

# **Stanthorpe Business Blueprint**

## **Contents**

Introduction .....	2
Historical scan of the Stanthorpe region .....	2
What will our business community look like in five years? .....	4
Our business community into the future.....	4
1. Bringing in and growing business .....	5
2. Employment and skill building in the region .....	5
3. Lifestyle & Identity .....	6
4. Infrastructure – assets and services.....	7
Businesses/ individuals who play a role in our business community success .....	8
Implementation & Conclusion .....	10

## Introduction

The Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce is an active organisation that provides facilities to inform, advocate and promote its members through publications, events and activities. The Chamber advocates on behalf of its members to protect the interests of business in Stanthorpe with the aim of providing a secure future for the business and broader community.

As a result of this focus, the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce identified that progressive communities determine their own destiny, and that the business community of the Stanthorpe region would benefit from a conversation. The leadership shown by the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce has enabled this conversation to occur, engaging the broader business community, not just those businesses who are members.

The purpose has been to create more than a conversation, but a vision for the business community, of what can become the Economic Plan for the region.

Over a series of facilitated sessions, the reference panel, representing retail, tourism, industry and agriculture developed a draft blueprint for the future economic development of the Stanthorpe region.

The panel identified what the Stanthorpe business community could look like in future, and what would need to be implemented for this to eventuate. This involves strong partnerships with key organisations particularly the Southern Downs Regional Council, strong leadership and advocacy from the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce and the agreement by the community of what can be achieved in a unique region such as the Granite Belt.

There are 2 opportunities that the reference panel has identified:

1. Development of a Business Prospectus to be used to encourage businesses from other regions to move to Stanthorpe – Build & Grow the Granite Belt
2. Development of a Community Prospectus to be used to promote the region as one to work, rest & play (although we know that tagline is already used!)

There are smaller actions identified within the plan that the reference panel thinks would continue to move our business community forward in the future and these are discussed further.

## Historical scan of the Stanthorpe region

The reference panel spent time and energy reviewing what the historical successes and challenges of the region have been over the last 30 years. This is shown in Diagram one below. This exercise allowed the group to identify where there has been great opportunities and advancements, for example in tourism and the quality of events in the region, and how these can be grown. It also suggested where challenges will need new thinking for the community to be able to progress, and how to ensure we don't replicate past failures.

## TIMELINE STANTHORPE SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES



1980

### SUCCESSES

1972 Apple and grape festival (ongoing)

- Highway bypass – no trucks in town
- Creeks & parks beautification work (1988)
- Winery tourism (& ongoing)
- Art Gallery purpose built in 1987. Across Qld this regional gallery is held in high regard.

### CHALLENGES

- Highway bypass – traffic counts disappeared
- Emu Dam Swam – no reliable water source; limit to growth



1995

### SUCCESSES

- Great culture
- ASWS (last 15 years)
- Wineries have improved
- Schools & education improvements, more teachers

### CHALLENGES



2005

### SUCCESSES

- Infrastructure at showgrounds and Sporting Fields
- Qld College of Wine & Tourism – training, laboratories, etc
- Tourism & accommodation – numbers of beds (on going)
- Agriculture – diversification, employment, representation
- GBWT provides strengths
- Wine industry recognition = tourism

### CHALLENGES

- Lack of advertisement of local events
- Lack of organisation and cohesion of tourism groups, not just wineries, but presentation of barrel rooms and cellar doors
- Amalgamation (2008) – workforce, services, staff morale, loss of control, infrastructure, streetscapes, car parks, signage for main street



2010

### SUCCESSES

- Korean backpackers
- Farmers market
- Tree change
- Corporate Agriculture
- 2 Visitor Information Centres amalgamated
- Aged care services have doubled the size of retirement village
- Industrial Estate – currently full, what's the next stage?
- Events – Christmas in July, Brass Monkey, "Snow" event. Capitalising on our cool weather
- Good Country attitude and spirit – great cooperation
- Restaurants / cafes
- Farmers and their local products
- Hospital

### CHALLENGES

- Corporate Agriculture – difficult to encourage to contribute to local conversations
- Internet shopping
- Locals taking business out of town – shopping in larger areas
- Loss of income due to drought Water Supply. Lack of quality cellar doors
- SDRC not encouraging Industry



2015

### SUCCESSES

- Piazza upgrade beautification / Plaza
- Tree change population
- National Franchises
- Diversity of Revenue
- Cultural experience increasing
- Forging New Brand
- Growth of large farm based enterprises and Council / Community acceptance that the farming community collective acts as 1 large employer

### CHALLENGES

- Unavailability of Car parking
- Lack of infrastructure to cope on several levels – internet, sporting, backpackers, drought, loss of income, youth events
- Retail sustainability
- Lack of Retail Diversity
- Loss of Community
- Loss of community and community morale – more people are sector focused
- Population - Low population of 18 – 35 year olds
- Backpacker accommodation

## What will our business community look like in five years?

To be able to focus a business community as diverse as the Stanthorpe business community, there must be a joint vision, something that regardless of the business sector, all can be working towards a common picture. The reference panel have been lofty in their aspirations, and practical in how this can be achieved.

When asked the question “what will our business community look like in five years”, the response has been:

### **An optimistic and connected community**

And yet, what does this look like? For the reference panel, this can include:

- Effective economic development and marketing that “puts Stanthorpe on the map”
- An increase in business co-operation
- A working and busy airport
- A strong service industry – where national and international businesses could be developed and based in the region

Conversations lead the reference panel to develop four key areas that encapsulated the vision. These four areas are:

1. Bringing in and growing business
2. Employment & skill building in the region
3. Lifestyle / Identity of the region – raising the profile
4. Infrastructure – assets and services

These four areas are discussed further below.

## Our business community into the future

The reference panel consisted of executive members of the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce, and individuals who are not necessarily Chamber members, but are certainly leaders in the business community, and have energy and a desire to support the Chamber with this initiative.

With the four key areas identified, specific consideration was given to each by various reference panel members.

## 1. Bringing in and growing business

The reference panel members who focused on this key area identified a key action that would be a foundational step in bringing new business to Stanthorpe and provide confidence to grow/ diversify existing businesses.

The group identified the need for a Stanthorpe Prospectus. This would be a document that could be taken to businesses outside the region to encourage them to relocate all or part of their business operations to Stanthorpe. This would allow a conversation around the needs of the business and how the Stanthorpe region can offer this.

The prospectus will include an inventory of what is available locally, including:

- List of commercial property available, including industrial estate
- Cost of living (to promote that it is cheaper than capital cities)
- Stable employment & access to a range of skilled staff
- Local professional promotion – current businesses are an asset to the region that can be captured.
- Location – access to major highways, great community.

This prospectus will also promote lifestyle benefits of the region, but the major focus is encouraging business establishment in the region.

An example of how this could support business development would be to consider the trucking companies and encourage Wickham's to establish a Depot in Stanthorpe, creating socio- economic opportunities for the region.

There were examples offered of the types of businesses that could be encouraged to move to Stanthorpe, and include:

- Police Academy
- Pasta Factory (infrastructure already exists)
- Cannery (particularly for fruit from local horticultural area)

The reference panel also identified the opportunity for businesses in the community to have access to business improvement/ development workshops. The challenge with any workshop is people having the time and seeing the importance to attend, so there would need to be an effort put in to encouraging participation. Topics for these workshops would be identified by business and the Chamber of Commerce.

<b>BRINGING IN AND GROWING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY:</b>
--

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Development of a Business Prospectus</li><li>2. Professional Development for businesses</li></ol> |
|--|

## 2. Employment and skill building in the region

Access to employment is a critical piece of a viable and vibrant community. It means that individuals and families have access to a regular source of income, and that economic activity occurs throughout

the community. Encouraging roles that require building skills will also help to lift the socio-economic profile.

The reference panel identified several strategies to increase employment

1. Providing the facilities for decentralized IT based services that lead to well paid professionals residing in the community
2. Promoting the community as a place to live for fly in, fly out (FIFO) contractors by using the airfield
3. Decentralizing government and large corporates to the region
4. Value adding secondary industries

### 3. Lifestyle & Identity

Stanthorpe has a history of being a busy, vibrant & healthy community. This is marked by the reference panel identifying various facets that could be promoted to families and individuals, including:

- Good health services
- Good schools
- A highly recognised Art Gallery
- Strong network of organisations and interest groups – service clubs, U3A, church groups, etc.
- Great local talent and cultural activities
- The climate
- High volunteer participation rates – schools, sports, etc.
- A region that grows the best fruit and vegetables in the state (and country we think!)
- Plenty of food and social opportunities
- Easy to get around (no traffic or traffic lights!)
- Financially diverse and sound local economy
- Natural resources and proximity to National Parks, such as Girraween National Park.

All of these create the unique culture and lifestyle that is Stanthorpe, and more broadly the Granite Belt. With the larger populations of Toowoomba, Brisbane and the Gold Coast all within only hours of Stanthorpe, the reference panel found this a great opportunity to market the lifestyle opportunities and the unique identity of Stanthorpe community as a way to encourage people to visit, and consider moving to Stanthorpe. Stanthorpe can be promoted as the community to live in and be part of for work, rest (retire) and play. There is an opportunity to incorporate this into tourism promotion, as well as encouraging business to move here.

While we are encouraging people to move to Stanthorpe, we already have a population that we want to ensure are aware of all of the great events occurring. As such, continual marketing



of events for the local community is just as important for the pride and engagement of our local community. As such, the panel considered local strategies such as:

- Internet Forum – Informing community about events (Destination Southern Downs)
- Central online Events Community Board – “What’s On”
- Event Board – Piazza – upgraded or similar
- Tourist Information Centre – Promoting all events and organisations – what’s on and available
- Texting / social media advertising of events for youth
- Email / advertising for older age groups
- Developing access and promotion of businesses off the main street
- Improve security and reduce any crime through the additional installation of security cameras
- Optional 7 day trading for small traders, in particular food outlets, with penalty rates reviewed. We are not advocating for 7 day trading for all business.

**LIFESTYLE OPPORTUNITY:**

Prospectus for the promotion of Stanthorpe as a community of choice for the active and wealthy retirees, people who want to buy houses and be part of the community.

#### 4. Infrastructure – assets and services

Infrastructure – both maintenance of old and building of new – is a constant for any regional community. Stanthorpe is no different.

Access to water to support the horticultural industries in the region is critical. As such Emu Swamp Dam is a project that has been planned for some time. The reference panel endorses this effort, and sees this dam as a critical piece of infrastructure that will lead to the ongoing viability of the region. Water infrastructure links strongly to the growth of our community. We can’t allow current non-access to water be a disincentive to looking for new businesses to come to the region.

Given our climate, we are an ideal business community for the establishment of a Data Centre. This type of business has risks associated with hot temperatures. A data centre in Stanthorpe would not have this issue for at least 6 months of the year, thus making it a much more cost effective option than other hotter climates, in relation to cooling the centre. The Chamber of Commerce will continue to advocate for fast internet in the region, to then be able to encourage IT service based businesses to the region

Other infrastructure needs identified by the reference panel are:

- Reviewing the size of the industrial blocks and encouraging large blocks to be zoned

- Public transport to be able to support community members with no access to private transport, as well as facilitating tourists to be able to arrive in Stanthorpe, and move around easily while visiting
- Street scaping of other parts of the town, not only the main street
- Covered car parking in the CBD of Stanthorpe

**INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITY:**

The Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce supports SDRC in a lobbying role for both the progress of the dam, as well as the rollout of improved broadband in the region, in the hope to attract a data centre.

## Businesses/ individuals who play a role in our business community success

Importantly, determining partners and supporters to work with on this business future is critical. The Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce, by engaging with members of the reference panel, have created momentum and energy to progress these conversations. The Chamber can't do this alone.

Support can mean different things. The reference panel identified various ways in which support is needed:

**Provider** – delivering services

**Funder** – funding to deliver services/ support

**Regulator** - regulating some activities through local law or policy

**Partner** - partnerships & Strategic alliances, for particular interests

**Facilitator** - involved in activities that bring groups and interested parties together

**Advocate** - promoting the interests of the community to other decision makers and influencers

(These definitions come from work done in the Loddon Mallee RDA region, as part of a Transitioning Tools project).



**Table one - Businesses/ individuals who play a role in our business community success:**

Key area	Provider	Funder	Regulator	Partner	Facilitator	Advocate
Employment & skill building in the region	SDRC EDU			SDRC can inform SCC when business opportunities arise e.g. Radium weed is grown in Stanthorpe – processed on the Gold Coast	SDRC SCC	SCC to work with / engage with EDU Accountability for results
Lifestyle / Identity of the region – raising the profile	EDU & Tourism body	SDRC Destination Southern Downs Destination Stanthorpe Destination Warwick GBWT	ED Officer – helping businesses	SDRC ED Officer	Case study of other regions	GBWT (Granite Belt Wine & Tourism)
Bringing in and growing business	EDU - Development of Stanthorpe Prospectus	Seek funding to have the Stanthorpe Prospectus developed	EDU	EDU	EDU	EDU DSDIP
Infrastructure – assets and services		Federal & State Government in relation to the Dam	SDRC – industrial estate	RDA		

SDRC = Southern Downs Regional Council

EDU = Economic Development Unit

SCC = Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce

RDA = Regional Development Australia

DSDIP = Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning

## Implementation & Conclusion

The next step is for the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce to engage and advocate these opportunities with Southern Downs Regional Council and all members of the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce, so that as a region and business community, these concepts can be supported, funded and implemented.

The Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce also has opportunity to progress Chamber actions. These include:

- The opportunity to restructure with a focus on portfolio/ committee focusing on economic development –progressing the work around the prospectus suggestion
- Refocus the purpose and role of the Chamber of commerce
- Consider the naming of the chamber – Stanthorpe and District/ Granite Belt – to encourage a broader based membership.

The Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce thanks all those who were involved with the reference panel and engaged in the process to identify the opportunities as promoted in this document.