

Western Downs Regional Council SBF Program Showcase

Western Downs Regional Council: Business in Western Downs eNewsletter

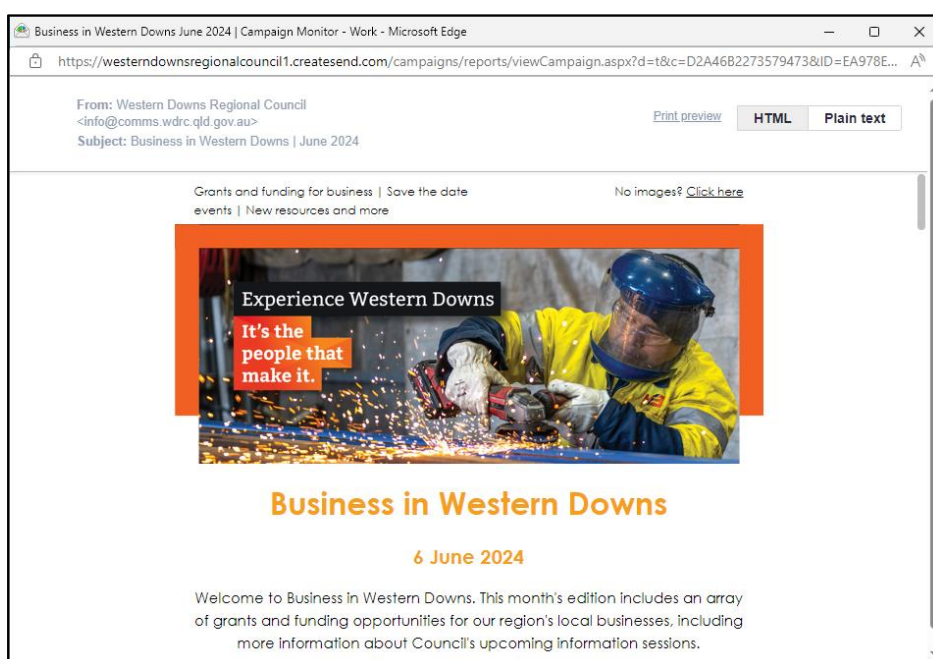


Photo: Preview of the June 2024 edition of our Business in Western Downs eNewsletter.

Showcase snapshot

- The Business in Western Downs monthly eNewsletter is a wealth of information to local small businesses and community organisations.
- It aims to raise awareness of initiatives, events, grants, resources and opportunities that are of relevance to businesses in the Western Downs region.
- Western Downs Regional Council's Economic Development Team collate and filter information from a variety of sources, including emails from contacts, promotion of partner events and various online subscriptions.
- Businesses can subscribe online via our website. We are working on a marketing campaign, including having a registration code available during Council-run business events, to raise awareness and increase subscriptions.

Key search words: Western Downs Regional Council, grants, funding, local events, partner events, networking opportunities, resources, support, small business, online newsletter



Introduction

- The Business in Western Downs eNewsletter is a monthly newsletter targeting small businesses (including agribusiness), community groups and support organisations (for example, Chambers of Commerce). Additionally, we want to ensure the information is freely available for all businesses in the Western Downs, not just those who are financial members of their local Chamber.
- While a newsletter was previously emailed sporadically, the Business in Western Downs eNewsletter (in its current iteration) is a relatively new initiative, with the first edition being sent in June 2023.
- The eNewsletter aims to promote Council-run and partner events that are held within the region, as well as raise awareness of networking opportunities, grants and funding, and other business-related news and support resources. Information is gathered from a variety of sources and vetted to ensure relevance to our local community.
- The eNewsletter is developed in-house by Economic Development marketing officers using Campaign Monitor. In addition to the cost incurred by Council to hold a subscription to Campaign Monitor, it takes staff approximately 3-4 hours every month to collate the information and create the email campaign.
- We are able to utilise the automatically generated campaign insights to monitor subscription lists, open rates, click rates etc. Our subscriptions rates have increased more than doubled since the first edition was sent in June 2023 (from 38 to 98 in June 2024).

Outcomes

- The Business in Western Downs eNewsletter is just one of the ways we are actively engaging with small businesses. The regular, monthly communication is full of opportunities that are relevant for businesses across our region.
- By delivering information directly to their inbox, we are making it easier for businesses to access opportunities to develop networks, access education, increase their capabilities, and take advantage of government, business and industry programs and resources.
- We continue to build a good relationship with local Chambers of Commerce, and Chambers continue to promote grant funding and business support initiatives to their members by receiving the eNewsletter.
- A number of stakeholders have used information provided in our eNewsletter and taken advantage of grants, events and other opportunities that we promote.

Insights

- Given the steady increase in newsletter subscriptions, it is clear that the Business in Western Downs eNewsletter is relevant and beneficial to local small businesses.



- Click rates tell us that businesses are keen to work with Council, are interested in the future of investment in the region, are keen to participate in professional development and networking opportunities, and are taking advantage of incentives and funding opportunities.
- Staffing priorities and vacancies across departments have meant that the planned marketing campaign of this newsletter has been delayed. As steps in this plan are actioned we anticipate continued increase of our reach, enabling us to support more of the small businesses operating across the Western Downs.

Further information

To learn more about this showcase, please contact:

- Organisation: Western Downs Regional Council
- Website: [Home Western Downs Regional Council \(wdrc.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au)
- Full name: Prince Lo
- Position: Economic Development Program Leader
- Phone:
- Email:

For more information about the Small Business Friendly Program visit qsbc.qld.gov.au