

ENERGY ROADMAP AMENDMENT BILL 2025

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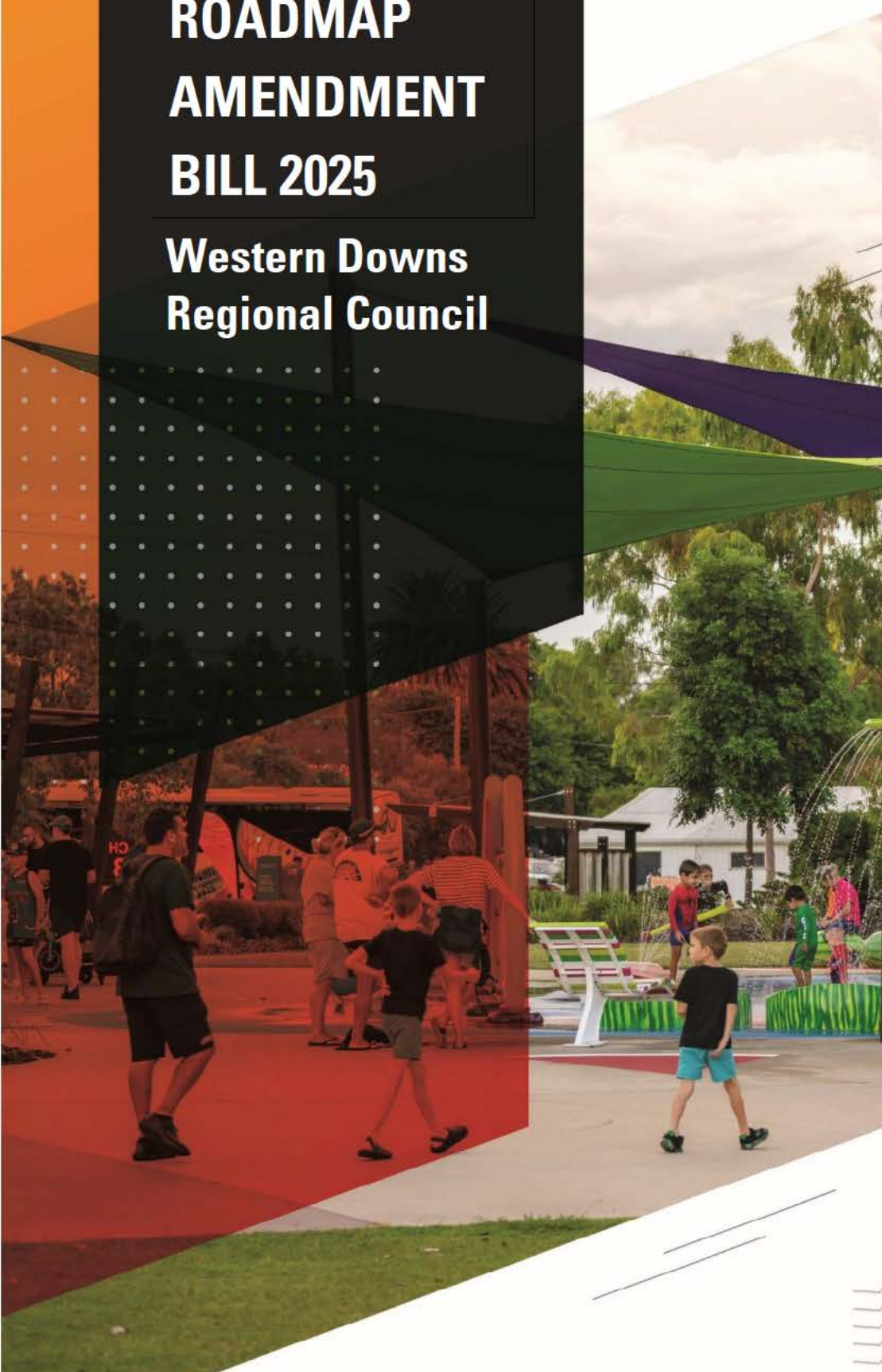
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ENERGY ROADMAP AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Western Downs
Regional Council



29 October 2025

OUR COMMUNITIES

OUR FUTURE



29 October 2025

The Honourable David Janetzki MP
Treasurer of Queensland,
Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership
Queensland Parliament

Sent via email: gefc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Treasurer and Governance, Energy and Finance Committee,

RE: ENERGY ROADMAP AMENDMENT BILL 2025

The Western Downs Region Council ("Council") oversees a vibrant local government area spanning 37,937 square kilometres, serving a diverse population of approximately 35,000 residents. Our region thrives on a robust foundation of agriculture, intensive agriculture, energy, and manufacturing industries. These sectors are bolstered by a rich and diverse workforce, including a significant number of migrant employees, who contribute to the social and economic fabric of our community

We sincerely thank the Queensland Government for seeking feedback on the proposed Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025, aimed to deliver cost-effective, safe, secure and reliable energy to Queenslanders. The newly released Energy Roadmap is of strong interest to our Council and our communities.

Enclosed is the Council's comprehensive submission for your consideration, detailing our perspectives and recommendations on the Amendment Bill. We believe that the insights provided will offer valuable contributions to the review process and help shape policies that foster growth and inclusivity in regional areas like ours.

For any further information or questions, please contact either myself via email [REDACTED] or mobile [REDACTED] or Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager via email [REDACTED] or phone [REDACTED].

Yours Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Jodie Taylor.

Jodie Taylor
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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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 38,000 square kilometres. Combining country lifestyle with modern living, excellent retail offerings and conveniences, the area is home to a population of around 35,000 people and has a large working age population of 60.9% aged 15-64 years.

Built 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 to ensure our future generation have 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 with highways leading into the region including the Bunya, Leichhardt, Warrego & Moonie, 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, Hydrogen, Solar, Wind and BESS 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 \$5.28 Billion.

Council's five-year [Economic Development Strategy](#) (2023 to 2028) addresses critical 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. The Economic Development Strategy focuses on five key pillars:

- **Jobs & Skills** - The Western Downs workforce is growing, optimised and fit for the future.
- **Liveability & Infrastructure** - The Western Downs is equipped with modern infrastructure and quality essential services across the region to enable liveability and wellbeing, whilst sustaining population growth.
- **Population** - The Western Downs demonstrates population growth to meet workforce demands.
- **Productivity & Innovation** - The Western Downs is a recognised leader in agribusiness, energy and manufacturing, 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.

This strategy aligns closely with the Council's [Corporate Plan](#) and supports one of Queensland's which is committed to attracting and enabling development, ensuring the Western Downs is a diverse region at the forefront of the changing world. [Planning Schemes](#) which is committed to attracting and enabling development, ensuring the Western Downs is a diverse region at the forefront of the changing world.

Executive Summary

Western Downs Regional Council ("Council") welcomes the opportunity to provide a consultation submission and contribute to the Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025. Council oversees a diverse region with a strong foundation in agriculture, intensive agriculture, energy and manufacturing, and is committed to ensuring that energy developments benefit all community members, following Council's commitments made in the Economic Development Strategy and Communities Partnering Framework.

Council wishes to commend the State Government on the release of the new Energy Roadmap, and note that it shares the Government's objectives of:

- Cost-effective, safe, secure and reliable energy provision;
- Efficient and coordinated augmentation of national transmission grid; and
- Support for workers and affected communities.

Nonetheless, Council wishes to share some recommendations in this submission, which it believes will ensure the Bill meets its objectives in regional Queensland, and will strengthen the implementation of the Energy Roadmap.

Council is committed to working with the State Government to ensure that we can continually strengthen, build and diversify the Western Downs economy, while continuing to improve the quality and spacious lifestyle our residents love so much.

Recommendations

Council has made three recommendations for consideration by the State Government. These are summarised here:

Recommendation 1: Council recommends the State Government to strengthen certainty and stability for energy sectors, with the intent to support investment decisions and workforce demands.

Recommendation 2: Continued strong collaboration with local governments to ensure that investment in energy infrastructure continues to strike the right balance between ensuring a reliable energy network, whilst unlocking new economic opportunities.

Recommendation 3: Considering the repeal of three central entities, it is critical that cumulative impacts of all types of generation are considered and collectively mitigated, requiring cross department collaboration and integration.

Submission

Western Downs Regional Council welcomes renewable energy into our region and believes the transition to renewable energy is beneficial to the Western Downs region and Queensland. The *Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025* is anticipated to have a positive impact on households, small and medium enterprises, and particularly manufacturing businesses through forecasted reduced energy costs.

Western Downs Regional Council is well positioned as the Energy Capital of Queensland - we recognise the economic opportunities provided by the renewables sector and actively attracts renewables investment in the region. Over the past 15 years, strong investment in transmission infrastructure in the Western Downs has placed the region favourably for the development of renewables investment. Western Downs Regional Council has approved 24 solar farms since 2016, 10 of which are either operational or under construction. The Coopers Gap Wind Farm and Dulacca Wind Farm are operational, and the Wambo Wind Farm is currently under construction. A renewables-based hydrogen demonstration plant will soon be operational and there are also a number of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) installed across the region.

Omission of Renewable Energy Targets

Whilst Council has expressed its support for the previous renewable energy targets, Council shared its concerns in January 2024 on the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 considering the targets ambitious, resulting in an array of intricate challenges and community concerns. Council's submission stated:

"Council holds legitimate concerns that the communities within our region may face adverse repercussions if the requisite supporting infrastructure, including housing, social infrastructure, and critical service infrastructure such as water, is not adequately addressed in tandem with this transition."

Council believes the focus of energy transformation should incorporate practical solutions to support the industry in achieving the transformation and ensure the industry is also committed to achieving the energy capacity and efficient improvement goals and timeframes for this transition. This can ensure ongoing energy security in Queensland and minimised market and community disruption."

Council has welcomed the energy scenario mapping study commissioned by Treasury and delivered by KPMG, providing strong insights in the potential impacts of energy developments in the region. The omission of the interim Renewable Energy Targets is considered to allow a more planned and paced coordination of energy developments, and the supporting infrastructure and services required to achieve successful outcomes for local communities.

Besides significant investments in renewables, the Western Downs has strong coal and coal seam gas industries, and it is important that certainty and stability can be ensured supporting investment decisions and workforce demands.

There are currently 1,324 persons directly employed in the mining sector, including 177 in coal mining, and 807 in oil and gas extraction, and a further 305 in exploration and other mining support services. In addition to this, there is another 1,120 persons employed in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services, showcasing the strength of the region's diverse energy sector. This workforce makes a strong contribution to the Western Downs economy and these employees and employers' certainty to support their careers and livelihoods. This should assist in mitigating the mental stress changes could place on workers and regional communities.

Besides strengthening certainty and stability for coal and coal seam gas industries, the omission of renewable energy targets may result in further uncertainty for the renewables sector. Council considers this sector as foundational to the Western Downs' economic outlook and growth and encourages the State Government to help strengthen a pipeline of secure projects.

Energy System Outlook

Council welcomes the objective to deliver cost-effective, safe, secure and reliable energy to Queenslanders. The Western Downs has a very strong manufacturing industry and rising energy costs are considered amongst the key challenges for our local businesses. Forecast reduced energy costs are considered positive for key industries in the Western Downs, as well as for our households.

The replacement of the Queensland SuperGrid Infrastructure Blueprint with the Energy System Outlook, supported by strategic infrastructure path objectives, is considered a market-based approach. Despite the proposed change to the Energy System Outlook and taking a market-based approach, it should be noted that the renewables sector has also become foundational to the Western Downs' economic outlook and growth.

Council wishes to express its firm position in support of renewables developments, recognising its substantial benefits for both the Western Downs region and the broader state. Council has embraced the recently introduced Community Benefit Scheme legislation and is closely collaborating with a number of proponents in the region in relation to their Social Impact Assessments.

It is through meaningful consultation, collaboration and connections that impacts can be mitigated and long-term benefits to regional communities unlocked. Council wishes to continue to work collaboratively with the Queensland Government and relevant stakeholders to ensure that investment in energy infrastructure continues to strike the right balance between ensuring a reliable energy network whilst unlocking new economic opportunities.

Repeals of the Energy Industry Council, Queensland Energy System Advisory Board and Queensland Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate

Council recognises that the Queensland Government has proposed to repeal the Energy Industry Council, Queensland Energy System Advisory Board and the Queensland Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate with the intent to reduce administrative complexity and reduce unnecessary costs. It is understood that the Queensland Government is committed to

continue to seek expert advice and that this can be achieved through more efficient administrative processes.

Council deeply values ensuring that investment in new energy infrastructure is unlocked through a coordinated, planned approach, supporting regional areas like the Western Downs that is considered a Powerhouse in the delivery. Considering the fast pace at which energy development is occurring, it is important that the Queensland Government works collaboratively with Local Governments to support for planned mitigation of anticipated impacts, and ensuring regional benefits can be unlocked.

Strengthening visibility in the pipeline of secure projects will support enabling local procurement opportunities and growing a pipeline of a suitably qualified workforce to support the delivery and ongoing operations of projects.

Considering that the energy portfolio is currently divided between departments based on the generation type, Council considers the Government to be at risk of working in 'silo's' and fragmentation of a coordinated plan to support energy investments. Particularly in the Western Downs, where coal, coal seam gas, hydrogen, solar, wind and BESS all play an important role in the energy sector, it is critical that the cumulative impacts of all types of generation are considered and collectively mitigated.

It is noted that the Queensland Energy Jobs Advocate has delivered important work since inception of the role, and that this work continues within the Government departments.

Conclusion

Council appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025. Council understands the State Government's intent to achieve:

- Cost-effective, safe, secure and reliable energy provision;
- Efficient and coordinated augmentation of national transmission grid;
- Support for workers and affected communities.

Council looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the Queensland Government, and other partners involved in the development of energy in our region, supporting coordinated and integrated investment in new infrastructure. By working together, Council believes that significant economic opportunities can be unlocked, further strengthening long term impacts in the Western Downs.

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to contact Jodie Taylor, CEO via email [REDACTED] or mobile [REDACTED] or Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager, via email [REDACTED] or phone [REDACTED] should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission.

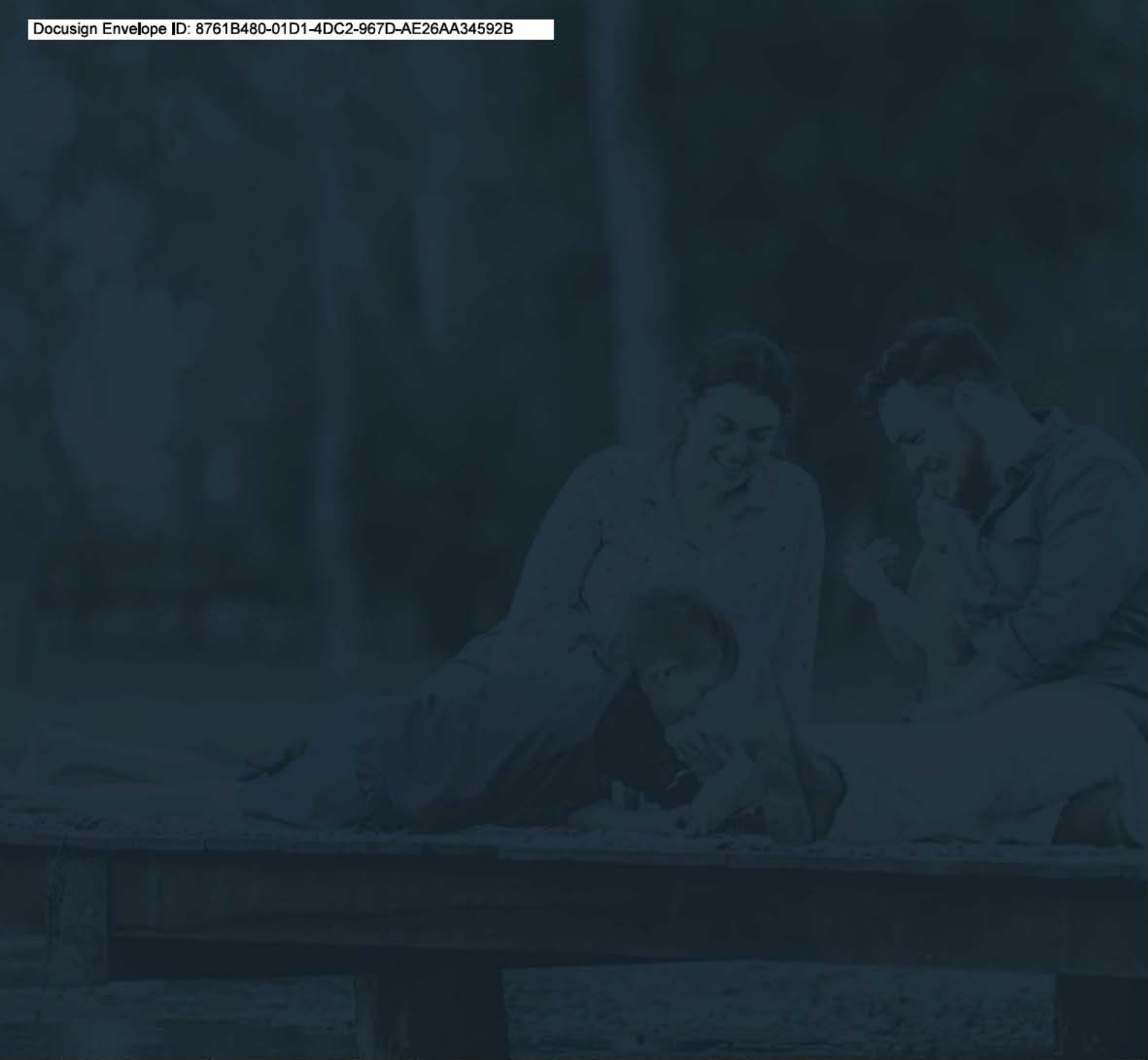
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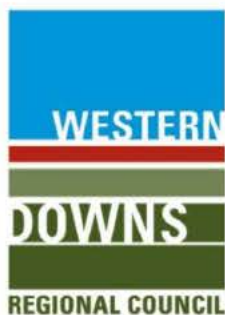
Appendix

1. Western Downs Council, Economic Development Strategy 2023 – 2028, [economic-development-strategy-document-ver-22.02.23.pdf \(wdrc.qld.gov.au\)](#)
2. Western Downs Regional Council, Corporate Plan 2021 – 2026, [Plans & Publications Western Downs Regional Council \(wdrc.qld.gov.au\)](#)



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