If you care to step back to the 1990's, Jason Little was arguably one of Queensland's and Australia's greatest centre pairings on the rugby union paddock, with Little a product of the Western Downs.

A Wallaby great, Little, who was born in Dalby, and grew in the Jimbour district, played his junior sport in the region, and went on to play for his country on 72 occasions,

as well as represent his country in athletics and cricket as a schoolboy.

As well as boasting strong rugby league and rugby union clubs in many towns in the region, Chinchilla is the home of one of the strongest polocrosse clubs in the state.

Chinchilla Polocrosse Club plays host to an annual carnival, which brings together enthusiasts of the game from all parts of central and southern Queensland and northern New South Wales.

They have hosted the Queensland State Polocrosse Championships several

times in recent years and have excellent playing fields and facilities which are continually being upgraded utilising funds raised by both the club, local businesses, and generous grants from the Western Downs Regional Council.

Sport is an important part of life for any regional community and staying active is extremely relevant in today's society the communities within Western Downs still enjoy a range of excellent sporting facilities and clubs run by pro-active committees made up of passionate individuals.

PULLING THEIR WEIGHT

SPORTING STARS RAISE THE BAR IN THE BUSH

PHOTOGRAPHY B. STUART, AUSTRALIAN WEIGHTLIFTING FEDERATION

Miles resident **Chloe Kerwick, 22**, has flexed her muscles at a national level, representing the region and taking home a bronze medal at the 2018 Australian Open Weightlifting Championships, qualifying her for the nationals later this year.

Chloe is one of a growing group of about 20 weightlifters to hail from Miles, thanks to the tireless efforts of trainers found at the Murilla Fitness Centre in Miles.

Another member of the Saints Weightlifting Club Kylie Salisbury, 15, qualified to compete in the open level at the Nationals.

Club Coach Sonia Stenhouse trains the next generation of champions, saying club members regularly competed.

"Everyone starts out training with a stick or a light bar, and the ultimate goal is to increase the weight you lift," she said.

"Weightlifting is very careful and progressive, as it is a very strictly supervised sport ... coaching is very one-on-one."

Sonia began coaching when Deb Acason, who established the club in 2013, moved to Ipswich in late 2015.

Deb is an Australian Olympic and Commonwealth Games weightlifter champion, having won Gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, as well as representing Australia at two Olympic and five Commonwealth Games.

When she first moved to Miles she was training on the concrete slab out the back of the Presbyterian Church where her husband Josh is a minister.

Many of the club members also attend Miles State High School.

To continue to develop sporting stars, the club was proud to receive a substantial amount of equipment from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Committee. Gym equipment was also donated to the centre by Origin Energy.

The fitness centre is located beside the Miles pool.



Chloe Kerwick shows her strength at the Australian Open Weightlifting Championships in 2018, winning Bronze.

HEALTHY WATERWAYS

Consider your summer plans sorted

PHOTOGRAPHY DAN PROUD

One of the best attributes of living in the Western Downs is the camping and nature parks right on your doorstep, with plenty of opportunities to explore and camp in the region.

The first stop for camping or exploring plans should be the **Bowenville Reserve**. Just 20 minutes east of Dalby, and only a few kilometres off the highway, this small rest area by **Oakey Creek** can revitalise your mind and set you up for the next day of adventure or break from your working week.

Dalby's winding **Myall Creek** pathway is a favourite spot to stroll the picturesque waterway, with geese along the banks and pelicans often spotted on the water. Lizards and other wildlife among the bottle trees and gums that line the banks are often spotted by keen walkers. The pathway near Dalby's CBD is also a favourite for early morning joggers, with newly build bridges to cross the water away from the nearby weir.

Heading south from Dalby on the Moonie Highway, the **Lake Broadwater**

Conservation Park is a well-known and established campground with amenities, picnic areas, wood fired barbeques and walking tracks around the fresh water to relax and unwind. Waterbirds and wildlife are found nearby, along with plenty of room to set up the campervan or motorhome. A playground area completes the family friendly area. The site is well signed and found just a few kilometres off the highway. A small fee applies on arrival for camping.

The **Chinchilla Weir** is a favourite spot of locals, with the freshwater weir offering thrill seekers a chance to waterski, canoe, swim or fish. A permit is needed for those looking for some down time to sink the reel in to catch a big one. Campers can settle in for up to two nights for free at the site with the help of barbeque facilities.

The banks of **Dogwood Creek** on the western side of Miles are an ideal quiet spot for fishing for those with a permit, as well as a free relaxing campground among the trees just west of the town. A heavy vehicle rest stop is found just across the open highway, with an undercover area and amenities. Others stay at **Gil Weir** for its popular fishing spot for those with a fishing permit.

For those headed south to Condamine, stay at **Caliguel Lagoon**, a perfect stop that like Chinchilla's facilities, allows waterskiing and boating when the water level is high. In Tara, take in the **Lagoon Parklands** that feature Settlers Park and the Walk of Remembrance Garden. The lagoon is part of Undulla Creek and host to a serene camping ground with great facilities and powered sites, with a 2km walk around the water.

CAMPING PLANS?



Overnight camping is also available at many town showgrounds sites, as well as:

- » **Waterloo Plain Environmental Park, Wandoan**
- » **O'Sullivan Park, Wandoan**
- » **Chinaman's Lagoon, just south of Miles on the Leichhardt Highway**
- » **Caliguel Lagoon, Condamine**
- » **The Gums Store, The Gums**
- » **Westmar Rest Area**
- » **Brigalow Creek Campgrounds, Meandarra**
- » **Round Water Hole, Chinchilla**
- » **Richard Best Memorial Park, Warra**



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