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reaching remarkable
milestones



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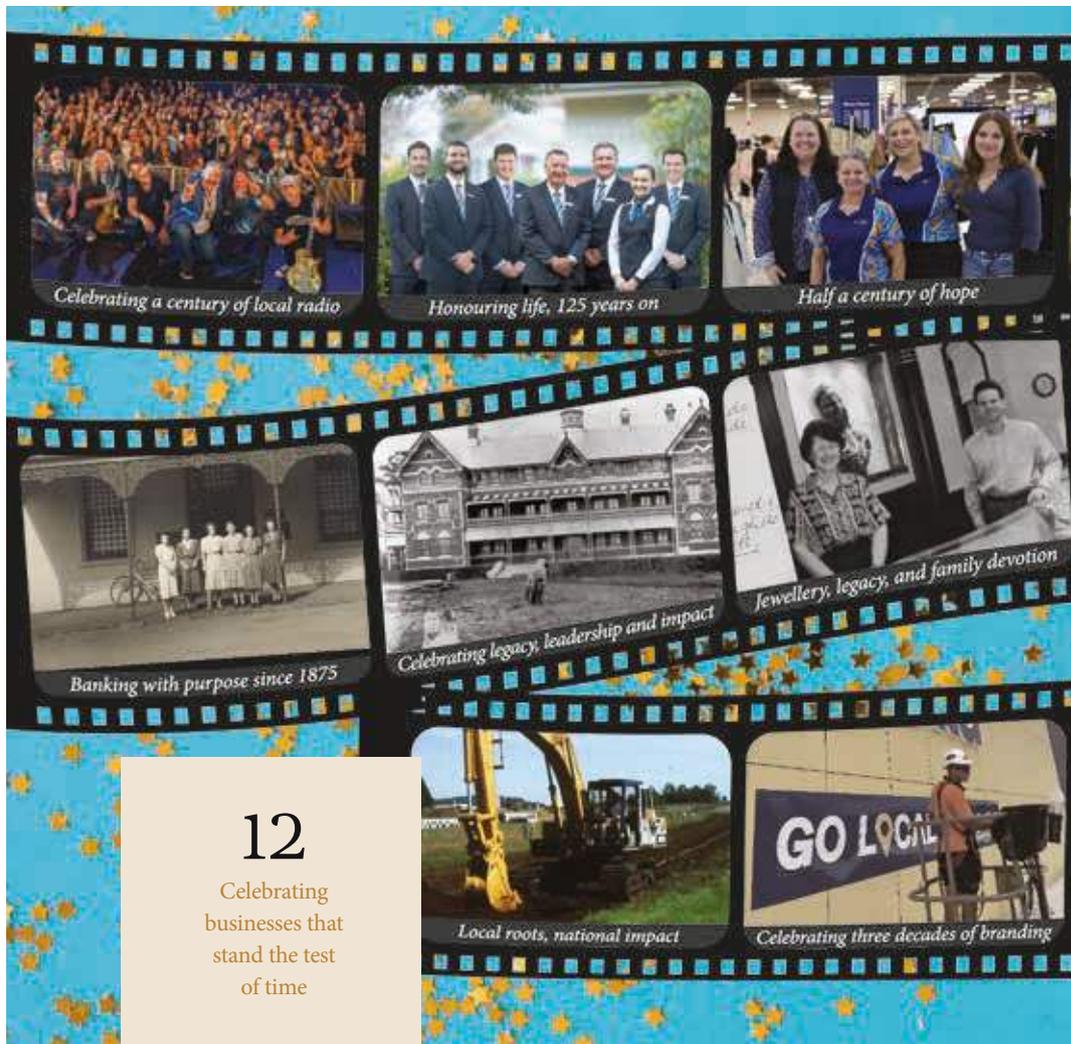
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Celebrating businesses that stand the test of time

Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, the Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people. We extend that respect to the elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and the hopes of Australia's First Peoples.

on the cover

Toowoomba businesses marking milestones.



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CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

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The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce is one of Queensland's largest regional Chambers. Together we represent a significant voice and as a group we can make a positive difference for our local business community. Contact our Chamber team today to learn more on how we can help you. We work for business. **Email:** admin@toowoombachamber.com.au

We want to hear from you

Send your story ideas and submissions to admin@toowoombachamber.com.au

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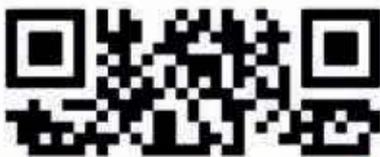
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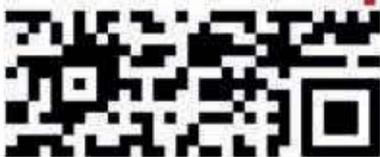
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A message from the CEO

Milestones matter. They're more than numbers on a calendar; they're the stories of people who built, adapted, and kept showing up. As the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce closes its own 125th year, this edition of the Scholefield Business Journal shines a light on the businesses in our community who are also marking significant moments.

What a year to have joined the Chamber as CEO. It's been a privilege to step into this role at such a historic time for the organisation, and at a moment when so many of our members are reflecting on achievements, anniversaries, and legacies.

Across these pages you'll find milestones that speak to endurance, innovation, and vision. Toowoomba Grammar School marking 150 years of educating leaders. Triple M Darling Downs celebrating 100 years of broadcasting. Master Hire reflecting on 35 years as a proud, family-owned business. These are just a few of the stories that capture the character and capability of our region. Together, they reveal a community that continues to grow, adapt and lead across diverse industries.

Of course, we could never include every achievement. For every business featured here, there are many more reaching important markers—launching new products, expanding teams, investing in technology, and mentoring the next generation. If your name isn't in this edition, know that your efforts are celebrated, your success recognised, and your future championed.

This year also marks a new chapter for our city's leadership. With the appointment of a new Toowoomba Regional Council CEO, there is fresh momentum for shaping Toowoomba's next phase of growth. You can read more about his vision for the city in this edition, but what is clear already is that the opportunities ahead—particularly as Queensland prepares for the 2032 Olympic Games—are immense. From investment and infrastructure to talent and tourism, we have every reason to look ahead with optimism.

Milestones invite us to pause and take stock of where we've come from, what we've learned, and where we're heading. They remind us that progress is rarely a straight line, but it is always a shared endeavour. To every business marking an achievement this year, congratulations. Your resilience and ambition strengthen Toowoomba's reputation as a powerhouse regional economy.

Here's to the past that shaped us, the present that challenges us, and the future we're building together.

Tanaya Treadwell
CEO, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce

Your Membership

and how to get the most out of it



Attend our events - in person or virtually

Chamber events are a great way to meet other members and professionals in the Toowoomba business community. You will hear from key note speakers, get to know our hosts and stay up to date with what is going on in our region.



Let us know what you're up to

We love hearing what our members are up to, the offers they have available, their good news and what support they need. It gives us the information we need to advocate for you, as well as better connect you to other members. Tell us, so we can tell the world.



Introduce a members only offer

A member2member offer is a great way to advertise yourself. We will share it with all of our new members when they sign up, put it into our monthly newsletter, mention it on our podcast and promote it on our social media platforms. Keep an eye out for other members offers.



Interact with us on social media

Make sure you are following us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and X. You can keep up-to-date with our events, campaigns and news. Tag us in your posts, so we can see what is happening with your business, while increasing your following.



Connect with our Advisory Groups

Chamber has a number of advisory groups including: Future Leaders Advisory Group (FLAG), Food & Agri Network (FAN) and the CBD Revitalisation Advisory Committee (CBD-RAC). These groups allow the Chamber to get input from our community, so that we can advocate for our businesses as a united voice.



Promote your business on our directory

As part of your membership, you can create and update your business profile on our online members directory. This gives all website visitors the opportunity to find your business. Make sure you keep your information up to date as Chamber also uses this for B2B introductions and encourage members to utilise this networking resource.



Engage with us

We want to know how your business is going, what we can assist you with, and how we can advocate for you. Tell us what events you have coming up (send us an invite), if you have received any awards or you are growing. We can even work with you to host an event, and bring more awareness to you and your projects. Stay in touch, we love hearing from you.

To get the most out of your Chamber membership, get in touch with our membership officer
memberships@toowoombachamber.com.au



People First Bank: 150 Years of Purpose-Driven Banking

From local beginnings in Toowoomba, People First Bank is celebrating 150 years of helping Australians access fair, community-focused banking.

Toowoomba was a town of only 7,500 in 1874 when a group of local leaders gathered in the School of Arts on Ruthven Street (where Toowoomba City Hall now stands) to address an urgent challenge: working families were unable to secure loans from the large Sydney-based banks to buy their own homes.

Their solution was to form the Toowoomba Permanent Benefit Building and Investment Society, which officially opened in 1875. By pooling their resources, members helped each other achieve the dream of home ownership. In doing so, they built not just houses but stronger families and a stronger community.

The model was so successful that in 1897 the Darling Downs Permanent was established. For almost a

century, the two societies operated side by side, helping thousands of families secure homes and stability. Their presence was a key factor in Toowoomba's growth, creating a stable workforce and permanent population.

In 1981, the two societies merged to form Heritage Building Society, which later became Heritage Bank.

Meanwhile, a similar story was unfolding on the other side of the country.

In 1949, the South Australian Public Service Association created the Savings and Loans Society to provide affordable credit to its members.

At a time when many people, including single mothers, were overlooked by traditional banks, this new society opened doors to opportunity.



Over time, it expanded into home loans and broader banking services, growing through mergers to become People's Choice Credit Union.

Though separated by geography, both organisations shared the same foundation: banking should serve people, not the other way around. That common purpose brought Heritage and People's Choice together in 2023 to form People First Bank.

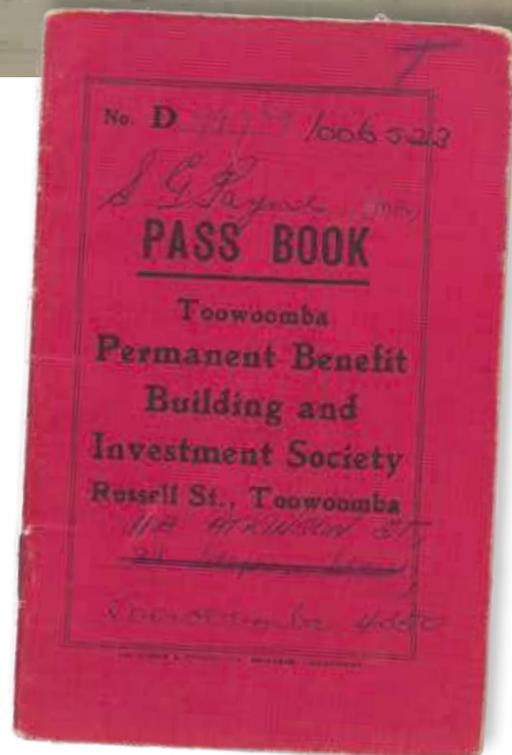
A continuing legacy in Toowoomba

From its earliest days, the bank has been woven into Toowoomba life, helping generations buy their first homes and plan more secure futures. Today, it remains one of the city's largest employers and a proud supporter of community life across the Darling Downs.

People First Bank is closely connected with Toowoomba's most celebrated events, including the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers and the Toowoomba Royal Show, as well as community fixtures like the People First Bank Golf Day.

Beyond major sponsorships, the bank supports grassroots organisations and local initiatives. Through the People First Bank Charitable Foundation and the People First Community Lottery, it also provides vital funding to organisations delivering services and opportunities to people in need.

The bank's connection to Toowoomba will soon become even more tangible. Work will begin on a new head office on Ruthven Street — just a few hundred metres from that first meeting in 1874. Due for completion in 2027, the development will create a modern workplace for staff and reaffirm the bank's long-term commitment to the city.



Looking forward

While 2025 provides an opportunity to reflect on 150 years of history, the story of People First Bank is also about the future. The bank is investing in simpler, smarter ways to bank, combining modern digital services with the personal care that has defined it from the beginning.

As People First Bank celebrates its 150th year, the focus is not only on honouring the past but also on building a future shaped by the same purpose that inspired its founders in 1875.



Toowoomba Grammar, Educating Leaders for 150 Years

In 2025, Toowoomba Grammar School marks a major milestone: 150 years of educating boys and shaping leaders. Known as Grammar 150 (G150), the year-long celebration reflects on the School's history, honours its community, and looks ahead to the future.

Founded in 1875 under the Grammar Schools Act of 1860, TGS was built with support from local graziers, businessmen, and townspeople, matched by the Queensland Government. Justice Charles Lilley laid the foundation stone, setting in motion a school built by the community, for the community. That principle continues to guide its mission today.

From 44 students in 1877 to boys from across Australia and overseas today, the School has stayed true to its founding values: honesty, respect, kindness, courage, and effort. These remain central to its culture and curriculum.

The G150 calendar has been packed with events. A commemorative book, *Toowoomba Grammar School: A Celebration of its Sesquicentenary*, written by former Headmaster Peter B. Hauser, captures the School's journey in two volumes. It draws on historical records, personal reflections, and photographs, making it a lasting tribute to the School's legacy. The podcast *Ompelliargo* adds voices and stories from across generations, offering a rich oral history of triumphs, traditions, and change.

Several standout events have brought the community together. Across All Borders celebrated 150 years of boarding, with more than 600 guests attending lunches across the state. Venues included Roma, Goondiwindi, Taroom, St George, Warwick, and Pallamallawa in Northern New South Wales. The Women of Grammar Luncheon honoured the leadership and legacy of Grammar women, while the Rising and Leading series inspired the greater School community with messages of resilience, ambition, and purpose.

Other highlights include the unearthing of a 50-year-old time capsule and the Foundation Day Assembly in August. It was a day of reflection, celebration, and connection, bringing together students, staff, families, and Old Boys. The G150 Gala Ball, planned for November on the Old Boys' Memorial Oval, promises a night of elegance and community spirit under the stars.

The sesquicentenary also prompted reflection on key milestones. In 2023, TGS released a visionary Masterplan, a multi-year strategy to meet the changing needs of



students. The Design, Engineering and Technology Centre is set to open by year's end, offering cutting-edge facilities for hands-on learning. The Agriculture and Industry Centre is underway, supporting students with interests in rural enterprise and agribusiness. The Grammar TGX program is already reshaping learning, blending traditional values with future-focused education.

TGS's legacy runs deep in Toowoomba. The Grammar Art Show, revived in 1993, is now a cultural fixture. The TGSOBA Museum, opened in 2009, preserves stories and artefacts from generations past.

The School's alumni include General Sir Harry Chauvel, a pioneering Australian commander whose leadership in World War I helped shape the nation's military legacy; Sir Buri Kidu, the first Indigenous Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea; and Les Weis, founder of Weis Ice Creams. These are just three examples of the School's impact beyond the classroom. Its boarding program draws families from across the country, and partnerships with Queensland-based businesses like Hutchinson Builders help drive regional development.

The School is also looking forward. With a new time capsule set to be sealed by the end of the year, it will capture today's voices and visions for future generations.

For Toowoomba, TGS is not just a school. It is a place of learning, connection, and growth. As the next chapter begins, the School remains committed to serving its community, educating boys, and developing their good character for life.





Burstows Funerals – 125 years of Service and Legacy

This year marks a remarkable milestone for a Toowoomba business. T.S. Burstow Funerals, a family-owned company that began in 1890 as a cabinetmaking and joinery business, has celebrated 125 years of service to the community.

Founded by Thomas Stephen Burstow and his wife Mary, the business began with furniture and butter churns before naturally extending into coffin-making and funeral services in 1900. By 1904, the company employed 50 staff, and its early growth reflected the Burstow family's reputation for quality workmanship and community service.

What started in Bell Street evolved over the decades into dedicated funeral parlours in Neil Street and, since 2000, a purpose-built funeral home on Ruthven Street. Alongside the business, founder T.S. Burstow played a pivotal civic role. He was elected Mayor of Toowoomba in 1904, helping the city achieve its official city status, and remained a strong figure in local government for more than 25 years.

Today, the fourth generation of the Burstow family leads the company, with brothers Don and Trevor Burstow joined by their children Laura, Ben, Toby, Scott, and Jeffrey. This generational continuity has ensured the family's founding values — tradition, excellence of service, and community connection — continue to define the business.

Over the years, funeral practices have changed significantly. In the early 1900s, funerals were mostly conducted from family homes, and the undertaker's role was little more than providing a coffin and carriage. As society became more mobile and families more dispersed, Burstows evolved their services to meet the growing need for professional

support. "The undertaker became known for 'undertaking' the family's responsibilities," reflects Don Burstow.

Remaining locally owned has not been without challenges. In recent decades, Burstows has competed against some of the world's largest multinational funeral providers. Yet rather than being daunted, the family saw it as an opportunity to reaffirm their purpose. Their 'why' remains clear: to provide transformational services that help families begin the journey of healing grief.

Burstows articulates this purpose through what they call the "4Rs" of an effective funeral: Realise, Remember, Receive, and Release. "Funerals are not about closure; in fact, they are about beginnings. They help the living to get to where they need to be, as much as the deceased," Don explains.

Underlying this philosophy is the company's belief that "everything we do, we do to honour life." It is a calling that has demanded their very best effort across five generations, from the earliest days of cabinetmaking to today's integrated funeral services.

Reaching 125 years is not just a business milestone; it is a community one. For Toowoomba, Burstows represents a unique blend of heritage and innovation, continuity and compassion. Their story is interwoven with the region's own history and identity; highlighting the strength of family businesses in shaping and sustaining local communities.



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Triple M 864AM Darling Downs: Celebrating 100 Years of Broadcasting Legacy

In 2025, Triple M Toowoomba 864AM — formerly known as 4GR — celebrated a century of broadcasting excellence, marking 100 years since its first transmission on August 17, 1925. As Queensland's first commercial radio station, 4GR holds a special place in Australian media history and in the hearts of the Darling Downs community.

The station was founded by radio pioneer Edward Gold, who had previously conducted experimental broadcasts under the callsign 4EG from a shed in Toowoomba. His passion and innovation led to the granting of Queensland's first commercial radio licence, and 4GR was born.

From its humble beginnings, the station quickly became a vital source of news, entertainment, and connection for the Downs community. Over the decades, 4GR evolved with the times, adapting to new technologies and audience preferences. It became known for strong local programming, community involvement, and iconic voices that built lasting relationships with listeners. Announcers such as John Krosh, Graham Healy, Ruby Slipperz, Kim Stokes, Lizzy King, and Lee Faulkner all helped shape the station's identity.

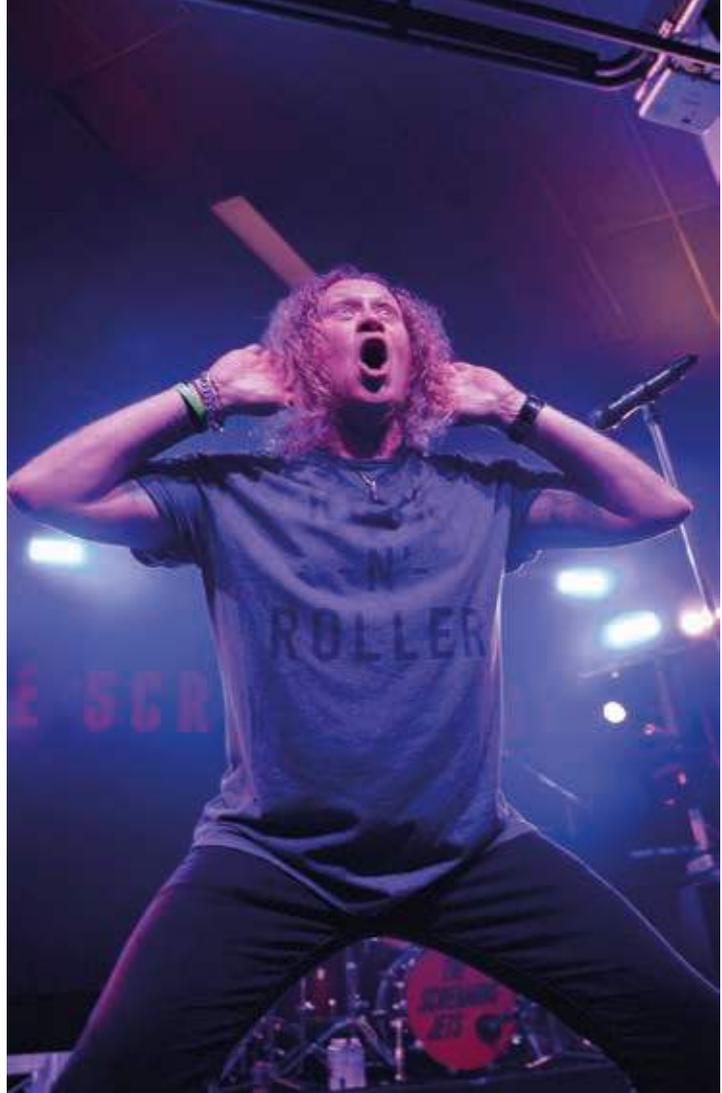
In December 2016, 4GR underwent a major rebranding, becoming Triple M Darling Downs as part of Southern Cross Austereo's national network strategy. Fast forward to 2025, and the station's 100th birthday was celebrated in true Triple M style. On August 14, hundreds of guests — including past and present staff, community leaders, and loyal listeners — gathered at The Powerhouse in Toowoomba for a night of nostalgia, music, and storytelling. The event featured a high-energy live performance by Aussie rock legends The Screaming Jets, fronted by Triple M's own Dave Gleeson.

Breakfast host Lee Faulkner, with the station since 2001, led a week of commemorative programming, including interviews with former station favourites and a special outside broadcast from Grand Central Shopping Centre. These moments offered listeners a heartfelt trip down memory lane, celebrating the station's enduring role in shaping the region's identity.

Southern Cross Austereo executives praised the station's legacy and its future. Ken Wood, Executive General Manager Queensland, described Triple M Toowoomba as "the heartbeat of Toowoomba for a century," while Blair Woodcock, Head of Regional Content, highlighted the station's ability to remain "live and local" and deeply connected to its audience. Dimity Sullivan, General Manager Toowoomba, added that its 100-year legacy is built on passion, people, and a proud commitment to shaping the sound of the region.

The centenary celebrations weren't just about looking back — they also reaffirmed the station's commitment to the future and to the local community. With its blend of classic hits, local news, and irreverent humour, Triple M 864AM continues to be a trusted companion for listeners across the Darling Downs.

From its origins as a pioneering voice in Queensland radio to its current role as a vibrant part of the Triple M network, the journey of Triple M Toowoomba is a testament to the power of local media. It's a story of innovation, resilience, and community spirit — one that will continue to resonate for generations to come.



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Celebrating 80 Years of Hogans Family Jewellers

This year marks not just another anniversary but a testament to enduring craftsmanship, community connection, and family devotion. Hogans Family Jewellers, now commemorating 80 years of trade, stands proudly as one of Australia's most respected family-run jewellers. Their story is rooted in Toowoomba, but its origins reach back to the 1940s.

It began in 1945 when Madeleine Hogan, then a sales assistant in Sydney's David Jones jewellery department, partnered with her husband Jack Hogan to open their first store in Leeton, New South Wales. After eight years of building their craft and customer base, a family holiday through Toowoomba left such a lasting impression that they relocated the business there. In 1953, the Hogans opened their Toowoomba showroom on Ruthven Street, with their young family living in the back of the shop and investing every cent into its growth.

Over the decades, the family's passion blossomed into a legacy. Their children contributed in different ways — whether in sales, bookkeeping, watch repairs, or jewellery-making. Later, the family moved to 243 Margaret Street, where they spent nearly fifty years building a reputation for quality and trust. Jack and Madeleine's sons Peter and Paul eventually took the helm. Paul, the first formally qualified jeweller in the family, established a sterling reputation

before passing the torch to the third generation and current Managing Director, Lachlan Hogan.

In 2022, the business opened a striking new multi-level showroom and workshop at 241 Margaret Street. The venue combines reclaimed brick, travertine, timber, and pressed metal with contemporary luxury to create a space where clients can experience jewellery design and craftsmanship firsthand. Today, the workshop is home to a team of jewellers, setters, apprentices, and sales consultants, making it one of the largest jewellery workshops in Australia.

Hogans' commitment to excellence has been recognised with numerous awards. In recent years, they were inducted into the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Business Hall of Fame, named Retail Business of the Year three years running, and crowned Jewellers category winner at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards.



Their new showroom was also honoured at the Queensland Master Builders Awards. Alongside business achievements, the next generation of artisans are also shining, with apprentice jeweller Keelie Sander named Apprentice Jeweller of the Year in 2023 and Paul Armstrong receiving the same title in 2022.

Beyond accolades, Hogans' legacy is most visible in its enduring relationships with clients. Families return for restorations, redesigns, and heirloom care, often spanning multiple generations. A recent example came when a customer presented a 45-year-old receipt from 1980 and won a diamond through an 80-year anniversary promotion — a gesture that perfectly illustrates the loyalty and connection the business has fostered.

From a modest two-person store in regional New South Wales to a three-generation Toowoomba institution, Hogans Family Jewellers exemplifies resilience, artistry, and community devotion. This year they celebrate eight decades of trade, heritage, craftsmanship, and heartfelt connection — crafted one generation at a time.

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Lifeline Darling Downs and SWQ: 50 years of Compassion

Fifty years ago, a single phone call marked the beginning of something extraordinary. On 20 July 1975, then-Mayor Nelly Robinson answered the first call at Matilda House in Toowoomba, bringing to life a local bank manager's vision of a Lifeline service for the region. That moment marked the quiet beginning of a legacy that would grow into Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland — a service built on compassion, connection, and the unwavering belief that no one should face life's darkest moments alone.

From those humble beginnings, where calls ended in prayer and services were run by ministers, Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland has grown into a trusted, professional organisation delivering more than 30 programs across one of the largest Lifeline service footprints in Australia. What hasn't changed is the heart behind the work: a deep commitment to walking alongside people with dignity, empathy, and hope.

Over the decades, we've evolved from 'doing for' the community to 'being with' the community. Today, our services span crisis support, suicide prevention, domestic and family violence support, youth and family programs, financial counselling, gambling help and education, community recovery, emergency relief, and more. Our retail

stores and beloved Bookfest events not only raise vital funds but also create spaces of connection and purpose.

Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland is, at its core, a local organisation, and every dollar raised through our fundraising efforts and retail stores stays right here in the region, directly supporting the programs and services that meet local needs. This local focus ensures that our impact is not only immediate but deeply personal, allowing us to respond with care.

Behind every service is a story. A young person finding safety. A family rebuilding after crisis. A neighbour receiving support during a flood. A volunteer offering a listening ear. These stories are the heartbeat of Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland — and they are made possible by the extraordinary people who make up our organisation.



The strength and longevity of Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland is a direct reflection of the people behind it. Across five decades, dedicated staff, passionate volunteers, committed Board members, and engaged community partners have collectively built an organisation capable of responding to the most pressing challenges — droughts, floods, economic hardship, housing stress, and rising levels of distress — with professionalism, compassion, and care. Their enduring commitment continues to shape the way we serve and support our communities.

In recent years, we've faced unprecedented challenges: financial hardship within our organisation, housing and homelessness crises, cost-of-living pressures, and increasing demand for our services. And yet, our team continues to show up — because we are part of the same community we serve. We feel the same pressures, and we carry the same hopes.

As we mark 50 years of Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland, we also look forward. The next 50 years will bring new challenges — some we can't yet imagine. But our history gives us confidence. We've weathered storms before, and we will again. Because what anchors us is not just what we do, but how we do it — with integrity, compassion, and a fierce belief in the power of community.



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Joe Wagner Group Celebrates Four Decades of Building Queensland

Starting with a few pieces of earthmoving gear and a Toyota ute, Joe Wagner Group has grown into a leading civil construction company delivering infrastructure projects across Queensland, northern NSW and Western Australia.

July 2025 marked 40 years since Joe and Mary Wagner founded Joe Wagner Earthmoving in 1985. What began with one employee, George Griesheimer, and a modest fleet has become a 70-strong team delivering civil infrastructure across the region.

Rooted in local history

The Wagner family's connection to Toowoomba runs deep. Joe Wagner, a stonemason, worked with his family in the JH Wagner & Sons business, operating in Toowoomba for 130 years. When he ventured out in 1985, he brought local knowledge and a commitment to quality craftsmanship — values that shaped the company's reputation and still guide its work today.

“Dad went his own way in 1985 with Mum and one employee, George Griesheimer, and a little bit of equipment,” reflects current CEO Jim Wagner. While Joe and George have since passed away, Mary Wagner remains involved in the business, representing the enduring family values that continue to guide the company today.

That commitment to long-term relationships is exemplified by Jeff Wirth, who joined two months

after the September 1985 launch and has just marked his own 40-year milestone with the business.

Building sustainable infrastructure

Today, Joe Wagner Group specialises in roads, rail, energy, water and waste projects, servicing Queensland and northern NSW from its Toowoomba base. The company recently achieved Main Roads prequalification in Western Australia, further expanding its reach while maintaining strong Toowoomba roots.

“For us, sustainability isn't a buzzword – it means many things,” explains Jim Wagner. The company's approach includes maintaining profitable long-term client relationships, supporting local supply chains, and investing in its workforce through full-time permanent employment rather than the industry-standard project-by-project hiring.

This commitment to local business extends throughout operations. Joe Wagner Group sources IT services, accounting, workwear, safety supplies and maintenance from Toowoomba businesses, creating a multiplier effect that supports the broader community and keeps capability in the region.



Leading through innovation

The company leads in construction technology, particularly machine control and GPS-guided systems. Under Survey & Machine Control Manager Kobus Viljoen, Joe Wagner Group became the first Australian company to trial an advanced machine control system now released worldwide — strengthening accuracy, productivity and safety on site.

“Australian businesses are well known to be early adopters of construction equipment technology advances due to our high cost of labour and high safety standards,” notes Jim Wagner. This technological leadership, combined with local expertise, allows the Toowoomba-based company to deliver world-class solutions.

Investing in the future

Looking ahead, Joe Wagner Group plans a new office to house its growing team. The company has also implemented a comprehensive decarbonisation

roadmap and environmental reporting system, positioning the business to assist clients with their sustainability goals as market priorities evolve. This focus on efficiency and environmental performance will underpin delivery for years to come.

Community investment remains central to its mission. The company sponsors the Joe Wagner Group Engineering Prize at the University of Southern Queensland, supporting the next generation of local engineers, and backs local sporting groups and charities, particularly children’s teams connected to employees’ families.

As they celebrate four decades of growth, Joe Wagner Group shows that local companies can compete on a national stage while maintaining strong community connections. With deep local roots, technological innovation and sustainable business practices, the company is well positioned for the next 40 years of building Queensland’s infrastructure, and the communities it serves.

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Master Hire celebrates 35 years in Toowoomba

In a fast-changing world, one Toowoomba business has stood the test of time by focusing on what truly matters: customers and people. Celebrating 35 years of service this month, Master Hire—a Queensland family-owned equipment hire company—is reflecting on a legacy built through hard work, loyalty, and a passionate team dedicated to helping customers get the job done.

Founded in 1990, the business began as a humble hire yard on Alderley Street with a small range of tools and machinery. Today, Master Hire has grown into one of South East Queensland's most trusted equipment hire providers, with nine store locations servicing everyone from DIY homeowners to building contractors, major projects, and government departments across the Darling Downs and beyond. Its branch network extends from western Queensland, the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, through Toowoomba and down to Coffs Harbour in New South Wales.

At the core of that growth is an unwavering commitment to meeting customer needs with personalised service and expert support—made possible by the company's long-serving and highly skilled team.

Master Hire has been part of some of Queensland's largest infrastructure projects, including the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, Brisbane's Cross River Rail project, Pacific Highway upgrades and many more. Being not only a go-to supplier but also a trusted partner for these projects reflects the company's brand promise: "Built on Service."



With a deep understanding of both trade and residential needs, the team at Master Hire are more than just equipment experts—they are solution providers. Whether it's guiding a first-time DIYer through a home renovation or ensuring a contractor has the right gear on site at 7am, the focus remains on reliability, responsiveness and real-world support.

The business now employs more than 130 staff, many of whom have been part of the company for over a decade. This continuity has fostered strong customer relationships and a workplace culture grounded in trust, pride and professionalism.

Master Hire has won several accolades in its 35-year history, including Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year in 2005 and again in

2013, and Australian Rental Company of the Year by the Hire and Rental Industry Association in 2019.

Over the decades, the business has expanded its fleet to include a broad range of modern, well-maintained equipment—from excavators and trailers to concreting tools, motorised access, landscaping and traffic management equipment. With more than 10,000 pieces of equipment available to hire, Master Hire continues to make hiring easy, efficient and hassle-free for every customer, no matter the size of their job.

As Toowoomba continues to grow, Master Hire remains committed to putting its customers first.

For more information, visit www.masterhire.com.au or call 1300 107 107.

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30 Years Bold: The ALE Group Story

In January 1995, Campbell Lane set out with a simple promise: to make brands look like they mean business. Thirty years on, ALE has grown into a leading Australian branding partner in clothing, signage, and end-to-end brand execution — trusted by thousands of clients and known for work that turns heads and wins loyalty.

Our story has always been about backing ambition with capability. As demand surged in the early 2000s, ALE moved into larger premises on Water Street South, investing in additional embroidery capacity and a growing production team to take on national contracts. That early step-change set the tone for the decades to come: when our clients needed more, we built for it — scaling our people, technology, and floor space so quality never had to wait.

Today, ALE's footprint stretches well beyond our hometown. We design, fabricate, and install signage along Australia's east coast, while our clothing and branded products ship nationwide and overseas — proof that regional grit and global standards can thrive in the same business.

What keeps clients coming back? A true one-roof approach. Our in-house designers craft distinctive identities and campaign assets, while our production teams bring them to life across uniforms decorated with embroidery and vivid colour, vehicle wraps, buildings, and retail environments. From logo design and brand refreshes to premium web presence and promotional products, ALE simplifies the complex — one brief, one accountable partner, consistent results.





On the ground, the difference is in the details: shopfronts that stop passers-by, vehicle wraps that turn commutes into campaigns, and site signage that elevates safety and professionalism without sacrificing style. It's branding that works as hard as the businesses it represents — made to last, installed with precision, and measured by the way it moves people to act.

But the real milestone isn't just scale — it's staying power. Three decades in, ALE remains family-owned and proudly local, with a team culture built on craft, accountability, and care. Many clients first met us when they were just starting out; we've grown alongside them, upgrading their brands at each stage — from first uniforms to full fleet rollouts and flagship signage. That continuity matters. It means we know each client's story and treat their reputation like our own.

As we celebrate 30 years, we're looking forward with the same restless energy that got us here. Smarter materials, sharper colour, cleaner installs, and closer integration between digital touchpoints and physical brand moments — these are the investments that will define the next chapter. Because while trends come and go, one principle hasn't changed since day one: when a brand shows up brilliantly in the real world, customers believe — and businesses grow.

Here's to the clients who gave us their trust, the team who gave us their best, and the community that gave us our start. Thirty years down... the next brief awaits.

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Efficient organisation is key to delivering best results for residents, business

Toowoomba Regional Council's new Chief Executive Officer, Mr Sal Petrocitto OAM, has outlined his early priorities for the organisation. His focus is on improving service delivery for residents and businesses, strengthening community connections, and preparing the Region to take advantage of future opportunities such as the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Since starting on July 14, he has balanced time in the community with time at his desk — a style he intends to continue. "This is how I will continue to operate, as I don't like being behind my desk all day," he said. "It is important for me to meet as many of Council's employees as I can in a short time. I have attended community and business functions to introduce myself and to understand the needs and workings of different sectors across our Region."

Having grown up around Stanthorpe, he looks forward to re-acquainting himself with the area and building new contacts and friendships. Relationship building has been a signature feature of his career, from early days as a planner with Brisbane City Council before moving to leadership roles at the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, where he oversaw planning and coordination for the state's road, rail, and port systems.

The expertise he gained across strategic policy, infrastructure, and planning was strengthened during his 11 years as Chief Executive Officer of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR).

"At NHVR, I focused on uniting staff across six states into one team, building a high-performance culture and delivering national reforms," Mr Petrocitto said.

Under his leadership, the organisation grew from a start-up into a respected national agency with more than 1000 employees and a \$250 million budget, earning three national customer service awards and an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2023. These achievements now guide his leadership focus for Toowoomba Regional Council, centred on customers, safety, people, and culture.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to bring my strategic leadership capabilities to the Council, and work with the



Mayor, Councillors and executive leadership team to drive and advance strategic priorities that improve our service delivery," he said. "My role is to ensure we meet the highest administrative standards and provide the best and most considered advice for our elected representatives to make the most informed decisions for our community.

"The organisation must keep a laser focus on understanding, engaging and delivering for our residents. If we strike the right balance to be more efficient for our customers, we can achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. I expect to focus on the nature and extent of our service delivery. As an advocate for innovation, we need to consider if Council is best placed to deliver certain services or whether specialists would run operations more effectively (an example is the private operator managing Council's aquatic centres and pools)."

Mr Petrocitto also believes Council has a vital role to play in the Region's growth. With Toowoomba poised for greater expansion due to its proximity to surrounding growth areas and its established health and education services, he sees the city as an increasingly attractive destination.

He emphasises that land use, transport, and economic planning must support growth in the right places while protecting the unique lifestyle that defines the Region.

By staying connected with communities, Council can also help grow niche sectors such as agritourism, heritage and recreation trails, drawing more visitors before and after the 2032 equestrian events.



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Here at Classic, we also focus on providing comprehensive Human Resource advice tailored to meet the needs of your business. Our team of HR professionals bring a wealth of experience and a personalised approach to help businesses overcome HR challenges and achieve their full potential.

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The Future of Education in Our Region

By UniSQ Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Nelson

Education is fundamental to driving our region's growth. From training the next generation of nurses in regional hospitals to equipping farmers with cutting-edge knowledge of drought resilience, education is shaping the resilience and prosperity of Southern Queensland.

As the pace of digital disruption, demographic change, and new industries accelerates, the future of education will determine how well our region thrives in the decades ahead.

Our businesses and communities need graduates who can solve problems, think creatively, and stay agile in the face of disruption. Whether it is developing engineers to build future infrastructure or equipping teachers to inspire the next generation, education ensures we have the talent pipeline to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Our region is uniquely positioned for growth. Rapid population growth and evolving industries are driving strong demand for a skilled and adaptable workforce. Health and aged care, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, energy, defence, and space are all expanding, and aligning education with these emerging needs is critical to ensuring regional prosperity.

By fostering collaboration across the entire education ecosystem and listening to local communities, we are strengthening the pipelines that keep skills, jobs,

and talent in our region. These partnerships ensure the benefits of growth are felt not only in major cities but also across the towns and regional centres that are the backbone of Queensland's economy.

The future of education will look different from the past. Lifelong learning will become increasingly prevalent, enabling learners to adapt to changing industry demands. Digital delivery will continue to expand access, with a strong focus on connecting education to the needs of local communities and emerging opportunities.

Equally important is inclusion. Ensuring First Nations students, regional learners, and people from diverse backgrounds can access education is critical to building a resilient and equitable society.

These priorities align closely with the Australian Government's Higher Education Accord. By focusing on improved access, stronger regional partnerships, and deeper collaboration across education and training, we can ensure more people engage in lifelong learning.



The Accord aims to increase tertiary education attainment to 80% of the working-age population by 2050, emphasising the importance of inclusive, skills-focused pathways that prepare communities for the future.

By creating clear pathways from education to meaningful employment and engaging directly with local communities, UniSQ ensures that learning delivers real-world solutions and lasting impact across Southern Queensland.

This is not a future written in isolation. Through initiatives like Our Foundations, Our Future, we are co-designing education strategies with communities across Southern Queensland.

By taking a place-based approach, education can unlock regional development, support economic prosperity, and ensure that local priorities guide investment and policy decisions.

The future of education is not a distant idea; it is being built here and now in our classrooms, training facilities, workplaces, and research centres. By investing in education, we invest in the skills, ideas, and innovation that will drive Southern Queensland forward.

As businesses, educators, and community leaders, we each have a role to play in ensuring education remains a powerful catalyst for opportunity. Together, we can create a future where our region not only adapts to change but leads it.

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Balancing Growth and Sustainability in Tourism

The Toowoomba Region is on the cusp of a major transformation in its tourism sector. Long celebrated as the Garden City for its Carnival of Flowers and sweeping escarpment views, the region is now positioning itself as a central player in Queensland's 20-year tourism agenda. The challenge is to balance growth with sustainability, ensuring tourism strengthens the economy while delivering benefits to the community.

The Queensland Government's Destination 2045 strategy provides a framework for steady, strategic growth. It calls on regions to leverage natural assets, cultural strengths, and liveability to attract new markets. For Toowoomba, the opportunity is compelling. The escarpment, long regarded as the city's natural treasure, is earmarked for major investment. New trails, lookouts, and facilities will enhance recreation while creating nationally significant nature-based experiences. The \$7.5 million commitment to mountain biking trails is an important start, positioning the city as a hub for adventure and sports tourism.

Connectivity will be critical. Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport has proven its worth with services to Sydney, Melbourne, and Townsville, but the next frontier is international access. Forecasts suggest that within a decade up to 15% of visitors could come from overseas, particularly New Zealand, Singapore, and India. For local operators, this will demand investment in product development, workforce readiness, and cross-cultural capability. Queensland Country Tourism (QCT), the region's RTO, is already working with industry to build trade readiness and prepare operators

for these markets. With the airport opening the door, the region must ensure it can meet global expectations.

Culture is another vital piece of the puzzle. Council's Connecting Through Creativity plan and its new Intercultural Strategy signal a shift toward embedding inclusivity and cultural identity into the region's DNA. For tourism, this means richer storytelling, stronger representation of First Nations heritage, and attractions that appeal to diverse audiences. As Acting CEO of QCT, Stephanie Parker, notes: "By celebrating inclusivity, First Nations stories and our unique regional location and connectivity, Toowoomba can only continue to grow and deliver rich visitor experiences."

Events remain one of the region's strongest levers for growth. Meatstock, now attracting close to 20,000 visitors, shows the economic impact of well-curated festivals. Proposals for a new Autumn Feast, celebrating food and creativity, highlight demand for diversifying the events calendar beyond the iconic Carnival of Flowers. Sustained council support and industry collaboration will be critical to ensure new events are viable and not overly reliant on subsidies.

The road to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics also presents opportunities. The proposed \$54 million upgrade to the Toowoomba Equestrian Centre could host Olympic events while leaving an enduring legacy for the equine industry, generating millions annually in visitor spending. Realising this potential will require alignment with broader infrastructure priorities to ensure long-term community benefit.

Beyond tourism initiatives, major projects such as Inland Rail, the \$1.3 billion hospital, renewable energy developments, and CBD renewal will all shape Toowoomba's appeal. The Railway Parklands redevelopment, for example, could transform the city into a vibrant, walkable hub that attracts both visitors and private investment.

The policy imperative is clear: growth must be managed strategically. Tourism development should enhance quality of life for residents, align with demand forecasts, support local operators, and maintain the environmental and cultural integrity that make Toowoomba unique.



The future of tourism here is not simply about attracting more visitors. It is about building a resilient, diverse visitor economy that supports jobs, celebrates local identity, and contributes to long-term prosperity. With support from Queensland Country Tourism, the Toowoomba Region will not just be part of Queensland's tourism story — it will be one of its most compelling chapters.

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The Australian AI Agenda

an executive breakfast series for board members and CEOs

From humble beginnings in the late 90's, Quadtech has grown to a team of 20 staff, effectively established as the oldest and largest locally owned and operated IT support business in the region.

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The Australian AI Agenda is an executive breakfast series for leaders seeking to leverage AI for measurable advantage while maintaining trust, security, compliance.

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Helping Buyers and Sellers Navigate New Laws

Since the beginning of August, Queensland property law has undergone an important change.

The new mandatory Seller Disclosure regime has now taken effect, and RWC Toowoomba is here to guide commercial buyers, sellers and prospective tenants through the changes.

Under the Property Law Act, anyone selling commercial properties must now provide a completed Form 2 Seller Disclosure Statement and a series of prescribed certificates to buyers before a contract is signed.

Failure to comply could give buyers the right to terminate at any time prior to settlement, creating serious risks for sellers.

RWC Toowoomba Principal Paul Schmidt-Lee said the agency is committed to helping clients navigate these changes.

“Our job is simple: we’re here to negate risk and protect your investment every step of the way,” Paul said.

From assisting clients complete the statement to organising the relevant pre-settlement paperwork, RWC Toowoomba aims to work closely with clients to achieve optimum results.

“Whether you’re selling, buying, or leasing commercial real estate, we’re here to help — guiding you through every step with clarity, strategy, and confidence.”

RWC Toowoomba specialises in commercial and industrial real estate, offering unmatched market expertise supported by the international Ray White Group.

If you would like more information on how the new Seller Disclosure legislation may affect your property, phone RWC Toowoomba on (07) 4613 1455 or visit the website rwct.com.au.



The Future of Sport in Toowoomba – Building a Regional Powerhouse

By Shane Sullivan, CEO Western Clydesdales

Sport has always been part of Toowoomba's DNA. Our city and South-West Queensland communities have produced some of Australia's greatest athletes, coaches, and administrators. Beyond the scoreboard, sport is an economic driver, a source of pride, and a catalyst for opportunity. Looking ahead, sport and the infrastructure that supports it will be central to shaping our region's future.

The Western Clydesdales – A Regional Success Story

The Western Clydesdales' return to statewide competition has re-ignited the region's passion for rugby league. With teams in the Hostplus Cup and BMD Premiership, we provide elite opportunities for men and women to represent their region while staying connected to community. Our junior programs and school partnerships give the next generation a clear pathway to the highest levels of the game. As an Academy program in the NRL/NRLW system, we've already seen local players progress from the Clydesdales and Toowoomba Rugby League into NRL and NRLW ranks — proof the talent is here, ready to shine when given the platform.

Economic and Social Benefits for the Region

The return of the Clydesdales has created more than just on-field excitement. Hosting high-level matches

at the Toowoomba Sports Ground draws thousands of supporters from across Queensland, generating significant spend in hotels, restaurants, cafes, and retail outlets. Visiting teams, media crews, and travelling supporters add to this impact, ensuring sport is not just entertainment but an economic engine.

Our club also plays a vital role in community wellbeing. Through community visits, junior clinics, Indigenous engagement, and charity partnerships, we use sport as a vehicle for connection and growth. These benefits multiply when supported by modern, fit-for-purpose infrastructure.

Opportunities for Strategic Infrastructure Investment

Toowoomba is well positioned to become the premier regional sporting hub for Queensland. But to fully realise this potential, we need strategic investment in infrastructure that can serve both elite and community needs.



Priority opportunities include:

- Upgrades to Toowoomba Sports Ground – Enhancing capacity, amenities, and broadcast facilities to attract larger events and improve spectator experience.
- A High-Performance Training Centre – Purpose-built facilities to support athlete development across multiple sports, offering elite training and community access.
- Multi-Use Venues – Flexible spaces to host sports, carnivals, and cultural events, ensuring year-round usage and community benefit.

These investments would allow Toowoomba to host more national and international fixtures, including NRL pre-season games, touch football state championships, athletics carnivals, and youth tournaments — bringing visitors, jobs, and national attention to our region.

A Vision for 2032 and Beyond

By the time of the Olympics, Toowoomba can be recognised as a leading sports and events city, blending grassroots participation with elite competition. The Western Clydesdales will continue to be the flagship for all sports across the Darling Downs and South-West Queensland, with upgraded venues and facilities benefiting all.

We envision:

- More local athletes progressing from school sport to national representation without needing to relocate early.
- Major events filling local hotels, restaurants, and attractions year-round.
- Stronger partnerships between sporting organisations, schools, universities, and industry to deliver education, training, and career pathways.

A Call to Work Together

The Clydesdales are committed to driving this vision, but it will take collaboration between government, sporting organisations, business, and community. Investment in sports infrastructure is not a cost — it's a catalyst for growth, wellbeing, and opportunity.

With the right facilities, Toowoomba can cement its place as the sporting capital of regional Queensland — inspiring the next generation, attracting major events, and delivering a lasting legacy for the entire region.

The future is bright, and the time to build it is now.





The Future of Cancer Care in Toowoomba: A Regional Cancer Centre for Our Community

Cancer doesn't just affect the person diagnosed — it impacts families, workplaces, and entire communities. In the Darling Downs, demand for cancer services has grown at an extraordinary rate. In fact, the number of patients treated by Toowoomba Hospital's Medical Oncology Service has more than doubled in the past five years.

That's why the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, together with Darling Downs Health, is spearheading one of the most significant health infrastructure projects in the region's history: the establishment of a purpose-built Regional Cancer Centre.

Why We Need a Regional Cancer Centre

Every day, up to 100 patients walk through the oncology and haematology clinics at Toowoomba Hospital. For many, the journey begins long before they step through the hospital doors. About half travel from outside the region, coming from as far west as Charleville, north to the South Burnett, and even across the border from

northern New South Wales. The sheer size of this catchment — more than 300,000 square kilometres — means that for rural patients, accessing timely care often involves hours of travel, overnight stays, and immense stress for both patients and families.

While Darling Downs Health has invested in teleoncology to reduce travel where possible, the reality is that many treatments, tests, and appointments can only be delivered in person. As a result, existing facilities in Toowoomba are operating at capacity every day, with every available space repurposed to meet demand.

A Regional Cancer Centre will change this story.



What The Centre Will Deliver

The Regional Cancer Centre will bring together specialist oncology services under one roof in a space purpose-designed for patients, their families, and the health professionals who care for them. It will provide:

- More treatment spaces, reducing wait times and increasing capacity.
- Coordinated care, allowing patients to see multiple health professionals in one location.
- Supportive environments, with areas designed for long treatment sessions and spaces for families and carers.
- A home base for innovation, ensuring the latest treatment methods and research are available in the Darling Downs.

The Impact on Our Region

This isn't just about bricks and mortar — it's about equity of access. The Regional Cancer Centre will mean many families no longer face the heartbreaking choice between accessing treatment and staying close to home. It will allow more people to keep can working, caring for children, and remaining connected to their communities while undergoing treatment.

The Centre will also play a key role in attracting and retaining skilled health professionals in Toowoomba, ensuring the expertise needed to meet future demand.

How We'll Get There

Building a Regional Cancer Centre of this scale requires significant investment. The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation has committed to raising \$10 million through community fundraising, business partnerships, and major events.

This momentum is being matched by Darling Downs Health, which has committed to match-fund the campaign, effectively doubling the impact of every donation. Whether it's a raffle ticket, a workplace fundraiser, or a corporate partnership, every contribution brings us closer to making the Centre a reality.

A Community Effort

The Regional Cancer Centre isn't just a building — it's about the power of community, where local businesses, individuals, and organisations are uniting behind a single vision: world-class cancer care, right here in Toowoomba.

As we look to the future of our region, the Regional Cancer Centre stands as a symbol of what we can achieve together. With the support of the community, we will not only transform cancer care but also ensure a brighter, healthier future for generations to come.

To learn more or get involved, visit: <https://www.toowoombahospitalfoundation.org.au/regional-cancer-centre>

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TAFE Queensland and BASE Services brew opportunities in Toowoomba

TAFE Queensland, in partnership with social enterprise BASE Services, is delivering hospitality training in the Toowoomba region — meeting local industry workforce needs while creating employment pathways for people experiencing disadvantage.

At the heart of the initiative is 2nd Shot, a social enterprise café recently opened at TAFE's Toowoomba campus. More than just a coffee shop, 2nd Shot provides hands-on training and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and hardship. Every purchase is a “cuppa-with-a-cause,” supporting brighter futures.

The partnership also aligns with the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which funds paid hospitality traineeships through BASE Services.

Traineeships support those facing barriers to employment — including youth, mature-age jobseekers, people with disability, and culturally diverse participants — who gain practical experience while completing a Certificate I in Hospitality.

BASE Services co-founder Tiffany Spary said TAFE Queensland was chosen for its industry-experienced educators and practical, outcomes-focused training.

“The support from TAFE Queensland will help us provide meaningful opportunities to people experiencing homelessness or unemployment,” Ms Spary said.

“At 2nd Shot it's not just about skills, it's about the wrap-around support needed to exit disadvantage.”

TAFE Queensland South West General Manager, Kate Venables, said the collaboration reflects TAFE's broader commitment to building local workforce capability.

“We're deepening our engagement with communities right across our footprint, especially in rural, regional and remote areas. It's about listening, learning, and understanding how TAFE Queensland can best support local needs,” Ms Venables said.

“Our partnership with BASE Services strengthens community connections while ensuring our training aligns with emerging workforce needs in the Toowoomba region.”

TAFE Queensland offers a wide range of traineeship and apprenticeship solutions, helping local employers upskill staff as employees gain nationally recognised qualifications. With flexible delivery, industry-aligned programs, and government incentives, businesses can more easily invest in a skilled, sustainable workforce.

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