



30 April 2024

Brisbane Olympic and
Paralympic Games
Arrangements
Amendment Bill 2024
Discussion Paper

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL
COUNCIL SUBMISSION

Western Downs Regional Council
PO Box 551
Dalby, Queensland
4405

30 April 2024

Department of State Development and Infrastructure and Industrial Relations, and Racing

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024

Western Downs Region Council (Council) is a local government Council in Queensland, Australia. The Council manages an area of 37,937 square kilometres with a population of approximately 35,000. Council is at the forefront of the changing world and works to support our growing region, with our Corporate Plan underpinned by progress, people, place, and performance.

We sincerely thank the taskforce from the Departments of State Development and Infrastructure and Industrial Relations, and Racing for undertaking its consultation into the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024, which is of strong interest to our Council and our residents.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Council's submission regarding the above discussion paper.

For any further information or questions, please contact Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager via email lidewij.koene-sloss@wdrc.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 4679 4526.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Fletcher
GENERAL MANAGER (COMMUNITY & LIVEABILITY)

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About the Western Downs Regional Council

The Western Downs is located on the Darling Downs, approximately 207 kilometres north-west of Brisbane and 83 kilometres north-west of Toowoomba. The region encompasses the centres of Dalby, Chinchilla, Jandowae, Miles, Tara and Wandoan, covering nearly 28,000 square kilometres. Combining country lifestyle with modern living, excellent retail offerings and conveniences, the area is home to a population of around 25,000 people and has a large working age population of 60.9% aged 15-64 years.

Build on agriculture and thriving in the intensive agriculture, energy and manufacturing industries, Western Downs Regional Council is focused on making our region a great place to live, work, visit and invest and the ensure our future generation has the opportunity to do what they love whilst enjoying a regional lifestyle and continue the strong economic growth of the region.

Council manages Australia's second largest road network of over 10,000 km with highways leading into the region including the Bunya, Leichhardt, Moonie and Warrego Highways, an extensive water, gas, and sewage network, and one of Australia's largest cattle saleyards. Located in the heart of the resource rich Surat Basin, the Western Downs has a diversified energy portfolio with five pillars of energy generation: Coal, Gas, Solar, Wind and soon Hydrogen cementing our reputation as the Energy Capital of Queensland. This contributes to the region's strong economic growth, investment, and consistently high employment with a GRP of \$3.68 billion and \$7.5 billion in the development pipeline.

In addition to the above key industry pillars, tourism is becoming a fifth pillar of our economy. Set against a breathtaking backdrop of dense bunya pine and eucalypt forests; quilted expanses of sorghum, wheat, and cotton ready for harvest; meandering rivers and creeks; the Western Downs region is an idyllic location providing the perfect country and emerging agritourism experience. It is a place of vibrant and distinctive festivals that capture our living history and country ambience; a host to showcase our arts, music, culture, and cuisine.

The Western Downs Region is a place where you can indulge in the quiet calm of country living and immerse yourself in the natural splendour of a country landscape, however you decide to spend your time in the Western Downs, one thing is for sure - it's the people that make it.

Council is committed to proactively advancing our region as a tourist destination for travellers all over Australia and beyond. Our vision is for the Western Downs to be an end destination of choice for repeat visitors, while leveraging off significant drive-through visitation. Councils' 5-year Tourism & Events Strategy (2023 - 2028) is essential for our region as we inch closer to the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games - a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our region to leverage domestic and international tourism, and to develop our great region as an end destination of choice.

This strategy aligns closely with Tourism & Events Queensland Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027 to contribute to the Queensland economy and attract visitors to QLD, generating overnight visitor expenditure, as well as the Australian Government's long-term strategy for the visitor economy, known as THRIVE 2030. This strategy focuses on sustainable growth, innovation, and enhancing visitor experiences. The long-term target for regional spend is \$100 billion dollars with the 2024 interim goal of \$70 billion.

By aligning Olympic-related investments with tourism strategies of all levels of government, Queensland can create a positive legacy for regional communities.

A key pillar of the Western Downs Tourism and Events strategy (wdrc.qld.gov.au) is "To grow and diversify tourism markets". We do this is to through marketing and promotion of the region as a destination of choice in collaboration with our Regional Tourism Authority (RTO), Southern Queensland Country Tourism (SQCT).

This partnership supports Council's strategy by leveraging of regional assets and strengths through the provision of data, marketing campaigns, information sharing and networking of key stakeholders throughout the region. SQCT's vision is to create demand for visitation by connecting people culturally and emotionally to our region.

Through conducting strong marketing and promotion, Council and SQCT strive to ensure the tourism and event offering are accessible and inclusive to the diversity of travellers and meeting their individual needs.

On average visitors spend \$144 per night per stay and stay an average of 2.6 nights. Visitors comprise 52% overnight guests and 48% day-trippers. Among these visitors 15% originate from Interstate, while 85% are intrastate. Notably these visitors hail from further toward the coast suggesting the majority of visitors venture inland to experience Queensland's countryside.

Roy Morgan Research denotes the typical traveller to the Western Downs are identified by the Helix Persona group of Hearth and Home. This persona represents middle Australia, with life revolving around family and home, which they see as an expression of their achievements. They are hardworking, house proud, with traditional values and closest to the average Australian. Likely to be older, around half are aged 50+ and many are already retired and relaxed living.

Executive Summary

On 27 October 2021, the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill (Bill) was introduced into the Queensland Parliament by the Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Olympics, and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee for its detailed consideration. The Bill was declared an urgent Bill under Standing Order 137, with the committee required to conclude its considerations and report to the Parliament on the Bill by 26 November 2021.

The Honourable Grace Grace, Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing introduced the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024 on 17 April 2024.

The primary objectives of the Bill are to:

- Establish the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority to ensure the successful delivery of Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the benefits are maximised;
- Establish a board of the authority to ensure it performs its functions in a proper, effective, and efficient way.

These amendments will focus on the activities required to successfully host the Games and deliver significant legacy outcomes and other benefits for the greater Queensland communities.

In reviewing the Bill, Western Downs Regional Council understand and support the key purpose and request the following recommendations be considered to strengthen the Games and Legacy Delivery Authority, remembering "*a successful Olympic Games goes beyond medals and stadiums; they positively impact the lives of residents. By actively involving regional communities and addressing their concerns, the Olympic department can create a meaningful legacy.*"

Council supports the authority and Bill recommendations, however, wishes to highlight more to be placed on legacy the games can provide, including through strengthening legacy investment in tourism infrastructure, enabling pre, during and post games visitation and ensuring local content in the procurement of materials and services supplied to the games.

Council would like to see this bill having synergy with existing partners including Queensland Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) supporting legacy projects, including support for regional Destination Events and investment in new hero experiences.

It's important that regional Queensland understand and maximise the benefits of the games, whilst leveraging long term legacy benefits. A focus on strengthening local content and the visitation economy, and not just the venues, will benefit regional communities.

Recommendations

While the Bill's primary objectives are commendable in ensuring Queensland's readiness to host the Brisbane 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there are indeed areas that could be enhanced to maximise the benefits of the Games. Here are our recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1: Ensuring a Coordinated Approach Between Stakeholders to Leverage and Maximise the Games for Tourism Product Development and Increased Visitation**

Strengthening a coordinated approach with Southern Queensland Country Tourism (SQCT) to attract private investment for the development of tourism product, increased markets and the delivery of destination events, which would enhance the overall experience for visitors and potentially boost post-Games visitation. Focusing on strategies to increase visitation to the region beyond the Games would ensure a legacy and continued economic benefits.

- **Recommendation 2: Public Investment in Key Visitor Infrastructure**

Investments in infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging stations and further bus transportation could improve road and transport connectivity, making travel more convenient for both participants and spectators. This would make travel more convenient for both participants and spectators, encouraging them to explore regional Queensland.

- **Recommendation 3: Government Investment in Accelerated Development and Expansion of Tourism Product and Experiences**

Government investment in key tourism infrastructure and experiences, such as Indigenous Tourism and accessible tourism, could enrich the cultural experience for visitors. Supporting projects currently in infancy, such as Bunya Songlines in conjunction with Southern Queensland Country (RTO) and Bunya People's Aboriginal Corporation (BPAC) would also contribute to this.

- **Recommendation 4: Securing Regional Opportunities to Supply Materials and Services to the Games**

While the Games may not be physically hosted in the Western Downs, the economic ripple effect extends beyond the immediate host city. Businesses in the Western Downs can participate in the supply chain for infrastructure development, transportation, logistics, and other related services. This indirect impact can create jobs, stimulate local spending, and boost the regional economy.

Submission

Council's five-year (2023 to 2028) strategy, [Tourism & Destination Events Western Downs Regional Council \(wdrc.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au) addresses issues and clearly articulates a strategic pathway for the Western Downs to diversify and grow its economy, building on the region's competitive advantage and further attracting business and investment in value-adding opportunities and emerging markets. This strategy focuses on five key pillars:

- **Tourism Product** - The Western Downs has a wide range of unique and high-quality tourism product, including destination events of national significance.
- **Market** – The Western Downs is a destination of choice for domestic tourists from Australia's metropolitan and coastal areas and expands to emerging domestic and international markets.
- **Infrastructure** – The Western Downs is equipped with modern infrastructure and quality essential services supporting the visitor economy.
- **Productivity & Innovation** – The Western Downs is home to modern tourism operators embracing leading edge business practices and local productivity continues to increase.
- **Sustainability & Resilience** – The Western Downs is future-proofed for a changing climate and transitioning economies, and circular economy principles are stimulated.

The Western Downs Regional Council recommends to the Department the following priorities with the aim to create legacy opportunities in regional Queensland from the Olympic & Paralympic Games.

Strengthening a coordinated approach

To enable increased visitation pre-, during, and post-Games, Council recommends strengthening a coordinated approach with key stakeholders such as SQCT and TEQ to enable private investment for the development and expansion of tourism attractions and experiences, including destination events.

Considering the multiple tiers of Government domestic investors interface with a more coordinated approach to investment attraction between all levels of Government, Tourism Australia and Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) and other stakeholders would strengthen investment attraction by reducing time for investors and developers. This includes alignment of Government policies and initiatives with targeted goals and priorities to facilitate coordinated efforts in attracting private capital to support investment.

Coordination between key stakeholders can further strengthen strategies to increase visitation and overnight stay such as regional travel itineraries created and additional event funding for new and existing hero events.

Investing in regional transportation and connectivity

The Western Downs region has the second largest network of local roads in Australia, while also maintaining significant sections of national highway and state-controlled roads. The region boasts three highways (Warrego, Leichhardt, and Moonie), and only a short two and a half-hour drive west of Brisbane, easily accessed by the Sunshine Coast or Gold Coast offering easy access to all major towns, visitor attractions and natural sights. This road network plays an essential role in the visitor economy and requires significant funding to renew and maintain road assets to support tourism and the Australian economy.

To enable international and domestic visitors to visit regional areas, Council recommends further investment in connectivity, transportation and the roll-out of sustainable solutions considering the climate positive aspect of the Games. A focus of importance must be placed on smart technologies that can support electric vehicles (EV) charging

infrastructure due to the vast distances between town centres. Currently there are only two (2) EV charges on public roads, with another four (4) EV chargers at business premises. To support EV adoption as well as regional accessibility, an increased importance should be placed upon this priority.

In addition to this, and to leverage visitor marketing and promotions for visitors, digital connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure upgrades in regional areas are essential. Reliable internet access, mobile coverage, and digital connectivity are critical for regional communities. These investments can boost tourism, business development, and educational opportunities.

Finally, it is its paramount to maintain and understand the concerns faced in regional communities such as workforce availability and accessible and affordable housing. Addressing these issues could ensure a more inclusive and beneficial Games for all.

Public investment in accelerated development and expansion of tourism product and experiences

The TEQ tourism strategy focuses on growing the tourism market by focusing on tourists who travel with the head, heart, and hand.

Queensland, and particularly Southern Queensland Country, has a significant opportunity to expand tourism experiences and product that are focussed on exquisite natural landmarks and hero experiences, such as the Bunya Mountains, that provide visitors with the opportunity to connect to nature, learn about Queensland's history and heritage and to support and give back to regional communities.

First Nations culture is an asset for Australia, supporting Indigenous tourism experiences can create economic opportunities and celebrate cultural heritage. Investment in Indigenous-led tourism ventures, cultural centres, and guided experiences will attract visitors and promote understanding. Western Downs Regional Council has invested in a pre-feasibility study to explore opportunities for new tourism development at the Bunya Mountains, however any of those require significant funding support prior to becoming commercial.

Focus must also be placed on ensuring that tourism infrastructure is accessible, this includes accommodations, transportation, and attractions. Investments in accessible facilities benefit not only tourists but also residents with disabilities. It fosters inclusivity and supports sustainable tourism growth.

In summary, a holistic approach leveraging visitor opportunities will contribute to successful Olympics and long-term regional development.

Securing Regional Opportunities to Supply Materials and Services to the Games

The 'Buy Queensland' program has been written into the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Arrangements ensuring Queensland businesses benefit from Queensland hosting the Games.

The policy includes a published procurement pipeline and availability of special advisers to help businesses engage with the government and get Games Ready.

Underpinning this new Procurement Strategy, the Buy Queensland approach gives the State's businesses a clear advantage in the race to reap the rewards of hosting the world's biggest sporting event with targets and policies maximising the involvement of small businesses, regional and local businesses.

Council is keen to learn how to leverage the new strategy and to ensure that the strength of regionally based small and medium business and their local communities are recognised. Local businesses, can participate in exciting projects, form valuable partnerships, and contribute to the supply chain for various goods and services.

Conclusion

Western Downs Regional Council extends its appreciation for the opportunity to respond to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024

In summary, the Olympic Committee should actively engage with regional communities, understand their tourism strengths and opportunities, and emphasise the potential benefits of leveraging the games creating legacy investment for decades to come. By doing so, they can promote positive outcomes and ensure a lasting legacy for both residents and visitors.

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to contact Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager via email via email lidewij.koene-sloss@wdrc.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 4679 4526 should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Appendix

1. Western Downs Regional Council Tourism & Events Strategy 2023 - 2028
2. Tourism Events Queensland Strategy 2022 - 2027
3. Australian Government long-term strategy for the visitor economy: THRIVE 2030.
4. Personas is a classification for each type of consumer and the communities they are a part of. (<https://www.helixpersonas.com.au/>)