



## **Thomas Jack Park Complaint Summary**

**A complaint has been lodged with the Queensland Ombudsman concerning Western Downs Regional Council's decision-making process relating to the proposed Cultural Centre development within Thomas Jack Park, Dalby.**

The complaint does not challenge the value of cultural facilities. Rather, it raises concerns about whether the planning and consultation process properly reflected community views and provided residents with a fair opportunity to participate in decisions affecting a significant public park.

Key issues raised include:

### **1. Community consultation findings may have been misrepresented**

During Council's community engagement process, protecting existing green space was identified by respondents as an important community value. However, subsequent reports appear to have characterised the principle that development "should not take away from green space" as being of relatively low importance.

The complaint questions whether Council's reporting accurately reflected the consultation results and whether decision-makers and the public received a fair representation of community feedback.

### **2. Loss of meaningful public participation rights**

The complaint argues that the development pathway adopted by Council avoided the level of public notification and participation that would normally accompany a proposal of this scale and significance.

By proceeding through planning processes that did not require broader public notification, local residents were not afforded the opportunity to formally examine, support, object to, or make submissions regarding the proposal before key decisions were made.

### **3. Classification and assessment concerns**

The complaint raises concerns about the planning assessment pathway applied to the proposal and whether the practical effect was to limit community participation in decisions involving the future of a long-established public park.

While planning legislation provides different assessment categories, the complaint questions whether the process used was consistent with the community expectations for transparency and public involvement in major changes to public open space.

### **4. The central question remains unanswered**

At the heart of the matter is a simple question:

*\*Did the community ever receive a direct opportunity to decide whether Thomas Jack Park should remain predominantly open green space or be redeveloped to accommodate a major civic building?\**

*Many residents believe that question was never clearly asked.*

### **Current Status**

The Queensland Ombudsman has completed a preliminary assessment of the complaint and has referred the matter to its Investigation and Resolution Unit for further assessment.

No findings have been made, and the Ombudsman's consideration of the matter remains ongoing.