
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2032



Murrumbidgee
COUNCIL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OF COUNTRY

We would like to show respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Pictured is local boy Bobby admiring the incredible mural which graces the walls of the Council Chambers at Jerilderie.

The mural is titled 'Yo-thun-ing-yuna-ngarratya', meaning 'Coming Together'. Created for the 2000 Olympic Games, it was hung in Parliament House to provide a visual welcome to visitors and wish them peace and safe travel.

The painting depicts various Aboriginal design elements, including the Eaglehawk, which is the Barundji/Barkindji totem. It also depicts a white feather to symbolise safe travel.



The mural was created by four Barundji/Barkindji artists: Elsie Black, Gertrude Gittins, Eileen Ballangarry and Sos Hawkins.

These women can trace their family back at least 700 years as direct matriarchal descendants of the tribe. We sincerely thank these talented artists for this masterpiece and for allowing us to share it for all to see and appreciate.

THANK YOU TO ALL

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to the many community members and business people who so enthusiastically provided input into the plan and participated in the community engagement.

Thank you also to Councillors for their ongoing commitment to the plan and to staff for their contribution to the plan and associated documents.

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WE WELCOME FEEDBACK ON THIS PLAN.

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THIS COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED IN KEEPING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993.

First adopted: August 2017. Revised: June 2022.

A robust and innovative agricultural industry and farming community are the cornerstones of our vibrant area.



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



I am delighted to present the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which articulates the community's aspirations and visions for the next 10 years.

The plan builds on the themes of the previous CSP, which was adopted in 2017, and was used as the guiding strategic document during the first term of Murrumbidgee Council.

Community input has been a driving factor for the changes made to the plan. We thank all members of the community who so enthusiastically contributed their ideas and feedback. The responses received clearly indicate the passion and pride felt for our wonderful area.

Our research confirms this with respondents overwhelmingly stating the 'people, community and lifestyle' are the best parts of living and working in our area. These factors have shaped the unique identity of our area and must be retained as we strive for innovation, to attract investment and to achieve sustainable growth.

The last few years has seen a phenomenal amount of new and upgraded facilities in our area. Made possible with significant government investment, we will continue to pursue funding into the future to realise the

aspirations outlined in this plan. Not all community aspirations fall under the domain of Council, but if we know that something is a strong priority of the community, we can advocate for this service or action. Some aspirations may need to be tweaked to make them more achievable and to address constraints outside of Council's control and unique to a small, rural area.

Asset maintenance and renewal is just one area that Council is involved in, with improving the level of services in the community, particularly health and essential services, another common aspiration of community members.

We will continue to strongly advocate for this. Fostering partnerships with the State and Federal Governments and their agencies, as well as other Councils and regional organisations, is integral to achieving these objectives.

We know there will be challenges along the way, as nothing comes easy, but please join us on this journey towards the next ten years and beyond.

Ruth McRae

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2022-2032 Murrumbidgee Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Planning is vital to ensure our area has a rich and sustainable future. The Community Strategic Plan is an integral part in this because it is the overarching strategic document that sets out the objectives and actions for our Council area.

This plan follows on from the inaugural CSP, which was adopted in 2017 by the then newly formed Murrumbidgee Council.

It builds on the elements that our community loves and wants to retain, as well as new aspirations to work towards to build a sustainable, positive future for the Murrumbidgee Council area.

They are achieved by us all working together with involvement, at various times, by all levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community organisations and individuals. Partnerships are integral to achieving these shared values and visions.

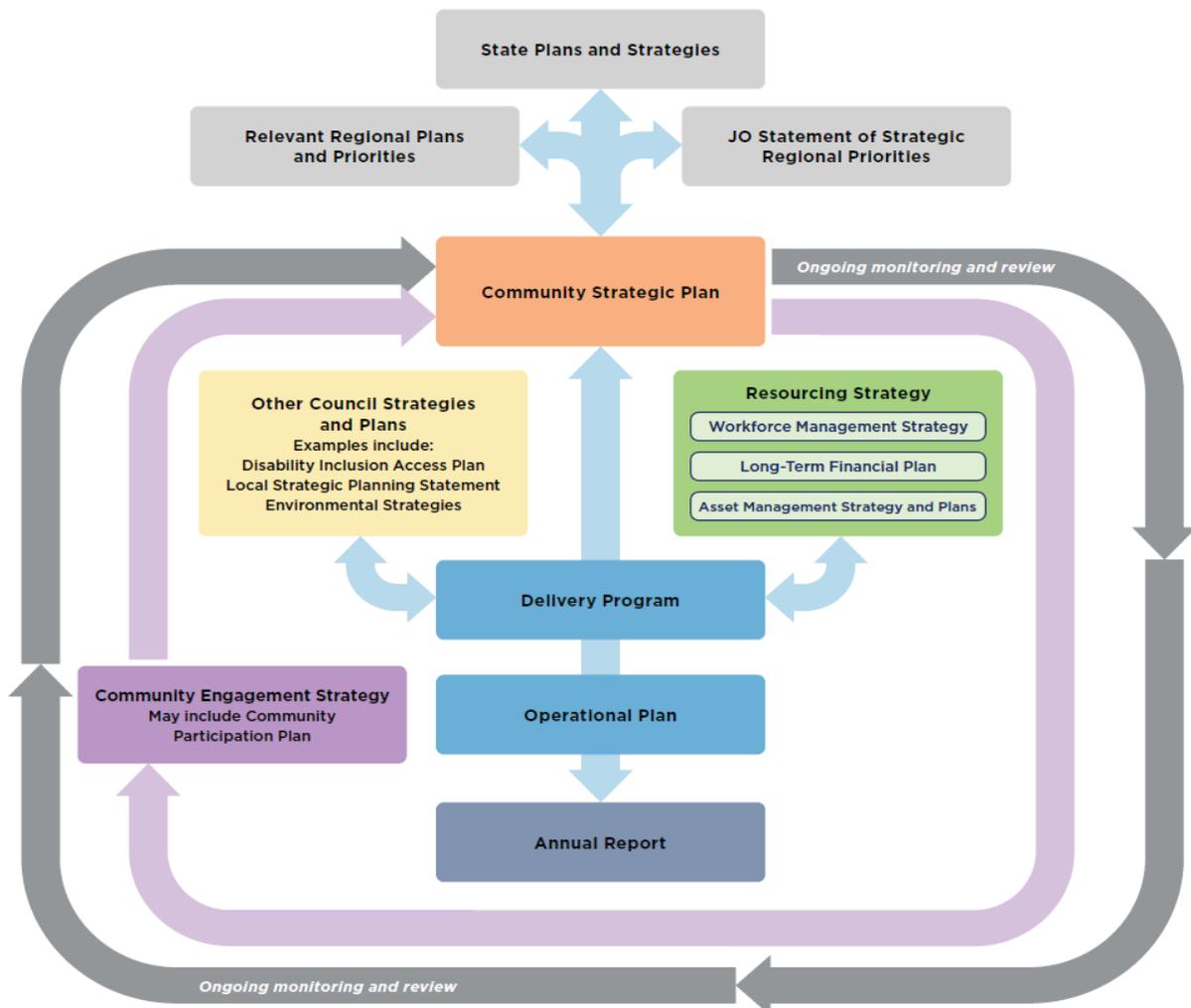
HOW THIS PLAN ALIGNS WITH STATE AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- NSW Government Premier Priorities
- NSW Government – Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021/2027
- RAMJO Statement of Regional Priorities (2018-2022)
- RAMJO Regional Infrastructure Priorities (Murrumbidgee) 2021
- NSW Government – Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036
- Regional Economic Development Strategy – Western Riverina
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan



3 | WHY THIS PLAN IS IMPORTANT

At Council, we prepare a number important planning and reporting documents, referred Integrated Planning and Reporting. This plan is the overarching plan that directly influences all other plans and operational actions. It is prepared following extensive engagement with the community to identify aspirations and expectations into the future. The diagram below shows the other plans and strategies that sit beneath the Community Strategic Plan.



These plans and strategies are explained further on the next page.



Community Strategic Plan – sets out the long-term aspirations of the community for the next 10 years. It is the key reference to guide Council’s decision-making during this period.

Delivery Program – this 4 year document outlines how the community’s priorities and wishes Council in the Community Strategic Plan will be achieved during the term of Council.

Operational Plan – this is an annual plan that details Council’s activities and budget for each year of the Delivery Program.

Resourcing Strategy - made up of:

- **Long Term Financial Plan (10 year plan)** - how Council affords to meet

current and future needs (ensuring we are financially sustainable).

- **Workforce Management Plan** (minimum 4 years) - human resourcing requirements.
- **Asset Management Plan** (minimum of 10 years) - Accounts and plans for all existing assets (including their condition) and future community assets as proposed in the Delivery Program.

Community Engagement Strategy - sets out our approach to engaging with the community and making sure everyone has the opportunity to be involved in projects, initiatives and future directions of our Council area.

4 | HOW WE LET YOU KNOW THE PLAN’S PROGRESS

We let you know the progress in achieving the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan in the following ways:

Half yearly Operational Plan review – each action within the Delivery Program has a measure to keep track of progress. Every 6 months we report on this.

Annual Report - prepared at the end of the financial year, this outlines results and achievements for the year against the Operational Plan and Delivery Program

End of Term Report – prepared at the end of each Council term to summarise projects and achievements throughout the term, particularly in regards to the Community Strategic Plan.

Community Strategic Plan Review - every four years, the plan is reported on by the outgoing Council, and reviewed by the incoming Council. At this time, the plan is rolled forward four years to maintain a minimum long-term 10-year strategic focus.



A scenic view of Billabong Creek. The foreground is dominated by a calm body of water reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. On the left bank, several large, mature trees with dense green foliage stand prominently. In the middle ground, a white car and a white trailer are parked on a dirt area. The background shows more trees and a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

The gorgeous Billabong Creek is a recreational hub for locals and visitors alike. Reputedly the world's longest creek, it also provides water for the Jerilderie township.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE MURRUMBIDGEE

Our location

Murrumbidgee Local Government Area is located in the Riverina region of south-western New South Wales. The area comprises the three townships of Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie. It also includes surrounding rural localities of Argoon, Bundure, Carrathool (part), Coree (part), Four Corners (part), Gala Vale, Logie Brae (part), Mabins Well (part), Mairjimmy, Nyora, Oaklands (part), Steam Plains (part), Waddi and Yamma. Together, these all form one vibrant rural community.

Population: 3,916 (ABS ERP 2020)

Land area: 6,885 square kms

Population density: 0.57 persons per square km

Location to cities:

Sydney: 615 km

Melbourne: 324 km

Canberra: 400 km



What we do

GRP: \$0.31 billion NIEIR 2021

Local Jobs: 1,978 NIEIR 2021

Largest industry (by employment): Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, generating 1,244 FTE jobs in 2020/21- NIEIR 2021

Local businesses: 656 ABS 2021

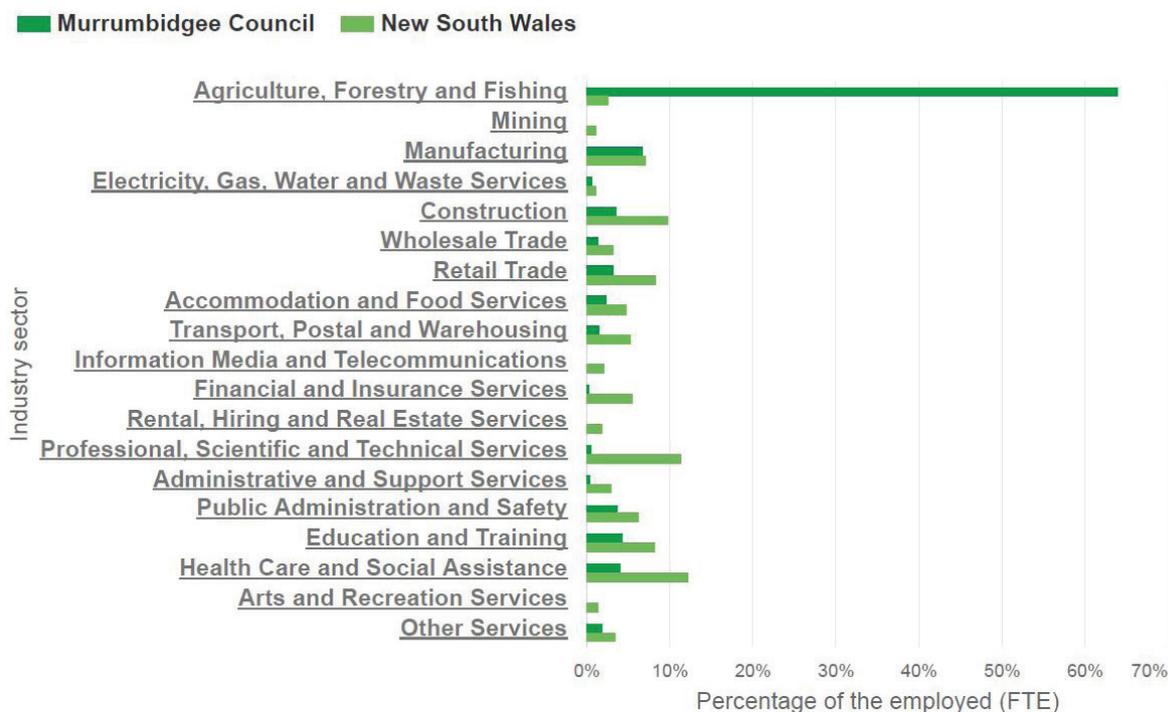
Employed residents: 1,985 = 59% of the population (NSW Average = 55%) NIEIR 2021

Ratio of jobs to residents: 1.00

At 4.5% (ABS Census 2016), the general unemployment rate is significantly lower than the regional NSW rate of 6.6%

Our economy grew by 16% from 2020 to 2021

Top five industries

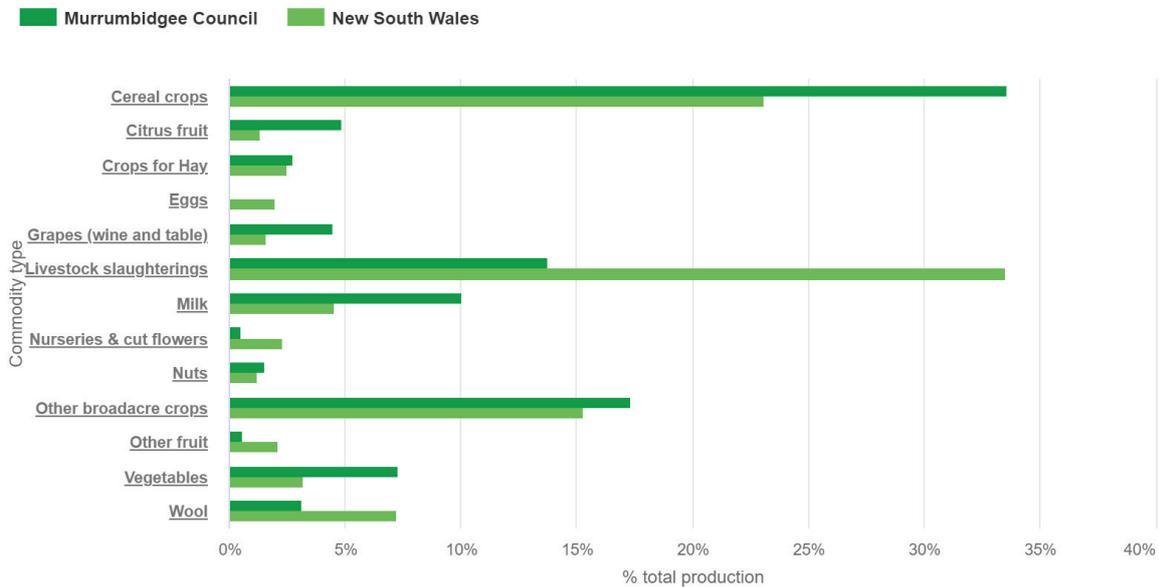


Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2021
 Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).



Key agricultural commodities

Value of agricultural production 2015/16



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).



Who we are

- 43% of the population are under 25 years
 - 17.3% are over 65 years
 - Median age is 41 years
 - 32.3 of the population has tertiary qualifications
 - 81.4% of the population are born in Australia
 - 7.5% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
 - 28.7% of people volunteer, which is higher than the 20.8% regional NSW rate
- Source: ABS Census 2016



How we live

- 93.3% of people live in a house
 - 36.3% of people own their dwelling outright
 - 24.9% of people have a mortgage
 - 71.4% of households have a least one person access the internet from that dwelling
- Source: ABS Census 2016



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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES



- Affordable housing
- Availability of medical, health and aged care services
- Retaining and engaging our youth post school
- Access to digital connectivity
- Adapting to climate change
- Local Government financial sustainability
- Sustainable waste management practices
- Improving water security

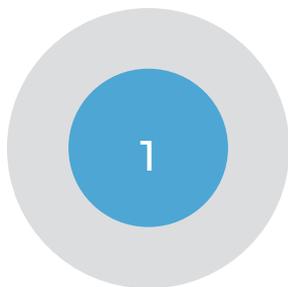
OPPORTUNITIES



- The community's strength and character, clearly demonstrated by how passionate and invested locals are in the area
- The natural environment
- Our strong agricultural sector
- Our well developed links with regional networks

THE GUIDING FORCE IN THIS PLAN: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In simple terms, the Community Strategic Plan is a plan for the community, by the community. Hence, engaging with the community is a vital part in its development. To ensure we engaged as effectively as possible, we prepared a Communications Plan which outlined how we would go about this. The phases in the Communications Plan were:



ENGAGE (1) AND RESEARCH

Reach out to the community and stakeholders to gather information about values, challenges, expectations and aspirations for the future (at the beginning of the Council term)



ANALYSE AND DRAFT

Compile and analyse all responses to inform the draft Community Strategic Plan



ENGAGE (2) AND REVISE

Reach out to the community and stakeholders for comment on the draft document and then incorporate changes into plan to produce the final version



ENGAGE (3)

Share the final report with the community and other stakeholders



IMPLEMENT AND ENGAGE (4)

Keeping the community informed about the plan's progress



REVIEW AND ENGAGE (5)

Reach out to the community to gather feedback at the end of the Council term

Key findings from the engagement process

A key element in phase 1 of the Communications Plan was a community survey. The survey achieved a 14.6% response rate, which in statistical terms is a high representation. We also conducted a youth survey, which achieved a 5% response rate.

Other communication tools, such as digital engagement, ideas boards in offices and at community events, newsletters, media releases, direct electronic mail, posters and advertising were used.



COMMUNITY VALUES

66.2% of respondents believe the 'people, community and lifestyle' are the best parts of living and working in our area

COMMUNITY PRIORITY

43.31% of respondents believe the most important Council service is road maintenance and construction

SATISFACTION LEVELS

Respondents are most satisfied with public amenities and least satisfied with aged, disabled and health services.

KEY DIRECTIONS

There was strong support for these initiatives: community safety, managing waste and recycling, assisting new and existing business and industry, and maintaining and improving roads.



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OUR VISION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

OUR VISION

Smart growth by creating opportunities.



OUR PURPOSE

To deliver quality services creating a friendly, welcoming and engaged community.

COPORATE VALUES

- We value creativity and innovation.
- We aim to reliably deliver quality services and well-maintained facilities.
- We embrace strong, positive and trusted leadership, guided by and respecting our culture and environment, and practising forward thinking that nurtures who we are and celebrates where we live and what we have achieved.
- The defining element in where we live is our identity, typified in our community's welcoming and energetic approach that makes where we live an appealing place for all.

COMMUNITY VALUES

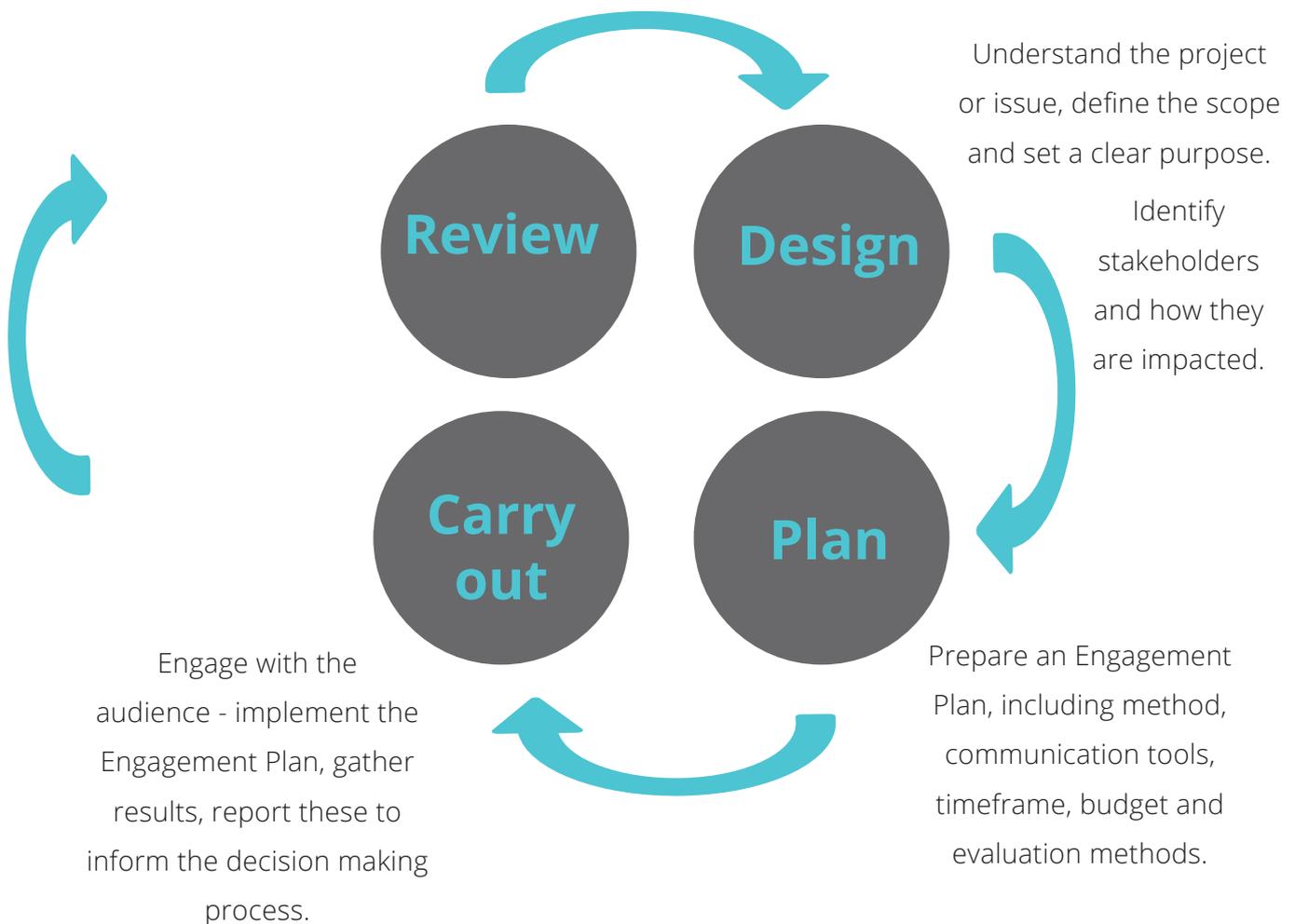
In ten years' time our community aspires for our area to have these values (these align closely with the social justice guiding principles outlined by the NSW Government: equity, access, participation and rights):

SUSTAINABLE	PROGRESSIVE	PROUD	INCLUSIVE
Sustainable Environmentally responsible Environment leader Environmentally proactive	Progress Prosperous Thriving Flourishing Growing Bustling Opportunity Vibrant	Attractive Clean Tidy Well kept Liveable Small Safe	Inclusive Friendly Peaceful Tranquil Content Passionate Diverse Cohesive Welcoming Fair Equal



HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

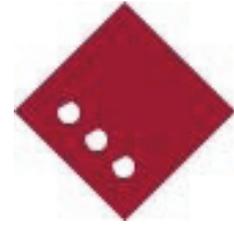
The steps involved



The tools we use to engage

For each engagement activity, we consider carefully how to best reach the target audience/s. This will usually be a mix of digital, face-to-face and paper based tools.

Appendix A shows the Engagement Matrix in relation to the level of participation and our 5 goals of engagement.



Community vision: We all live happily in a thriving, safe and vibrant community. We feel safe and connected with equal access to community infrastructure and services. We celebrate the diversity of our three towns and value our rural lifestyle.

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
<p>1. We work together to support all members of the community</p>	<p>Work together to achieve enhanced community and public transport accessibility</p> <p>Support a housing mix that gives choice and meets the needs of the community</p> <p>Advocate for cheaper utility costs, particularly electricity costs</p> <p>Advocate and work for greater access to health and medical services</p> <p>Embrace and empower all groups within the community, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local first nations people • youth • seniors • people with mixed abilities • socially and economically disadvantaged members of the community • people from multicultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds
<p>2. We celebrate, embrace and preserve our cultural identities, our heritage and diversity</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to showcase and preserve our unique culture and heritage</p> <p>Encourage and support events and activities that strengthen social cohesion, such as the arts</p> <p>Work with each town to retain and celebrate their unique identities, while working towards a shared vision for our area</p>

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
3. We create opportunities for a more connected and cohesive community	<p>Foster sporting, social, recreational and cultural opportunities and activities to increase participation and inclusion</p> <p>Work with the community to provide a diverse mix of community entertainment and wellbeing activities, including activities for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities</p> <p>Empower our community to embrace technology and innovation</p> <p>Advocate for improved telecommunications and utilities</p> <p>Encourage and expand volunteering opportunities</p> <p>Enhance tertiary education opportunities</p>
4. We encourage healthy, active and safe communities	<p>Plan for and provide outstanding parks, gardens and neighbourhoods</p> <p>Encourage an active lifestyle with outstanding recreational facilities and spaces</p> <p>Work together to enhance community safety</p> <p>Work together to enhance a safe road network</p> <p>Build the capacity of all sectors in the community to understand and meet public health standards</p> <p>Partner with providers of emergency services to ensure appropriate response levels to community emergencies</p> <p>Work with the community to ensure responsible animal management and compliance with relevant legislation</p>
Who will be involved	<p>Murrumbidgee Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Aged care providers, Community groups, Volunteers, Disability support services and advocacy groups, Non Government Organisations, Regional Government Agencies, Education providers, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Local Aboriginal support organisations, Schools, Police, Creative arts sector, Service clubs, Child, youth and family services, Sporting associations, Utility providers and Regional Development organisations</p>
How we measure success	<p>Satisfaction levels with Council's services and facilities</p> <p>Satisfaction levels with various Government services</p> <p>Volunteer participation</p> <p>Road safety statistics</p> <p>Crime statistics</p> <p>Emergency response feedback</p>





OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Community vision: We live in a unique natural environment that we value highly. We undertake a guardianship role to protect and enhance sustainable living through appropriate practices and management.

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
1. We protect our natural environment for future generations	<p>Work together to protect, monitor, manage and promote the natural environment, waterways, wildlife and ecosystems</p> <p>Manage and foster learning on environmental and climate challenges</p> <p>Work together to control and eradicate weeds in our area</p>
2. We carefully manage our resources	<p>Support sustainable energy initiatives and manage Council's energy consumption wisely</p> <p>Sustainably manage our waste with best practice waste management and recycling facilities</p> <p>Support and promote responsible water usage, particularly in town areas</p>
3. We achieve a balance between growth, development and environmental protection	<p>Preserve local character and stimulate the conservation of important heritage assets</p> <p>Ensure land use planning and developments are well planned, sustainable and meet legislative requirements</p> <p>Work with the community to achieve well designed urban streetscapes</p> <p>Ensure best practice public and environmental health controls</p>
Who will be involved	Murrumbidgee Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Non Government Organisations, Environmental organisations, Volunteers, Local Aboriginal groups and organisations, Service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and the business community, Schools, Community groups, Weeds management organisation
How we measure success	<p>Increase in community participation in protecting and managing the environment</p> <p>Reduction in Council's energy bills</p> <p>Reduction of waste going to landfill</p> <p>Satisfaction with land use planning</p> <p>Satisfaction with certifying authority functions by Council</p>

OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT LIVEABLE PLACES



Community vision: We all enjoy access to well-planned social and community infrastructure and spaces, which are developed and maintained to a high standard.

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
1. We are proud of our outstanding buildings, facilities, public places and assets	<p>Efficiently manage, maintain and enhance Council's assets</p> <p>Efficiently manage Crown Land resources</p> <p>Improve street and building accessibility for those with mixed abilities</p>
2. We cherish our open spaces where the community can be active	<p>Activate spaces and places to complement activity around waterways, urban areas and green spaces for families, the community and visitors</p> <p>Enhance sporting, recreation and leisure facilities and opportunities</p>
3. Our road network (reserve) is well maintained, functional and continually improved achieve a balance between growth, development and environmental protection	<p>Work together to maintain and develop a highly functioning road network (reserve), including roads, footpaths, bridges cycleways, kerb and guttering, and drainage system local character and stimulate the conservation of important heritage assets</p> <p>Ensure land use planning and developments are well planned, sustainable and meet legislative requirements</p> <p>Work with the community to achieve well designed urban streetscapes</p> <p>Ensure best practice public and environmental health controls</p>
4. We operate our local utilities according to best practice standards	<p>Manage Council's utility assets in line with best practice standards and priorities</p>
Who will be involved	<p>Murrumbidgee Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Non Government Organisations, Road Safety organisations, Road Traffic Committee, Environmental organisations, Volunteers, Local Aboriginal groups and organisations, Service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and the business community, Schools, Community groups, Families</p>
How we measure success	<p>Community satisfaction levels</p> <p>Road safety data</p> <p>Government funding levels</p>



A THRIVING AND GROWING ECONOMY



Community vision: Our thriving economy enjoys business and investment growth, with new and existing business and industries proactively achieving development and business success. We spread the word about the magic of our area, with visitors joining with locals to relish our beautiful natural environment and other tourist assets. We all enjoy access to well-planned social and community infrastructure and spaces, which are developed and maintained to a high standard.

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
1. Our area is a popular place to live, work and invest in	<p>Provide an environment to grow and strengthen local businesses and attract new businesses</p> <p>Promote our area as a great place to do business and invest</p> <p>Advocate and identify opportunities for increased workforce participation</p> <p>Address and advocate for measures to overcome barriers to business and industry expansion (eg land availability)</p>
2. Our area is a vibrant social, recreational and cultural hub and a great place to visit	<p>Develop and promote our area as an attractive visitor destination</p> <p>Support and encourage events and activities for locals and visitors</p> <p>Implement and encourage projects that achieve social cohesion, and celebrate diversity and inclusiveness</p> <p>Encourage opportunities for further recreation activities on or around rivers and waterways</p>
3. We have a resilient, vibrant agricultural sector	<p>Work together to address impediments and identify initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector</p>
Who will be Involved	<p>Murrumbidgee Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Non Government Organisations, Road Safety organisations, Road Traffic Committee, Environmental organisations, Volunteers, Local Aboriginal groups and organisations, Service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and the business community, Schools, Community groups, Families</p>



What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
How we measure success	Workforce participation data Business satisfaction levels Business and investment data Annual visitation levels



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

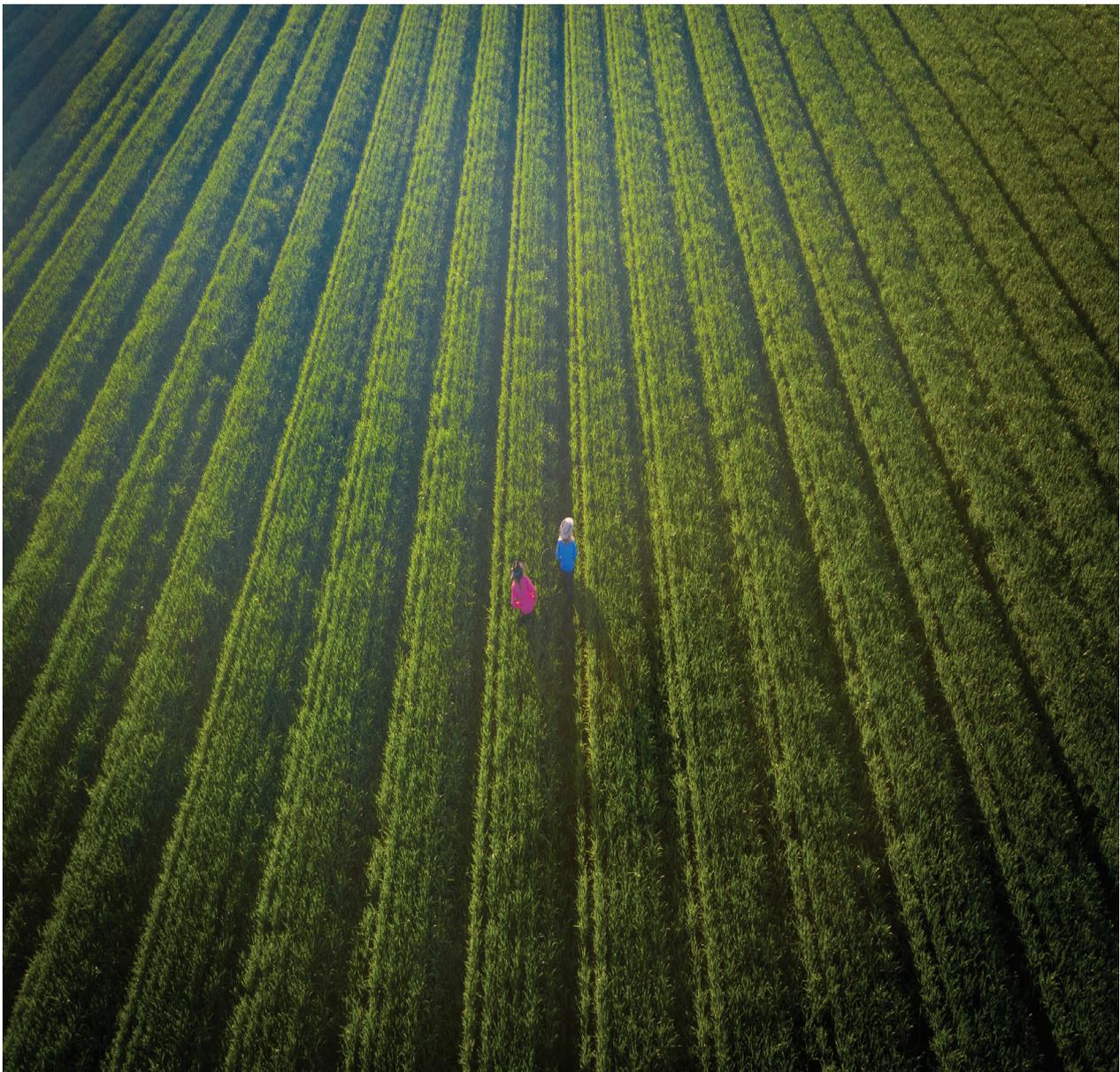


Community vision: We are a highly respected local council who is recognised as a proactive civic leader that embraces opportunities for the area and community. We operate ethically and implement outstanding governance to develop and ensure a positive future for the Murrumbidgee Council area. The community is highly engaged and invested in the future of the area.

What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
1. We have strong partnerships with our community, government and other stakeholders and are seen as a trusted and reliable organisation	<p>Build strong, effective, and productive alliances and partnerships with all stakeholders</p> <p>Provide an excellent customer experience, that provides value for money, quality services, is convenient and simple.</p> <p>Maintain sound legislative decision-making that is ethical, accountable and transparent</p> <p>Provide best practice financial, corporate and operational management and reporting that meets legislative requirements</p> <p>Provide best practice procurement activities, as well as risk and project management</p> <p>Pursue innovative methods to source income as a local government body</p>
2. We build a collaborative culture by effective and meaningful engagement with the community	<p>Provide genuine, simple and accurate information that is accessible and inclusive</p> <p>Empower the community to become engaged in and understand Council projects and initiatives</p>
3. We are a strong and sustainable organisation that is seen as an employer of choice	<p>Develop and grow a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce</p> <p>Maintain a positive safety and risk culture supported by quality assurance, audit and training programs</p> <p>Engender a respectful culture that celebrates achievements, accountability, transparency and exceptional work standards</p> <p>Leverage new technology to monitor and innovate our people and service development</p>



What we aim to achieve	How we shall go about it
3. We empower our community through our civic leadership role	Promote opportunities for leadership development for the community Promote funding, services and initiatives to strengthen communities
Who will be Involved	Murrumbidgee Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Non Government Organisations, RAMJO, Volunteers, Local Aboriginal groups and organisations, Service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and the business community, Schools, Community groups, Families
How we measure success	Increase in social media metrics and engagement Increase in website metrics and usage Increase in customer service satisfaction Volume of online customer transactions is increasing Ability to meet NSW Government reporting legislation





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