



2016 Local Government Election — Priorities for Jandowae



The 19 March 2016 Local Government election will determine not only the next Mayor and Councillors for the Western Downs region, but also the course of the region's economy at a critical juncture in Queensland's economic future.

CCIQ and the Jandowae Business and Community Group have conducted this survey to determine priority issues for small business on key election issues such as community infrastructure, economic development, roads infrastructure, local facilities and services, planning and development, local content policy, and the quality of representation in Jandowae.

CCIQ and the Jandowae Business and Community Group are determined that the issues of concern and importance for small businesses in Jandowae stay at the forefront of the Local Government election debate

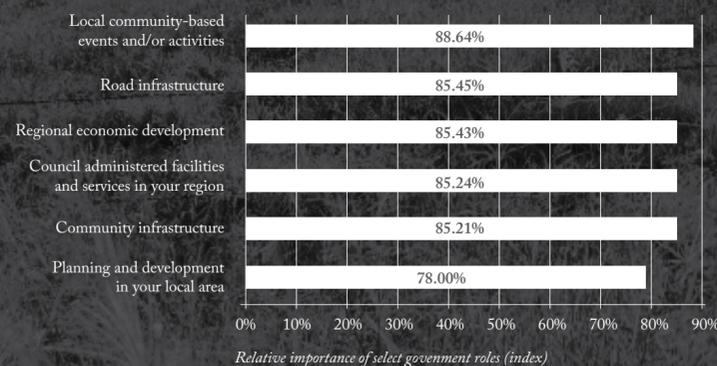
The Jandowae Business and Community Group recognise the vital role that the Western Downs Regional Council plays in building and sustaining the Western Downs economy. Local businesses and community members in Jandowae believe the activities of the Western Downs Regional Council are of crucial importance in their day to day activities and to this end, the Jandowae Business and Community Group maintains a significant interest in the outcome of the Local Government elections to be held 19 March 2016.

Jandowae Business and Community Group are committed to working constructively with all Councillors across the Western Downs region over the coming four years to address those issues and challenges confronting the community. The next Western Downs Regional Council must also work closely with Jandowae's small businesses to shape Queensland's economic and social environments in a way that promotes business growth and community prosperity.

The Jandowae Business and Community Group Election Survey revealed 3 key priorities that all candidates must act upon to improve the business operating environment in Jandowae. These are:



In the context of your business and/or community, how important are the following in your local government area: Jandowae



For general enquiries or more information contact the Jandowae Business and Community Group at jandowae.bcg@gmail.com

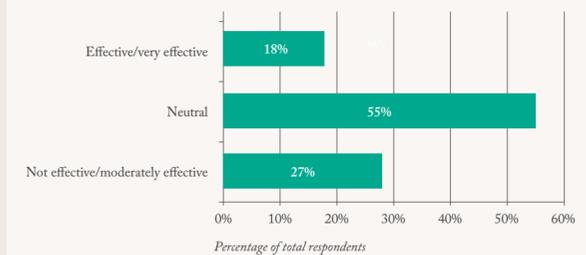
Community-based events and activities

Council's role in facilitating and/or supporting community events and programmes is critical to building and maintaining social capital throughout Jandowae. Communities that share knowledge and cooperate to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes are in essence more profitable, with networked communities more likely to be innovative, creative, and take risks thereby reducing business transaction costs.

Marked by reciprocity through the collective benefit of networks in local communities, local government across Queensland play a central role in generating social capital. The facilitation and execution of community-based events and activities is therefore critical to achieving this goal. This was also reflected in the survey results.

The Jandowae Business and Community Group Local Government Election Survey revealed that 75 per cent of business and community members in Jandowae believed local community-based events and/or activities were very important or critical. When asked how effective Council was at planning and facilitating community-based events, 27 per cent of respondents stated Council was either not effective or moderately effective.

In the context of your business and/or community, how effective is your Council at planning and/or facilitating local community-based events and/or activities?



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

- Develop a Community Events and Celebrations Strategy to bring engagement activities in line with community expectations
- Reduce the red tape associated with hosting an event in Jandowae and Districts
- Better utilise existing Council resources to assist applicants to conform with Council requirements

Roads infrastructure

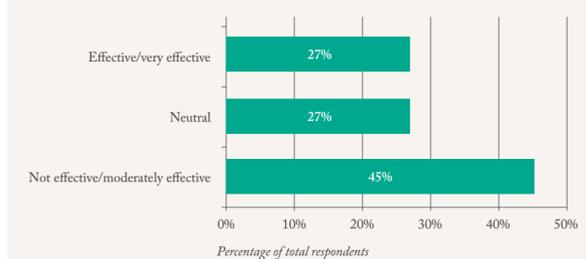
Roads infrastructure plays a crucial role in driving business investment, growth and productivity. It is essential that local governments invest in roads infrastructure and address current and future bottlenecks so that businesses can thrive in the domestic and global marketplace. An investment in infrastructure represents an investment in the future prosperity of Jandowae, the Western Downs region and its businesses.

The Jandowae Business and Community Group Election Survey showed that a significant majority (79 per cent) of businesses and community members believe roads infrastructure is very important or critical to the region. When asked about how effective the Western Downs Regional Council is at providing and maintaining local roads, 45 per cent of respondents believed Council were not effective or moderately effective, with 27 per cent stating the Council was effective or very effective.

Jandowae is largely inaccessible during periods of heavy rain and as a result, respondents indicated that the Western Downs Regional Council must do more to flood proof local roads, and upgrade major state arterials to ensure the town continues functioning during bad weather. Further, respondents stated that the road from Jandowae to Dalby was unsafe, and required urgent attention.

It is critical that the next Western Downs Regional Council put in place a strategic road upgrade strategy and work co-operatively with the Queensland State Government to continue to deliver much needed roads infrastructure for the region to secure a strong future.

In the context of your business and/or community, how effective is your Council at providing and maintaining local roads



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

- Prioritise upgrades to Dalby-Jandowae Road, working closely with the State Government to ensure roads in and out of Jandowae are properly flood proofed
- Ensure local roads are regularly maintained, and Council resources are used as efficiently as possible when carrying out this task

'Dalby Road needs to be address to alleviate the impact of floods on the town.'

—Survey Respondent, Jandowae

'I don't know who fixes the roads, but they have potholes a week later and are worse than they were originally prior to road works.'

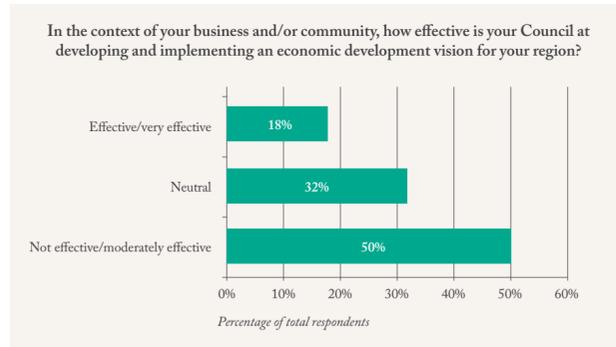
— Survey Respondent, Jandowae

Economic development

An economic development strategy for the Western Downs that identifies and capitalises on the uniqueness of Jandowae is a key determinant of business confidence and investment in the township. Businesses in the Jandowae district will be looking to the next Western Downs Regional Council to drive economic development and better enable economic growth to ensure the community is supported by a dynamic and globally competitive regional economy.

When asked about economic development initiatives in Jandowae, a significant majority of businesses and community members (89 per cent) stated regional economic development was very important or critical to the economic future of the Jandowae district. Notably, the Jandowae Business and Community Group Local Government Election Survey revealed that 50 per cent of businesses and community members in the Jandowae region believed the Western Downs Regional Council was either not effective or moderately effective at developing an economic vision for Jandowae and/or the Western Downs region more broadly.

This result has been driven by the lack of an existing economic development plan that sets out a strategic vision for the Western Downs region. The most recent plan expired in 2015, and businesses are deeply concerned about the impact of no short, medium, or long-term economic development planning at present. The lack of a clear strategic vision for developing Jandowae, attracting tourism, and capitalising on future economic opportunities in the region is fundamentally undermining business certainty, confidence, and investment.



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

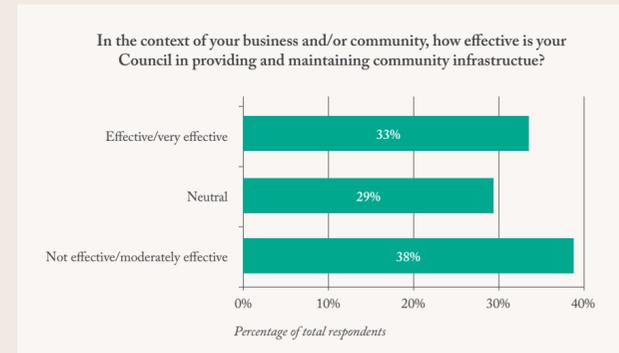
- Develop and deliver a Western Downs Regional Economic Plan that is endorsed by the business community in Jandowae as a matter of urgency
- Create a positive investment and business operating environment to ensure the Western Downs becomes an attractive place to do business and invest
- Establish an economic diversification strategy for the Jandowae region to accommodate for the gradual downturn of the energy sector
- Work with the Jandowae local chamber to implement regular ‘buy local’ campaigns to encourage greater spend in local businesses

Community infrastructure

Investment in community infrastructure is critical to community health, well-being, and economic prosperity. It must benefit the local population, cater for intergenerational needs, and increase the liveability of each region and city across Queensland. When asked about community infrastructure in Jandowae, a significant majority of businesses and community members (92 per cent) stated facilities for recreation such as sports centres, art galleries, museums and civic centres were very important or critical to the Jandowae district.

The Jandowae Business and Community Group Local Government Election Survey revealed that 38 per cent of businesses and community members in the Jandowae region believed the Western Downs Regional Council was either not effective or moderately effective at delivering and/or maintaining community facilities. Conversely, 33 per cent of respondents believed the Council was effective or very effective in providing and maintaining community infrastructure in Jandowae. The relative even distribution of response on the issues of community infrastructure indicates that Jandowae businesses and community members are split on the effectiveness of Council in this area.

There is a perception amongst respondents that larger towns in the Western Downs catchment, such as Dalby, receive more funding and support with regards to community infrastructure than smaller townships such as Jandowae. The challenge for the next Western Downs Regional Council is to ensure existing facilities are effectively maintained for the use and enjoyment of the residents and businesses of Jandowae, and to engage more closely with residents and businesses to deliver more targeted facilities.



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

- Progress a more targeted community infrastructure plan that better informs the current and future requirements of Jandowae
- Engage more fully with the Jandowae business community prior to finalising the Amended Draft Western Downs Planning Scheme to ensure future planning for facilities better responds to community needs

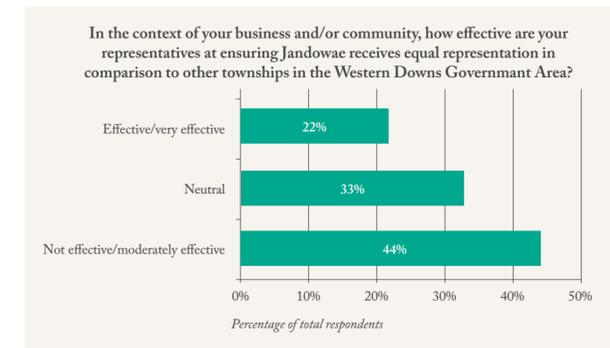
‘Council seems to focus on Dalby as it is larger, not the smaller outreach towns’

—Survey Respondent, Jandowae

Effective representation for Jandowae

The lack of Council engagement in Jandowae is being felt strongly by all residents and business owners. This was also reflected in the survey results. Overall, respondents believed the interests of larger townships such as Dalby were being over-represented to the detriment of Jandowae, and that priorities for small business owners were regularly over-looked in favour of those closer in proximity.

In addition to the survey, the Jandowae Business and Community Group hosted a consultative forum, meeting with small business owners and operators in the district. The purpose of this forum was to explore the ways in which the Western Downs Regional Council could better advocate for Jandowae at a Council level. Business owners told the Jandowae Business and Community Group that at present, elected Councillors were not living up to local expectations with respect to adequate presence in the district, and felt largely neglected in comparison to other townships in the Western Downs Local Government Area.



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

- Commit to greater engagement with the Jandowae small business community and develop key accountability markers to measure success
- List and display Jandowae on Council-produced maps of the region. At present, Jandowae is not officially represented on any tourism or directory information.
- Deliver a comprehensive data set capturing up to date Jandowae demographics

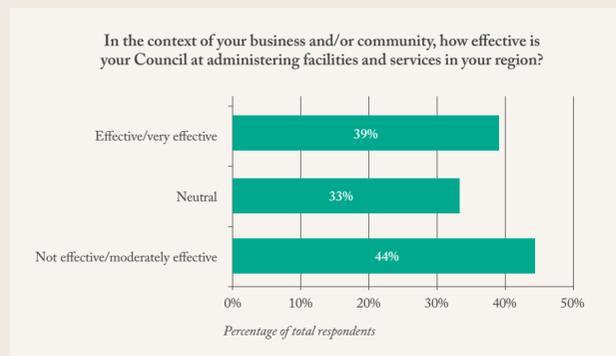
‘We need a representative who lives here, who sends their kids to school here, to really care about our issues. Jandowae has been forgotten.’

— Survey Respondent, Jandowae

Council administered facilities and services

Community members in the Jandowae district recognise that services and facilities are a central component of a thriving community. It is equally critical that the district has the right services and up to date facilities for Jandowae to continue to be an attractive place to do business.

The Jandowae Business and Community Group election survey shows that the majority of businesses and community members (67 per cent) consider Council-administered facilities and services such as the upkeep of footpaths, water and sewerage, waste disposal, and public amenities to be very important or critical for Jandowae. When asked about how effective the Western Downs Regional Council is at administering facilities and services in Jandowae, 44 per cent of respondents said the Council was either effective or very effective at providing services and maintaining facilities.



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

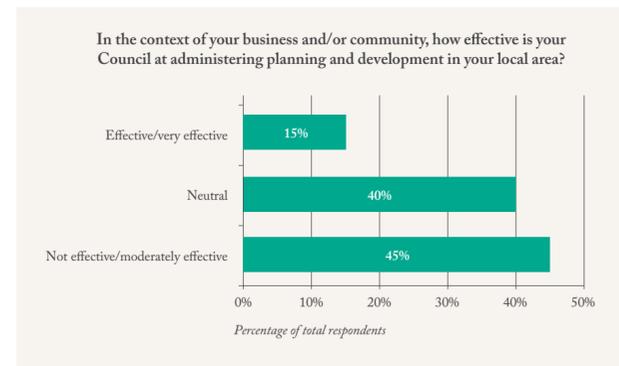
- Prioritise greater communication with Jandowae residents and business owners regarding Council’s maintenance schedule
- Improve footpath networks throughout the Jandowae district, particularly in consideration of the needs of the aged and people living with disabilities in Jandowae
- Fast track kerb and guttering upgrades to ease water build up throughout the town centre during periods of flood

Planning and development

Local planning departments across Queensland play an important role in achieving economic, social, cultural and environmental goals in their respective regions. Small businesses in particular rely on planning departments to be flexible when assessing applications, to employ a common sense approach towards planning and zoning, and to divulge simple and accessible information on by-laws, licensing and registration requirements to ensure the barriers to starting, expanding or planning a business is not burdened by red tape.

A significant majority of community members and business owners in Jandowae believe planning and development are very important or critical to Jandowae (70 per cent). When asked how effective Council is at administering planning and development in the Jandowae district, a significant proportion (45 per cent) stated Council was not effective or moderately effective.

There appears to be concern about existing impediments to the growth of Jandowae due to the lack of effective planning at the Council level. The Jandowae Chamber believes the next Western Downs Regional Council should vigorously prosecute a comprehensive planning strategy for the region as a matter of urgency.



The Jandowae Business and Community Group are calling on the next Western Downs Regional Council to:

- Consult small and medium sized businesses widely prior to the implementation of the Draft Western Downs Regional Planning Scheme
- Accelerate red tape reduction efforts across Council with a focus on reforms that will be most beneficial to small and medium business
- Fast-track approval services to ensure the costs of starting or expanding a business are not prohibitive

‘The Council is very slow at making decisions, which costs us businesses setting up in Jandowae.’

—Survey Respondent, Jandowae

‘The new town plan has been 5 years in the making and has still not been released’

—Survey Respondent, Jandowae

Conclusion

Regardless of who forms the next Western Downs Regional Council, it is essential they implement a program that addresses the issues of concern for the region’s small and medium business owners and community members.

The next Western Downs Regional Council must commit to improved roads infrastructure and more community transport initiatives, greater engagement with small business owners and residents of Jandowae, and prioritise the development of an economic development plan for Jandowae in consultation with the small business community.

Ultimately, when people vote on 19 March 2016 they should do so on the basis of who they think will best address the concerns raised by the business owners and community members of Jandowae.

Every citizen of Jandowae, be they business owner, employer, employee, or resident has an opportunity to determine the future prosperity of their region.