

# Appendix 1

## Report of the Citizen Panel and Engagement

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## **Armidale Regional 2040 Plan**

**PlanCom Consulting Pty Ltd**



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## 1. Introduction

This report documents the process, deliberations, and outcomes of a citizen's panel (the Panel) held to inform development of a draft of the Armidale Regional 2040 Plan (the Plan). The Plan aims to develop a comprehensive vision for Armidale by:

- Serving its current and future residents within the city and regionally;
- Inspiring, motivating and being owned by the diverse people who make up the community;
- Engaging and embracing the diversity that is in Armidale in its development;
- Providing a broad blueprint to guide future development and land use for public bodies, private investment and the people who live, work and play in Armidale;
- Respecting and conserving the biodiversity of the city and region;
- Enabling residents, workers and visitors to access and enjoy the facilities and destinations the city and region has to offer;
- Facilitating the revitalisation of the city and its environs to serve as the hub for the wider region;
- Capitalising on both the challenges and the opportunities which integrates long-term thinking with immediate initiatives, public and private; enhancing the city's viability, image and public domain;
- Rewarding community confidence through 'smart city' living and regional prosperity.

The Panel is one of a number of stakeholder and community engagement activities undertaken to inform development of the Plan. It involved a mix of 20 randomly and purposefully selected citizens of the Armidale Region who met intensively over twelve hours in March 2020. The Panel's input, alongside other stakeholder and community feedback engagement, is being used to understand what the people of the Armidale Region see for their environmental, economic and social future.

The Plan will inform Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), which is a strategic planning document that provides a link between the NSW Government's New England North West Regional Plan 2036, and Council's Community Strategic Plan. The outcome is a document that will provide a coherent spatial vision and strategy and guide Council's future decision-making on land use issues across the area for the next 20 years. The Plan is to facilitate orderly growth based on common goals and needs to align with community needs and aspirations. The Panel worked together over a day and a half to agree common goals for the area, which included:

- Sustainability,
- A Developing Economy,
- Culture and Belonging, and
- Health and Wellbeing.

## 2. Objectives of the engagement

The objectives of the overall engagement process for the Plan and associated activities are as follows:

Objective	Action
Create awareness of the planning process and harness the interest of the broader community.	Inform the community of the purpose of regional planning processes and the context in helping to shape the community in which they work, live and play.

Have the community inform development of the Plan.	Seek early input from the community and key stakeholders to inform analysis of planning constraints and opportunities.
Work with representatives of the community to help shape a final Plan to go on exhibition.	Finalisation of a Plan with community input (using a Citizen Panel). The Plan would then go on exhibition for further community comment.



The aim of the Panel was to prioritise themes and potential directions for the draft Plan that were identified through background planning studies and earlier community engagement including café drop-in sessions and the Council online 'Your Say Armidale' platform. The themes identified for the collection of information from the public included:

Themes for the Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and employment growth</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Arts, Culture, Social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Sports, recreation, open space</li> <li>• Transport, connectivity</li> <li>• Sustainability, biodiversity, smart city</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>

The Panel's deliberations also tested a number of options and existing ideas on key land use issues for the future of the Armidale Regional LGA. The Panel considered evidence and engaged in open and honest dialogue on these issues.

### 3. The team

PlanCom Consulting provided specialist stakeholder and community engagement services to support the Conybeare Morrison (CM<sup>+</sup>) Consultant Team to prepare the Armidale Regional 2040 Plan (the Plan), commissioned by ARC.

The Panel was led by Forward Thinking a consultancy that comprises team members with 20 years of experience in delivering deliberative processes.

### 4. About deliberative process and its benefits

Council chose a deliberative process to try to overcome common engagement challenges. This included being able to:

- Effectively communicate the connection between the planning process and action and have people understand the challenges and complexity that local governments face in balancing evidence and different interests in decision making, and

- Provide opportunities that extend the involvement to a wider range of community members, that is beyond those who regularly participate in consultations.



Citizen panels are empowering processes in that they allow participants to shape the discussion and dialogue around issues that matter to them and which they consider important for the future.

Citizen panels represent a process of simulated decision-making where community members are given the evidence typically available to elected representatives.

Through exchange of different viewpoints and facilitated whole and small group discussions they are asked to arrive, to the extent that this is possible, at a shared group view on the issues being considered.

During the Panel, participants were provided with evidence on key issues, had the opportunity to ask questions of Council officers and CM+ (the consultants preparing the Plan). The Panel was able to hear from those knowledgeable in local government and land use planning and consider different perspectives and knowledge on key land use issues from the diverse range of participants in the room.

Citizen panels take different formats and are designed in different ways. They have a number of key features:

- A participant selection process that assembles a group of people that represent the diversity of views, experience and interests that exist naturally in any community,
- A process of education on the issues being deliberated upon and access to evidence and expertise on those issues, and
- An opportunity for participants to hear different points of views on the issues, reflect on these as a group, and consider how they might change their own viewpoints.

These are essential ingredients to enabling a deliberative environment, similar to that which occurs in a parliament or a court jury process. A series of small group and whole-of-group discussions are used during the Panel to ensure cross-pollination of views and interests and that all members of the group consider differing viewpoints of fellow Panel members.

Citizen panels and the process of deliberation that they offer can help balance different views and competing interests. This process involves participants engaged in reasoned debate and discussion based on the evidence, and their local experiences and insights. Through the process, the ‘force of the better argument’ rises to the top as participants are given the opportunity to reconsider their views in response to the evidence and perspectives put by other participants.

## 5. Engagement prior to the panel

In planning to engage the Armidale community there was effort to engage the broadest range of members of the public as possible. It was important to target those who had already been engaged through the Your Say Armidale online platform and to open up opportunities for people who were more comfortable providing feedback as part of face to face engagements.

Council used traditional media and social media to make people aware of the opportunities to be involved. In addition special interest groups were directly targeted through emails and calls and asked to represent the interest of their organisation or the people that they represent.

All forms of input were used to provide input to the draft Plan and Panel process.

The engagement activities provided the opportunity to:

- Gather input from the general community through drop-in café sessions and Council's online 'Your Say Armidale' website,
- Understand Council and stakeholder group initiatives that could influence the future of the LGA, and
- Recruit members of the panel that were both those with a keen interest in future planning for the Armidale Region, and community members not typically involved in planning.

### **5.1 Meetings with key stakeholder groups**

It was important that key stakeholder groups were provided the opportunity to provide input to the Plan and to give Council the perspectives from their particular stakeholder group. The list provided by Council of approximately 60 stakeholder groups were emailed an invitation to participate with a link to information about the development of the plan.

All groups were encouraged to attend the café catch up session.

Around 15 of these groups were identified by Council to get a further follow up call to ensure that they had the invitation, knew about the consultation and were offered the opportunity to have a one on one meeting if required.

Those the team met with were:

- Armidale Chamber of Commerce,
- Visions for Armidale Creeklands,
- New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM),
- Armidale Local Aboriginal Land Council, and
- TAFE NSW – Armidale.

### **5.2 Meetings with Council officers**

Meetings were held in Armidale in mid-September and early December 2019 with ARC Council officers representing the following Council responsibilities:

- Economic Development
- Tourism and Events
- Strategic Infrastructure Planning
- Coordinator Public and Town Spaces
- Interim Museum Team Leader
- Coordinator People and Community Services
- Manager Utilities
- Manager Asset Management and Strategic Planning
- Manager Development and Regulatory Service

In January-February follow up questions were forwarded to Council officers and responses received that have informed the development of the draft Plan and background planning studies.



### 5.3 Drop in Café Sessions

Community members were invited to Café catch ups sessions with a free coffee at either Guyra or Armidale. The sessions were held:

- Tuesday 3 December – 12- 2 pm - Juneils Cafe - 120A Bradley St, Guyra
- Tuesday 3 December – 4- 7 pm - Bistro on Cinders - 14 Cinders Lane, Armidale.



The sessions were informal, with the opportunity to have a discussion with the team developing the draft Plan and with Council officers. There were also 10 sheets of paper, each with one of the themes, and people were invited to answer two questions on each:

1. What is it that the Armidale region is doing now or has done in the past in relation to the theme area that it should do more of?
2. What else can we do for that theme area to take the Armidale region in a direction that you think it should go in the next 20 years?

The Café session in Armidale attracted over 50 attendees with 43 signing the attendance sheet. There were 11 who participated in the session at Guyra. The input from the café sessions was incorporated with the outcomes of the Your Say Armidale website. These are provided at Appendix A.



### 5.4 Your Say Armidale

CM+ used the Your Say Armidale website to contribute ideas to feed into the draft Plan, and encourage interested residents to register to participate in the Panel. There were 562 visits to the Your Say Armidale page, representing a total of 293 different people.

Contributions structured around the ten themes were collected using the same questions asked at the café sessions. A total of 65 people made 662 separate contributions across the themes.



A total of 35 people, also answered a short survey to express their interest in participating in the Panel. Of those registering through these means, 10 participated in the Panel.

### 5.5 Community survey

A short community survey was conducted using both random phone number dialling and drawing participants from an existing large online social research panel that included residents of the LGA. The survey was fielded over a series of weekends and weekday evenings throughout February 2020. The survey respondents were stratified to represent the 2016 Census profile of the LGA as closely as possible to ensure representation of different ages, gender, incomes, education levels, and area of residence.

The survey tested the range of issues and themes identified from the Your Say Armidale and Drop in Café Sessions and a review of Council's existing policies and strategies. It also was used to recruit a broader range of residents not typically engaged in planning to participate in the Panel.

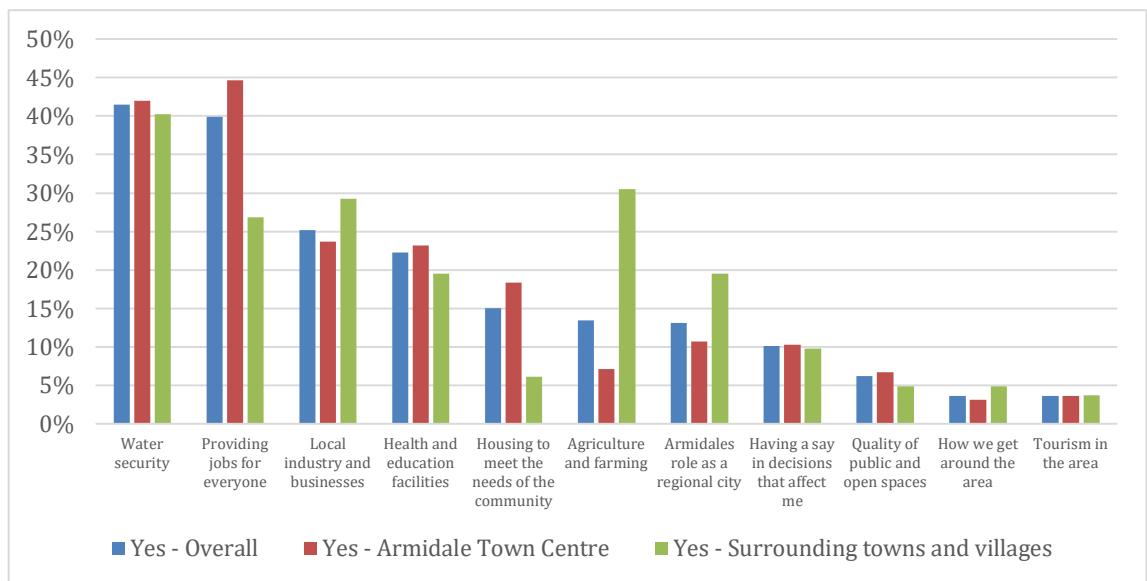
A total of 306 community members were surveyed across phone and the online social research panel and asked the following questions:

#### **Q1 - Thinking about the longer term future of the area where you live, which TWO of the following most concern you?:**

*Note that the all responses were rotated. Water security was however kept in the middle of the list as at the time this was a major issue for the community given the prolonged drought and recent unseasonal rainfall. Placing it in the middle helps to avoid response bias from the issue being more immediate in the minds of respondents or simply that it is the first response read out from the list.*

- a) Providing jobs for everyone
- b) Local industry and businesses
- c) Health and education facilities
- d) Housing to meet the needs of the community
- e) Agriculture and farming
- f) Armidale's role as a regional city
- g) Water security (remained in the middle of the response set)
- h) Having a say in decisions that affect me
- i) Quality of public and open spaces
- j) How we get around the area
- k) Tourism in the area

Responses to this question are outlined below, including differences between responses of those living in Armidale and those living in outlying towns and villages.

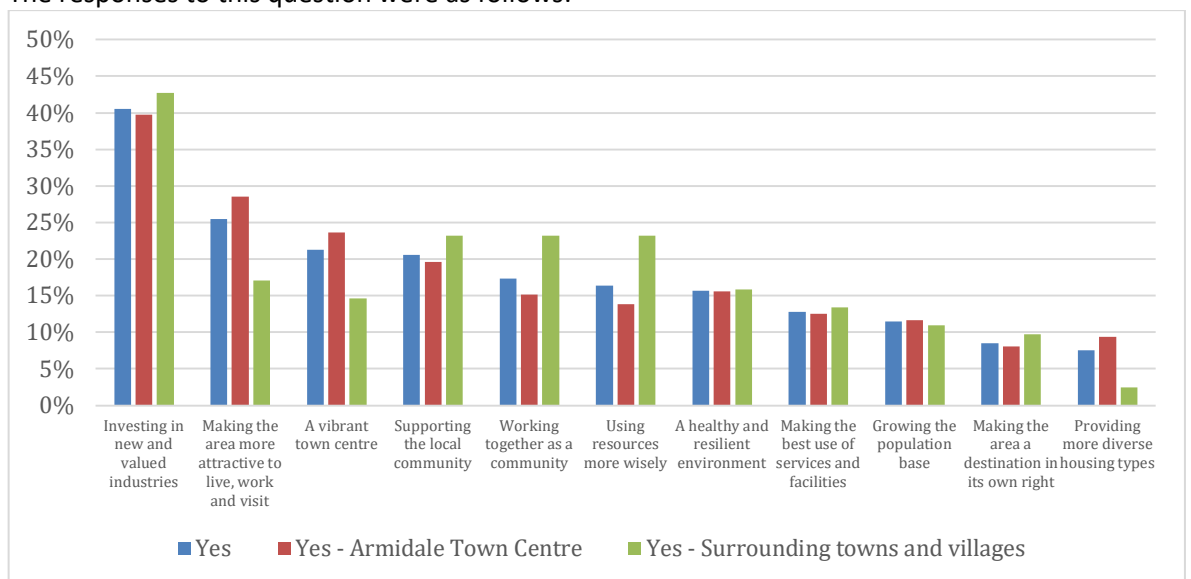


**Q2. And from the following list, which TWO do you think offer the best prospects for the future of the Armidale area?**

*All response options were rotated for each survey.*

- Investing in new and valued industries
- Making the area more attractive to live, work and visit
- A vibrant town centre
- Supporting the local community
- Working together as a community
- Using resources more wisely
- A healthy and resilient environment
- Making the best use of services and facilities
- Growing the population base
- Making the area a destination in its own right
- Providing more diverse housing types

The responses to this question were as follows:



At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to express their interest in participating in the Citizen Panel. Of the 306 respondents, 73 indicated an interest in participating and were contacted as part of the recruitment process.



## 6. Panel participants

The recruitment process for the Panel included both random and purposeful selection.

The process was purposeful insofar as it included members of the community with a known interest in planning for the future of the Armidale Region. These panel members were selected from the pool of registrants that came via the Your Say website, with attention to ensuring demographic diversity in terms of age, gender, income, education, and area of residence.

The community survey was conducted by random phone number dialling (landline and mobile) and an online social research panel that aimed to reach members of the community who may not previously have been engaged with planning for the future of Armidale. The survey questions helped ensure participants with a diversity of views and interests in the future of the Armidale region were selected.

It is important to note while random selection techniques such as random phone dialling or electoral or ratepayer databases are intended to reach everyday community members not typically engaged in planning, every method has its limitations. Examples include:

- Electoral databases do not reach those who are not registered to vote including new immigrants or newly arrived residents who have not updated their electoral details,
- Ratepayer databases provide access to landowners, some of whom may live outside a community, and therefore often exclude renters in a community, and
- Phone surveys tend to reach an older demographic when using landlines. Also older people are more often at home when a survey company calls. This can be offset by using lists of mobile phone numbers and combining with other modes such as online surveys that are more commonly used by younger people.

Of the 20 selected for the Panel they comprised the following demographics:

- 12 women and 8 men
- 14 from Armidale city and 6 from surrounding villages and rural areas

They were from the following age groups:

Age Group	Number
18-35 years	3
35-50 years	7
50- 65 years	4
65 and over	6

## 7. Sessions and outcomes of the Citizen Panel

This section describes the process and key outcomes from the Panel's deliberations.

### 7.1 Panel sessions day one

#### 7.1.1 Setting the scene for the Citizen Panel

The Panel commenced on Friday evening with an introduction by Council's Chief Executive Officer, who outlined the purpose of the Plan is to pull together strategies and initiatives of the former Armidale, Dumaresq and Guyra Councils to, for the first time, provide a coherent spatial vision and land use framework for the Armidale Region.

The Panel was then provided with an overview of how deliberation happens as a process, including bringing together evidence on key land use issues with lived experiences and insights about the Armidale Region from those involved in the deliberations.

Panel members were informed they were chosen to become a 'mini-public' that is, as broadly as possible, representative of the Armidale Region community, including different demographics (e.g. age, gender, income, education), areas (e.g. Armidale City, Guyra Town Centre and outlying villages), and viewpoints (e.g. those with interest in particular ideas or initiatives).

They were also reminded that whilst the selection process aimed to replicate the range of demographics and views that exist naturally in any community, the full diversity of a community can never be fully replicated.

In this context, the Panel were asked to think about viewpoints that might not be represented in the room and consider the implications of their deliberations for these people. This includes those in the community who may be socially or economically marginalised, such as people with disability, the under- and unemployed, service providers, retailers and local businesses.

A number of Panel members indicated they had family members or close friends or associates in these situations, and were then asked and collectively indicated they felt confident they could adequately consider the interests and aspirations of these people in the deliberations.

#### 7.1.2 Introduction and strengths of the region

Panel members introduced themselves to the group and, through this whole-of-group conversation, identified current strengths and weaknesses and emerging opportunities and threats (SWOT) for Armidale Region. Particular strengths for the area included:

- Strong connections amongst and support for fellow community members;
- An appealing climate and scenic natural environment that provides health benefits;

- Affordability of the area for families;
- Strong community capacity to drive local initiatives;
- A great place to raise a family where ‘kids can be kids’ and enjoy a healthy and active upbringing in a peaceful rural environment;
- A strong local arts and music sector;
- Significant local built and natural heritage;
- Ease of access to quality health, education, and other government services;
- Ease of travelling around locally and to nearby major centres on the coast and Sydney;
- Sporting and recreation activities and facilities;
- Nature and adventure-based tourism attractions; and
- Strong and innovative agriculture and education services.

The Panel considered these strengths are significant attractor qualities for the Armidale Region and referred back to them a number of times during their deliberations. The Panel also noted these strengths underpin a special connection to place with the Armidale Region, as demonstrated by a large number of residents, including some of the Panel members, who have grown up or spent time in the Armidale Region, left and then re-settled in the area later in life because of this special connection.

The panel also identified a number of weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for the Armidale Region’s future. There was a general sense the area has not yet reached its full potential. A particular weakness and threat identified by the Panel members was a limited range of employment opportunities that would encourage more young people to stay in the area. This was a strong theme throughout the Panel’s deliberations over the day and a half.

Other weaknesses and threats identified included over-reliance on a couple of key industries, water security, a changing climate, lack of promotion of the area’s tourism potential, and difficulties finding the right type of housing in the right location particularly for younger and older residents who may want to live in smaller housing closer to Armidale city centre.

There was a sense amongst the Panel that there are opportunities to use the community’s strong capacities to progress local initiatives and that Council ‘does not have to do it all’. However, that greater engagement by Council is needed to uncover how the community can best be supported to take the lead on delivering initiatives. Again, managing community’s expectations of what Council can achieve and how it can enable or support other groups working in the community to progress ideas and initiatives was a strong theme through the Panel’s deliberations.

### 7.1.3 Common goals

To agree on common goals that could drive their consideration of future land use issues for Armidale Region, Panel members were asked to reflect individually and in small groups on the question of **‘What they thought were the most important goals for Armidale region?’**.

After considering what is most important to them, the whole Panel consolidated these items into a number of overarching goals. These shared goals acted as ‘touch points’, with the panel referring back to them when discussing particular issues throughout the deliberations. Whilst the Panel felt there are shared goals amongst the community, they also indicated Armidale Region needs a strong and compelling vision for the future that is broadly shared and understood amongst the community and around which they can rally.

<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>A developing economy</b>	<b>Culture &amp; belonging</b>	<b>Health &amp; wellbeing</b>
Triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental) Agriculture Environment, Economic – water, waste, etc, Sustainable environment, Ecological diversity and sustainability, Secure Water (2) including potable water options / recycled and storage capacity for entire community, and Sustainable population including growth and growing and being environmentally sustainable, e.g. solar power/water.	Diversify our economic and employment base (3) drawing on regional strengths including agriculture, education and environment,  Tourism (2) including Environment, Education, Recreation, Cultural, marketing and promotion of regional events, nature, liveability/lifestyle,  Centre for culture, Education, and Technologies.	Preserve character,  Meaningful youth engagement and opportunity,  Engage with Aboriginal heritage & include (heritage considerations)  Town with Gown, and  Culture of collaboration and co-operation with business, industry and community.	Connected community – cultural, transport, social,  Sporting facilities - world class, tourism events associated with regional/world events and bike paths for recreation & major sport, and  Housing for all.

#### 7.1.4 Planning for the future

The Panel was provided with input from the team including:

- An overview of the aim of the Armidale Regional 2040 Plan and its focus principally on land use issues,
- Information about local government strategic and operational planning, government revenues and expenses,
- Strategic land use planning considerations including constraints and opportunities for development as well as being mindful of the implications (e.g. weighing costs and benefits) of different development models and approaches, and
- Overview of population projection data for Armidale Region to 2036 prepared by NSW Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment.

For context, the Panel were provided data on the projected growth of the region of approximately 8,000 people to 2036, requiring approximately 184 new dwellings a year to service this growth. Also data was provided on dwelling approvals and completions over the last two decades, including whether these were single residential or multi-unit style (including secondary dwellings, granny flats, and seniors living). The Panel were also advised that growth is projected to be uneven across the Armidale Region with the city of Armidale expected to grow while surrounding centres and villages, such as Guyra, were projected to slowly reduce in population to 2036.

The implications of the projected population growth were discussed extensively by the group. Key points of deliberation with respect to the growth projections included:

- The veracity of predictions and whether historic growth predictions for the Armidale region have been met,

- Population change by household type and the different types of housing that different segments of the community may need into the future,
- Population change by age group, and the different types of services and facilities different segments of the community may need into the future. For example, part-time employment opportunities for the high proportion of 19 to 29-year olds engaged in education,
- Comparative population change by age group. For example, whilst older population groups are projected to increase to 2036, younger age groups such as 19 to 29-year olds are projected to remain relatively constant, and
- Changes in population for the city of Armidale and Guyra Town Centre and the outlying villages.

At the end of these discussions, the projected growth scenario for the Armidale Region was considered a key issue for planning for future land use and there was a strong desire to revisit this the following day. The Panel's deliberations then closed for the day.

## 7.2 Panel sessions day two

### 7.2.1 Feedback on ideas gathered through previous engagement

A week prior to the Panel, members were provided with a document that collated, under the 10 themes, 17 pages of ideas and initiatives contributed by members of the public via the café sessions, the Your Say website, and individual and community group submissions. Prior to the Panel, members put a great deal of thought into considering the ideas the community put forward to Council, and were asked to develop a sense of which were most important to them and why.

The Panel provided some general observations on the feedback provided. In particular, Panel members noted the ideas seemed to be a 'wish list' and there needs to be a more measured approach to what the community expects and what Council can reasonably contribute to. There was also a sense that many of the themes/areas and initiatives could be consolidated into a few common streams as there were issues that cut across a number of the themes.

The Panel articulated that Council should focus on addressing cross-cutting issues to drive multiple outcomes and enhance the value and benefits from individual projects, for example, beautification and upgrade of the Dumaresq Creeklands could not only improve habitat for native flora and fauna and reduce flood risk but also act as a tourism driver and provide enhanced sporting and recreation infrastructure that could also improve health and wellbeing of the community.

They were asked **"One idea that you thought was great from the community contributions?"** This produced the following list of potential initiatives:

- Bus from the airport to city centre,
- Need for more cycleways/pedestrian access and facilities, particularly in new residential release areas where they should be considered part of the basic package of infrastructure,
- Sporting facilities/ water beautification – in conjunction with the creeklands upgrade,
- Agricultural production diversification,
- Creeklands – beautification/collective vision/multi uses,
- Tourism – enabling this as a theme,
- Engagement with the local Aboriginal community around creeklands etc,



- Tourism trails in Armidale using the rail line – Armidale to Glen Innes,
- Link between UNE and the city centre with UNE presence in the centre of Armidale,
- Attracting health services that bulk bill,
- Promote businesses in town (airport, etc.),
- Need to broaden and diversify employment opportunities that are available.
- Council diversifying income sources such as through recycling/waste,
- Focused/strategic promotion and branding for the area (demographically targeting – families to promote quality of schooling (for example) and to retirees – visitor attraction strategy),
- Environmental protection - linking open space – wildlife corridors – bike plans and koala reserves,
- Carbon sequestration – plant more trees, grasses, agriculture and more sustainable approaches,
- Expand on the climate emergency declaration,
- Supporting the ideas around initiatives for diversifying the local employment, particularly for lower skilled occupations,
- Increasing security of water supply – minimising evaporation, recycled water, preserving town trees,
- Aquatic centre/recreational area – using UNE and the creeklands corridor, and
- Ideas to incentivise a more diverse range of industry and employment opportunities, particularly for a range of skilled and unskilled occupations. This might include reverse trade missions for small-medium enterprises and industry (that is bringing potential industries to Armidale to see what we offer).

The discussion following this session was around the desire for the Panel to see Council advancing some concrete projects that have been in the pipeline for some time such as the creeklands upgrade, the rail trail or addressing the issues for the city centre/ Mall. The panel members wanted to see Council make a start on at least one of these to give the community confidence that meaningful action is being taken to secure the Armidale Region's long-term future.

### 7.2.2 Growth scenarios and spatial structure

A key aim of the draft Plan is to facilitate orderly growth aligned with community needs and aspirations. The Panel indicated a strong desire to give their view on their aspirations for the Armidale Region's growth.

The Panel was advised that, along with Tamworth, Armidale Region is one of only two LGAs in the New England North West region projected to grow over the next 15 to 20 years, and that other LGAs in the region are facing slight or significant reductions in population with flow on impacts for housing, employment, service and infrastructure delivery.

The Panel was provided with an overview of current plans to facilitate housing and employment growth around the city of Armidale envisaged by the New England North West Regional Plan. The plan identifies locations to the west, north, and east for new large lot and low density residential development and industrial areas, including at Armidale Regional Airport.

During this session, the Panel were provided with a range of other information about development constraints and opportunities for Armidale Region including:

- The large area of land across the LGA that is bushfire prone, and in particular the outlying towns and small villages, and the role of the city of Armidale as an emergency centre in the event of large bushfire/s,

- The significant amount of prime agricultural land that contributes over half the Gross Regional Product. And the significant amount of land surrounding outlying towns and villages that is zoned for primary production uses,
- Recent initiatives to secure the water supply, such as the Malpas Dam to Guyra Pipeline, and the community's recent efforts to conserve water through behaviour change, and
- Large areas of protected open space and important recreational facilities associated with Guyra Town Centre (such as the Mother of Ducks Lagoon) and a number of outlying villages.

The Panel was interested in understanding and called on professional advice on the 'optimal size' for a regional community such as Armidale. The Panel was advised there is no 'magic number' and planning for future development typically occurs using scenarios – such as 'reduction', 'no change', 'low growth', 'medium growth', and 'high growth' trajectories. These scenarios have different costs, benefits, and land use implications that need to be considered and balanced such as the costs of servicing new lots in outlying areas balanced against the revenue that could be generated from these new lots that could then be reinvested back into services and infrastructure. While providing different housing types can have the benefit of better meeting the housing needs of the community it can come at the cost of preserving an area's character.

During the discussions, panel members indicated they were keen to ensure the ongoing viability of Guyra and outlying villages, as these provide vital services such as schools and community facilities. It was also recognised that large lot rural residential living is important to the region's identity and 'sense of place'. However, the Panel considered residential expansion in these areas may represent an economically unsustainable settlement model as they are located at the fringes of the city of Armidale, a long distance from existing major facilities, roads and service infrastructure.

The Panel considered the current planned development patterns of outward expansion of Armidale did not reflect their aspirations for environmental and economic sustainability. They generally agreed the development pattern should be focused 'inwards not outwards' and that more intensive development (consolidation and infill) in the city of Armidale would result in less land take and more efficient use of services and infrastructure. The Panel considered the potential implications of a more consolidated settlement pattern, such as the potential for the character of Armidale to change, but agreed the benefits outweighed the negatives.

The Panel felt more compact urban living would not only be more environmentally and economically sustainable, but also support the social sustainability of the Armidale region by providing housing that better meets the needs of an increasing population of older people who are looking to downsize in the area, but have faced difficulties finding the right housing, as well as students looking to live closer to services and facilities offered in the Armidale CBD.

Three potential growth scenarios for the Armidale LGA were put to the Panel:

- A. Low growth as per the current situation,
- B. Aspirational growth of 2-3 %, and
- C. High growth.

Input was sought and collated from each Panel member around the question of "What would need to be present to have this growth scenario occur?" The responses to this

question included the following. Note the responses in bold type were the key issues identified by the groups with respect to each scenario:

LOW GROWTH (1-2%, current)	ASPIRATIONAL (2-3%)	HIGH GROWTH (>3%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More housing space is required if single dwellings or more density of housing,</b></li> <li>• <b>Investment in transport, council services, childcare, health, housing, new developments don't stress infrastructure,</b></li> <li>• Evidence that basic services can be improved,</li> <li>• Not at expense of villages,</li> <li>• <b>Maintain small schools,</b></li> <li>• <b>Council level of efficiency to go up,</b></li> <li>• Grant funding is available,</li> <li>• Social welfare will continue to support the region,</li> <li>• <b>Reduce reliance on public sector jobs,</b> and</li> <li>• Employment opportunities available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Infrastructure – water, STP, Transport (all),</b></li> <li>• <b>Jobs available (security)/ diversification of employment – attract industry,</b></li> <li>• Re-zoning of land? (Appropriate) including infill development, retain fauna corridors/green spaces and commercial,</li> <li>• <b>Safeguarding character of communities,</b></li> <li>• Spreading growth across region including centres of excellence and decentralised/suburban clusters,</li> <li>• Collaborations with other LGAs/State – shared services,</li> <li>• Access to health services/childcare/schools/ aged care,</li> <li>• <b>Cohesive council with resources (human &amp; financial),</b></li> <li>• <b>Promotion – sell lifestyle, businesses, jobs, environment,</b></li> <li>• Self-sufficiency, e.g., energy/water,</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities enhanced,</li> <li>• Affordable housing &amp; proximity to services, and</li> <li>• Tourist destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Character of town/region maintained - lifestyle/greenspace,</b></li> <li>• <b>Incentives for business,</b></li> <li>• Grow infrastructure &amp; accommodation,</li> <li>• Communication infrastructure,</li> <li>• Improved transport infrastructure - Access to markets, Traffic management, Integrated, Public transport improved,</li> <li>• Marketing,</li> <li>• <b>Water security,</b></li> <li>• Increased cultural development,</li> <li>• <b>Not sacrifice current lifestyle,</b></li> <li>• Get grants/funding,</li> <li>• Parking,</li> <li>• More high-density residences,</li> <li>• <b>Ensure natural heritage values are protected,</b></li> <li>• Ensure resources from all levels of government to fund growth,</li> <li>• <b>Social infrastructure – health/childcare facilities/aged care,</b></li> <li>• <b>Guyra becomes new Armidale,</b></li> <li>• Support growth in villages/towns,</li> <li>• <b>Demand for better governance and have a plan/ alignment/ focus/ group buy in/ execute plan,</b></li> <li>• Communicate/continuity,</li> <li>• Strategic vision,</li> <li>• Maintain current 'green' spaces,</li> <li>• Plan for growth,</li> <li>• Attract industry and big business,</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empower the community,</b></li> <li>• Preserve rail corridor/trail/creeklands/cycleway, and</li> <li>• <b>Aesthetically pleasing CBD</b></li> </ul>
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In response to the deliberations around these scenarios there was a strong preference for Council to work towards Scenario B – Aspirational Growth of 2-3%. While the Panel realised this may be ambitious and would require additional effort from Council they wanted to see Council working toward a growth scenario rather than the threat and risk of under-performance in meeting the current low growth trajectory represented by Scenario A.

### 7.2.3 The University of New England (UNE) – role and relationship

The UNE plays a vital role in the fabric of Armidale Region and representatives were invited to present UNE's future plans to the Panel. The presentation included a number of strategic initiatives underway around student enrolments, new facilities and management, renewable energy, and expansion of the UNE footprint to other locations across the New England North West region such as Tamworth.

The Panel felt the relationship between Council and UNE needs to be closer. The Panel expressed the view that currently the UNE sits on its own and considers the city of Armidale needs it, more than it needing the city. This was reflected in the Panel's concern that UNE's exploration of options to increase its presence in neighbouring Tamworth represents a threat to an economic strength of the area. It was also mentioned the quality of student accommodation was outdated and did not meet current needs, and Armidale requires more employment opportunities to encourage students to remain in the area during and after their studies.

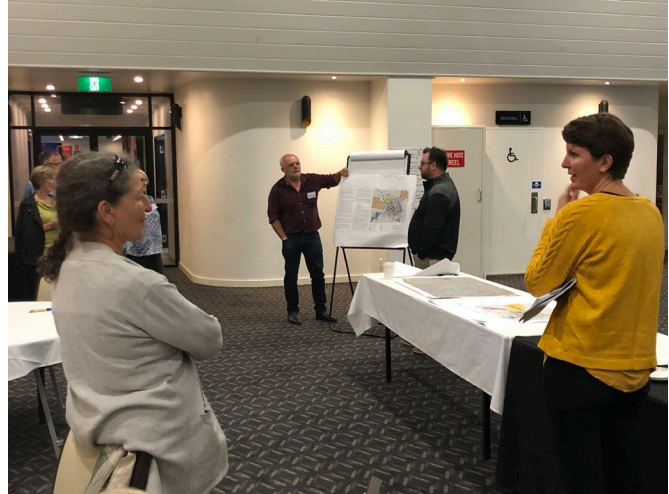
The Panel felt UNE needs to have a stronger presence in the city of Armidale and the location of its campus facilities on the fringe of the Armidale urban area diminishes the contribution it could make to the vibrancy of the CBD. There was agreement that UNE needs to have a physical presence in the centre of Armidale and that it would be a good idea to locate staff and information services in the Mall. Another suggestion was for the Court House to be used as a moot court for the large faculty of law students, which would further contribute to the city's vibrancy. The Panel felt these initiatives would increase the use of the Mall and attract other retailers to establish there because of increased foot traffic.

### 7.2.4 Spatial structure and transport

The final set of land use issues considered by the Panel was the spatial structure, particularly transport connections, for the Armidale Region. The Panel were presented with a map of opportunities and constraints across the LGA prepared by CM+ as part of the background planning studies. Drawing on the deliberations so far, the Panel considered which areas they would prioritise for land use action, particularly transport corridors. Overall, the Panel's focus for the LGA spatial structure was urban consolidation within the city of Armidale, rather than continued outward expansion through large lot rural residential.

The Panel also identified the eastern transport corridor to Ebor along Waterfall Way, which has been heavily impacted by recent weather events, should also be a focus, as this is a main route to accessing scenic natural areas to the east in the Great Diving Range that are valuable assets and could be better promoted as tourism opportunities.

Using the opportunity and constraint maps to draw attention to important transport connections across the LGA, the Panel indicated that the priority corridors for Council to focus on are the main northern, eastern, and southern roads out of Armidale city, connecting to places such as Guyra, Uralla, and Ebor. These roads are considered important contributors to the ongoing viability of towns and villages along them. The Panel also felt the vibrancy of some of the outlying towns and villages, such as Guyra, could be enhanced through initiatives such as a Main Street



The Panel argued Council should focus on existing industrial areas within the city of Armidale, as well as through the Airport Master Plan, with a particular focus on encouraging a broad range of employment opportunities particularly for blue collar workers through a more diverse industrial base. The Panel also suggested Council should consider more direct links between freight traffic and logistics centres and hub within the city of Armidale, such as the airport and postal sorting base.

#### 7.2.5 Messages from Panel members to Council

Panel members were asked individually what key message they wanted Council to hear. Panel members spoke to some of the discussion that has already been outlined in this report. Also, there was discussion about the need for community education on how the Council works. Some were looking for a more entrepreneurial Council. Panel members reiterated the outcomes of the growth scenarios and the need for employment growth and jobs.

Several panel members reiterated the need for Council to commence action, on one or more of the projects that it has commenced as studies or master plans. In addition each person was asked to offer their one message for the elected Councillors, with the understanding this would be reported in the session with Councillors that followed the end of the Panel.

They contributed the following:

- The need for water security particularly for Guyra, and my kids,
- Council to be focused on the 'plan' with achievements and quick wins – important for community morale,
- Bike tracks and green space are important to be included in new development,
- Sustainability should flow across all decisions,
- Encourage infill as appropriate new development,
- Don't restrict thinking – think BIG and get runs on the board,
- Make better use of our existing assets,
- Share the vision, be ambitious, deliver on the plan,
- Relocate tourism information into to CBD and open it on weekend,
- Work on relationship with UNE towards coming together,
- Release and action the CBD and creek reports,



- Need for absolute focus, sense of urgency, internal alignment,
- Improve community engagement /coordination of activities,
- Facilitate growth with good health and transport services,
- What are Armidale’s possibilities? Lifeboat on a planet – share the love, show what we love,
- Build on existing strong foundations of community – economic, environment, social – future generations (kids),
- Tell our good story, and
- Seize the opportunity of the rail trail.



## 8. Panel recommendations

In the final whole-of-group session, the Panel reviewed its discussions and potential points of agreement. Panel members were advised the concluding statements would be put to Council as part of the outcomes of the Panel.

After this session, each panel member had an additional opportunity to articulate their own message about the future of the Armidale Region, that was then conveyed to Council.

Based on this session and the sessions over the two days there was agreement on:

- The common goals that should drive the plan are Sustainability (environmental, economic, and social), Diversified Employment, Culture and Belonging, and Health and Wellbeing,
- There is strong support for an aspirational, medium growth scenario as the potential under-performance on a low growth scenario and reliance on existing economic strengths was considered to be a threat to the Armidale Region’s future.

Other points which the Panel indicated the plan should consider included the desire that there be:

- A spatial structure and settlement pattern that protects existing large lot rural residential in outlying towns and villages, whilst consolidating new housing within the existing urban area of the city of Armidale. It was considered that this strikes a balance that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

- A focus on supporting the continued viability of outlying towns and villages by improving essential services and infrastructure, main street vibrancy, and transport connections to these locations.
- Acknowledgement that while agriculture and education are the Armidale Region's existing economic strengths, relying too heavily on these represents a threat to the area.
- Economic diversification and a viable third pillar to the local economy. Whilst there are a number of initiatives and potential opportunities in tourism, health care and social assistance, and transport and logistics industries, the Panel did not consider these are presently robust enough to form a viable third pillar.
- A sophisticated approach from ARC to assessing opportunities for future industry development and economic diversification. They considered that key to this is attracting industries that provide the full spectrum of jobs, particularly lower skilled occupations.

## 9. Next stage

A report of all stages of the consultation including the Citizen Panel will be made available to Council alongside the final Armidale Regional 2040 Plan.

The Plan will then be placed on public exhibition to provide a further opportunity for the community to provide comment and make submissions in regard to the draft Plan. This document will encompass the outcomes of the consultation with the public, including how this input shaped the Plan.

All those contributing to the consultation through Your Say Armidale and those participating in the Citizen Panel will be notified about the public exhibition of the Plan.





## **APPENDIX A**

### **Community Input to the 10 Themes**

## Summary of Consultation contribution to the themes via the Your Say Armidale and Café Sessions

### General

In addition to the contributions about the themes there was concern about:

- Lack of participation of senior staff in the consultation.
- Feeling that there are plenty of ideas and need for more action and achievements.
- Need for greater scrutiny on Council expenditure - lost investments, high salaries.
- The need for a good urban design strategy for the CBD that focusses on opportunities to improve connections and activation of dead areas
- The plan needing to be based on Principles identified: duty of care to ensure safety to our residents, declaration of climate change emergency to inform all planning, social justice at the heart of decisions, fiscal responsibility and risk management, preparation for things that are likely to occur and enough flexibility to deal with unexpected change.
- The need for this plan to have clear targets and performance indicators and be based on those that can be achieved and that would provide the greatest benefit.
- The need for more short-term strategies to cope with the many unforeseen events.
- The need for community-wide involvement in regional planning and need for tangible action from that involvement.
- Suggestion of the addition of themes including: service supply, environments for start-up enterprises, finance issues such as a local venture capital fund, age related themes, learning about impending technologies, creation of a local culture termed evolvagility or agile technologies.
- Concern that the airport and industrial area will be sold off with little benefit to the community.

Category Titles	Comment Categories (times mentioned)	Issues Raised (times mentioned)
<b>1.Growth Economic &amp; Employment</b>	1a. Extending the Rail Line (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourist rail – Armidale to Glen Innes</li> <li>• Don't turn the line to Brisbane &amp; Toowoomba into a cycle track</li> <li>• Steam train between Tenterfield and Uralla</li> <li>• Fast track the new Rail Trail from Armidale to Ben Lomond</li> </ul>
	1b. Rail Trail between Armidale and Glen Innes. Great for the area, economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike trail along the disused and closed rail line</li> <li>• National and international studies show there are ongoing and growing economic and employment benefits from rail trails.</li> </ul>

	and accommodation providers (3)	
	1c. Make the Mall affordable for business (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iconic regional architecture is being dominated by Centro and Coles</li> <li>• There are many vacant properties</li> <li>• Town has been polarised by the location of Coles and Woolworths</li> <li>• Premises should be rent free until business becomes permanent – these fair trade arrangements exist in Sydney</li> </ul>
	1d. The importance of the Mall as central to the community and need for refurbishment (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mall remains the best place to create a feeling of community</li> <li>• Library, NERAM and Post Office could be a catalyst for a more vibrant community</li> <li>• Revitalise three malls by creating a similar theme and a shared access for central mall and encourage residential premises above the CBD businesses</li> <li>• Popular family friendly events should be held in the Mall such as Christmas, Autumn Festival, Multicultural food markets</li> <li>• Where are we up to in the redesign of the mall in close consultation with stakeholders? Things have been very quiet since the upheaval a few years ago. Meanwhile the mall is looking so sad. Another well-known business is about to leave.</li> <li>• Arrange for a pop-up restaurant in the mall on Friday/Saturday nights with food cooked by refugee/ multi cultural students</li> <li>• Beardsley Street Mall is a relaxed location with the wrong venues and look and feel</li> <li>• Renew Armidale Plan had many good ideas when the community opposed restoring traffic in the Mall - The Mall looked very sad during Christmas-New Year</li> </ul>
	1e. Do something about East Mall (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get rid of the ghastly traffic calming</li> <li>• Parking is impossible (2)</li> <li>• Extend the parking times</li> <li>• Straighten out the road (3)</li> <li>• Get rid of the lame mini parks</li> <li>• Rents are too high (2)</li> <li>• Where is the mall renovation and where are the millions of dollars that were on the table to fund it?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council is seen to sit on its hands for all things progressive in this city with the solution “let’s make a future plan”, try a present one</li> <li>• The mall is about to lose its two anchor tenants</li> <li>• East mall can be used in a movie as a post holocaust scene</li> </ul>
	1f. Need a secure water supply / water security (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve residential quality of life and attract business</li> <li>• Need to change citizen’s water use habits- current effort commendable (2)</li> <li>• Increasing the height of Malpas Dam won’t achieve anything if there isn’t any rain in the catchment. Need to think laterally</li> <li>• needs to be a priority for economic and employment growth</li> <li>• modern abattoir and horticulture need this for their establishment</li> <li>• Need multi-dimensional approach E.g., improved dam storage, increase domestic water tanks, increase flushless urinals, increase water reuse, drought resistant plants</li> <li>• One strategy regarding water is to harvest water from another higher rainfall catchment with a different rainfall pattern such as the Styx River</li> <li>• Investigate using recycled water for businesses such as car wash, cleaning and gardening (3) - -if used for the activities of the Council it would add to the water security of the town</li> </ul>
	1g. Relocation of facilities to be more central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NERAM and Library relocation to CBD (2)</li> <li>• Consolidate retailers and develop office/business space in CBD (2)</li> <li>• Easy parking is needed (3)</li> <li>• Peel St Tamworth is always busy and bustling</li> <li>• Pedestrian movements need to be permeable in shopping centres</li> <li>• Increase housing density near Mall - -Allowing units above shops fronting the Mall and above car parks adjacent to the Mall</li> </ul>
	1h. Growth is required for survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armidale has excellent secondary and tertiary education and a good hospital</li> <li>• Expand population to the maximum size permitted by the water supply</li> <li>• Increase the capacity of Malpas Dam and adapt to increasing erratic rainfall</li> <li>• Poor air quality in winter from wood fires</li> <li>• A “dead” centre</li> <li>• Encourage use of the Mall in the evenings</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't allow new shopping centres</li> <li>• Promote Armidale as an education/research centre</li> <li>• Lasting growth will only come through job creation and appealing socio/environmental attributes.</li> <li>• Uralla is busy on Saturdays and Sundays because the shops are open all weekend</li> </ul>
	1i. Jobs, growth and climate protection and make New England the Next Renewable Energy Zone (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New England is a leading contender to become the next REZ given the shortlisting by the Federal Government of UPC Renewables-Armidale-Renewable Pumped Hydro</li> <li>• Council's Strategy should have as a priority to take advantage of the REZ's low-cost energy with innovative projects</li> <li>• Acquire regional arrangements for recycled materials with surrounding Councils and utilise for economic purposes.</li> <li>• Establish businesses using our recycled materials to make useful products. The leading engineering team at UNSW should be able to assist</li> </ul>
	1j. Promote Armidale in capital cities to attract settlement, also improve connectivity with Sydney and Brisbane (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract soon to be retirees and young couples</li> <li>• Advertise in local newspapers in Sydney suburbs, seminars in UNE campus. Need to attract businesses and people to Armidale</li> </ul>
	1k. Create Business/Tourism /Park Activities (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host quality sporting and music events</li> <li>• Business development staff should understand this</li> <li>• Labyrinth Trail as a tourist attraction</li> <li>• Annual medieval steampunk historical re-enactor event with dedicated venue – these have grown in popularity - a major event similar to Ironfest/St Ives Medieval Fair etc.</li> <li>• Consider allowing the old Court House to be used by the New England Art Society for an easily accessible Gallery and for cultural / community events</li> <li>• A ground level gallery would be a great drawcard in the Mall</li> <li>• Upgrade the parkland facilities in the centre of town</li> </ul>
	1l. Integrated Dumaresq Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River care, landscape elements, plantings, recreation spaces/facilities</li> </ul>

	beautification plan (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the central axis of Armidale a living, watery environment will greatly enhance the attractiveness of the highest city in the nation</li> <li>• Annual “Sculpture by the Creek” exhibition and include Black Gully Creek and other watercourses similar to Bondi 'Sculpture by the Sea' - have an annual or biannual major sculpture contest. Sculpture entries could also be for sale. The contest would be held along the creeklands. In time a body of sculpture works could adorn our town.</li> </ul>
	1m. More links between UNE & Town (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public lectures and workshops to the public, schools, TAFEs.</li> <li>• Cooperation between UNE and Council</li> </ul>
	1n. Armidale as a digital hotspot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalise on having good NBN service in town. Exploit opportunities</li> </ul>
	1o. Climate Emergency Declaration to inform all Council business decisions (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council’s declaration on 23 October 2019 which was unanimously passed should be central to Council’s budgetary considerations and priorities.</li> <li>• There should be plans for climate impacts that will affect future growth - The Armidale Regional Plan 2040 should incorporate actions and principles to address the Climate Emergency. (2)</li> </ul>
	1p. Encourage various small business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many businesses come and go too quickly, e.g., do we need more hairdressers?</li> <li>• Offer incentives to small business/light industry including the airport industrial park</li> <li>• Prospective small business needs assistance with market research and business plans and incentives (2)</li> <li>• Promote online shopping with local businesses on Armidale website</li> <li>• Astrotourism (3) – generates jobs and income</li> </ul>
	1q. Street art including murals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armidale and Guyra retail areas will benefit through more tourist traffic visiting these centres if there is more street art and murals.</li> <li>• There are significant and ongoing grants for this purpose.</li> </ul>
	1r. Sports Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A year-round indoor fitness centre located at Monkton Aquatic Centre (3) it would provide jobs and centrally located activities for families – especially in winter</li> <li>• Need for an indoor aquatic and sports centre and a big super park, bigger than at Tamworth</li> <li>• Synthetic running track with UNE and schools – can attract many events</li> </ul>
	1s. Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armidale has the infrastructure and local skills for a large IT industry.</li> </ul>

	Technology Powerhouse (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage decentralisation from capitals</li> </ul>
	1t. Broaden employments opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry/manufacturing jobs for young people who want to work but don't want to go to Uni- push State Government to beef up local TAFE/Apprenticeships.</li> <li>• A focus must be directed to non-tertiary required business also - We can't just be a 'high-end' educated city</li> <li>• The best prospects for job creation lie in non-geographic specific occupations/professions</li> <li>• We need to get families here.</li> </ul>
	1u. Increase rate base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase rates paid by local religious and educational institutions (or their business premises and housing). Armidale need a greater rate base</li> </ul>
	1v. Ensure new policies do not support unbridled growth – should be based on planning (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With attention to impact on infrastructure: schools, water, sewerage and recycling</li> <li>• Impact on emissions</li> <li>• Availability of appropriate jobs</li> <li>• Support new businesses that are appropriate for the community and environment</li> </ul>
	1w. Services for Guyra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping services - Workers at the Tomato farm go to Armidale twice weekly. They should shop in Guyra</li> <li>• Guyra needs an entertainment complex - -Hall is too small and Lazenby it too often unavailable</li> <li>• Local abattoir - only after the two dams (Malpas and Guyra)</li> </ul>
	1x. Site for Nuclear Power Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a site for a GENTV nuclear power plant</li> </ul>
	1y. Economic leakages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify economic leakages to corporations from the area and way to local resilience</li> </ul>
	1z. Retain Kolora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Kolora and run as a B&amp;B for itinerant/seasonal workers</li> </ul>
<b>2. Education</b>	2a. Public schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our public schools need a steady injection of full-time positions for new teacher graduates A good mix of experienced and new teachers would be great</li> <li>• Super school - Loss of identity, big city response to education</li> <li>• Retain small schools where possible</li> </ul>
	2b. Energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentives for educational institutions to reduce and become more efficient in water and energy usage and recycling of waste</li> </ul>



	2c. General improvement of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic approach to pre-primary, primary, secondary, UNE/TAFE</li> <li>• The future education and wellbeing of our children is our most important asset</li> <li>• Growth should not outstrip excellent educational opportunities for all our residents</li> <li>• Education should be ongoing with strong adult programs and retraining opportunities</li> <li>• Continue the close links to Tamworth</li> <li>• It's a long way to get to the Library with no transport. A library centre in East Armidale</li> </ul>
	2d. TAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby State Government to strengthen TAFE and increase range of offerings, including excellent English as a second language programs (2)</li> <li>• Fix TAFE</li> </ul>
	2e. Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By being more transparent, and sharing plans with the community, Council can help to educate people about the value of the commons and our joint responsibility</li> <li>• Our association plans to launch a competition (with substantial cash prizes) for primary and secondary students in 2020 to submit their class ideas for beautification, water health, urban design, bridge design, social amenity, sporting facilities, recreation facilities etc.</li> <li>• Our list of suggestions for potential research projects has been shared with academic staff at UNE.</li> <li>• More regular engagement strategies such as this to gain everyone's input and to provide real engagement (council staff and councillors)</li> </ul>
	2f. UNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNE online Vs campus - On campus best, encourages college culture.</li> <li>• Changing technology is great but takes away the social/human interaction</li> <li>• Less student in town with trimester changes</li> <li>• A better presence of UNE within the town centre - -A second campus in the old town centre or airport.</li> <li>• Promote college life</li> </ul>
	2g. Training for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with private businesses to help create training hubs for the youth of the city and keep more of the young in the area</li> </ul>
<b>3. Health</b>	3a. Health services for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a higher proportion of seniors than the State or national average - More assistance will be needed for local seniors to attend specialist appointments/hospitals in Tamworth, Newcastle and capitals</li> <li>• Reduce the 3.6year life expectancy gap-New England NW vs Sydney -The master plan should</li> </ul>

		<p>identify all causes that reduce life expectancy by more than 6 months and present detailed strategies to solve the problem as a matter of urgency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to plan for another aged care/nursing home</li> </ul>
	3b. Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armidale needs affordable Bulk Billing GPs</li> <li>• Those without a pension or health card have to pay \$42.50 out of pocket to visit a GP</li> </ul>
	3c. More opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sporting opportunities to improve physical and mental health Council should be working more closely with local sporting clubs to increase participation, we know that those who play sport have better physical and mental health</li> <li>• Armidale should be known as the sporting capital of Regional NSW</li> <li>• Region could be a health promoting community where residents take responsibility for personal health - -Council needs to work collaboratively with other organisations to create, promote and encourage an environment that supports individuals' preventative health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
	3d. Defibrillator kits for outlying communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like the HeartSine 500P for example; tells you what to do and if you're doing it properly</li> </ul>
	3e. Hospital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a Quiet Garden at the Armidale Hospital to promote wellbeing through nature's beauty There is space at the front which would perfectly suit a garden. Some hospitals even have labyrinths for mindfulness and quiet reflection</li> <li>• Ensure enough staff to cope with demand</li> <li>• More staff in emergency at the hospital</li> <li>• -Find parking for hospital. Purchasing adjoining land to put additional parking in</li> </ul>
	3f. Specific facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Labyrinth-</b> Promote use of the labyrinth in Civic Park for mental health among the general community and among people with mental health issues - Labyrinth walking is a calming, reflective practice that allows the mind to be stilled.</li> <li>• <b>Armidale to Glen Innes Rail Trail (2)</b>-Provides for healthy family oriented recreational activity and as a fitness option -Once completed it will undoubtedly be extended to Tenterfield and across into Queensland</li> <li>• <b>More get fit/come and try promotions</b></li> <li>• <b>Encourage walking/cycling to work</b> - make it a lot safer, particularly cycling, to get to work each day without resorting to motor vehicles - Cycling and walking are excellent methods of keeping fit,</li> </ul>

		<p>without having to outlay lots of money (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fitness equipment trail</b> - Could we please have a fitness equipment trail, such as in Guyra?</li> <li>• -Equipment stations could be provided along the creek parklands</li> <li>• <b>Improve parks</b> - Continue to improve parks, footpaths; add street trees and seating. More common spaces for active and passive community purposes (2) - -This has climate mitigation benefits as well as health</li> <li>• <b>Walking trails, maps, benches, shade trees and tables in parks</b> (4) – to encourage walking that improves health.</li> <li>• <b>Increasing safety for bikes by providing more cycle paths and road signs</b> (3) - Encourage cycling, both recreational and as a mode of transport. Ensure motorists and cyclists are aware of road rules -Walking and cycling paths should be required in all new developments.</li> <li>• <b>The hydrotherapy pool had been talked about</b> - where have those plans gone? (2) - Idea to purchase land on the corner of Rusden St and Markham St on the east side</li> <li>• <b>Creek land facilities</b> -The health of the broader community will also benefit from more development of recreational and sporting facilities along the creeklands</li> </ul>
	3g. Introduce incentives and policies that promote or ensure energy, water and waste efficiency of health facilities (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes that are effective in bringing about greater efficiency could make a substantial difference</li> </ul>

	3h. Environment and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council has a duty of care to ensure we live in a healthy thriving community -Proper monitoring of air quality is critical and must be made available to the community</li> <li>• To ensure safe water: adequately fund vigilant water monitoring while maintaining a viable water supply</li> <li>• Maintenance and increase of street trees and park vegetation helps to make our air healthier</li> <li>• Protecting the environment, reducing pollution and waste were priorities for the community throughout the consultation for the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 - Of particular concern to some was wood smoke pollution, and the impact this is having on the local air quality, which is said to have exceeded National Air Quality Standards on multiple occasions in recent times (3)</li> <li>• Council should lobby the NSW Government for funds to remedy the problem as a matter of urgency</li> </ul>
	3i. Consider better controls on night time lighting, recent research links light at night to several diseases	
<b>4. Tourism</b>	4a. Fishing based tourism (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dumaresq Dam proposal was a good start, though it is a little small to cope with high levels of fishing pressure unless regularly re-stocked</li> <li>• Could something be done about Gara, Malpas or Puddledock dams -Copeton is a stand-out example.</li> <li>• Work with the local fishing club (St Kilda Fishing Club) the DPI and Tourism NSW to make this happen</li> <li>• Dumaresq Dam – Bass Hotspot -Developing this would bring locals and tourists to the dam and our region subject to fish stocking, canoe and bank fishing only, a jetty was built and further development for recreational pursuits</li> </ul>
	4b. Sporting and musical events as an attraction/ destination (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armidale should be pushing strongly for world class sporting events such as NRF Fixture (see what Mudgee has done)</li> <li>• 2020 Cricket Fixture (see Coffs Harbour)</li> <li>• NSW Golf Open or the like – Armidale Golf Club is a hidden gem</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in a state of the art music/theatre venue would help too (2)</li> <li>• Endurance events - -Endurance events through the local national parks, farmland and city, highlighting what the region has to offer e.g. Wynyard to Tasmania</li> <li>• Music events</li> <li>• Black Gully Festival Armidale Show</li> <li>• Holding a back to Armidale week/weekend maybe over Easter break.- Especially since we allowed the Peter Allen Festival to slip through our fingers</li> <li>• The three-year contract for Tenterfield expires this year - Imagine.</li> <li>• Medieval/Renaissance/Steampunk Faires have grown in popularity in Australia following on from the US. Link it to a rail trip with package them accommodation and Armidale would emerge as a more significant drawcard with a difference.</li> </ul>
	4c. Specific Tourism/ cultural facilities and promotion of the beautiful environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourist labyrinth trail linking Armidale and Dorrigo labyrinths -This would attract a growing number of people from around the world who use labyrinths as a meditative and reflective practice</li> <li>• Promote the parklands along Dumaresq Creek as a tourist destination. Continue to enhance creek lands by supporting native revegetation (3)</li> <li>• Armidale creeklands are an attractive and special feature of our city and attract</li> <li>• Cyclist numbers using this trail have grown exponentially</li> <li>• Tourism/bus trips to creekland/revegetation walks, interpretation/bird watching/enhanced habitat</li> <li>• National Parks, a key tourist attraction. Promote walking trails, camping and picnic areas</li> <li>• Dumaresq Dam (2)</li> <li>• University grounds</li> <li>• Promote parks further afield: New England, Wollomombi, Cathedral Rocks, Ebor Falls etc</li> <li>• Bike tracks and walking tracks to make areas more accessible - Improved signage and interpretation</li> <li>• Develop the Castledoye Road (to Bloohole) further with a footpath/cycle way</li> <li>• The Armidale Keeping Place and Cultural Centre</li> <li>• NERAM</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other art galleries</li> <li>• NECOM</li> <li>• Promote restaurants, live music venues, lively concerts</li> <li>• Development of a tourist trail to mark both natural and constructed landmarks. Signposts, such as this one from Tenterfield could celebrate the region's heritage/history in an attractive informative way</li> <li>• Need a Peter Allen statue in the mall- draw crowds to mall</li> <li>• Promote world local heritage national parks</li> <li>• Deer farming as a tourist attraction</li> </ul>
	4d. Be prepared for the inevitable electric vehicles (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council needs to ensure Armidale has a supply of EV charge stations, to encourage tourists driving battery-powered vehicles to stop in Armidale -Armidale is a black spot for charging stations.</li> </ul>
	4e. Marketing Armidale to the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special packages can be developed by Armidale travel agents for short term visits</li> <li>• A paid tour service to show them around in the town and outskirts</li> <li>• Emphasis should be on our beautiful natural environment, particularly the gorge country and National Parks</li> <li>• Work with State tourism bodies more closely, to broaden the reach of the city</li> </ul>
	4f. University based tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNE could re-visit their very successful Summer Schools, of residential workshops in specialist arts activities</li> </ul>
	4g. Armidale to Glen Innes Rail Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and international rail trails and walking and cycle trails provide increased tourism opportunities/ employment (2)</li> <li>• In New Zealand they provide opportunities for rural landowners to diversify their incomes and provide increased employment - Mt Cook to Oamaru bicycle trail in New Zealand has led to purpose built cabins, cafes and restaurants, tour guide and bicycle hire companies</li> </ul>
	4h. Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote our healthy lifestyle, good clinics and hospitals and medical school</li> </ul>
	4i. Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby to improve train travel by decreasing travel time to Sydney</li> <li>• Lobby State and Federal governments for an elevated 4 land highway from Dorrigo to Coffs Harbour, with upgraded lead in highway</li> <li>• Free bus Sydney-Armidale funded by real estate and council</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airport to CBD bus</li> <li>• Walking/cycling connection to airport</li> <li>• Keep Armidale airport in public ownership and develop with view of increasing/facilitating tourism, including from overseas</li> </ul>
	4j. Natural features and working with residents to promote tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the four seasons aspect of Armidale, with flower festivals in spring and autumn colour festivals</li> <li>• ARC's investment in educating the community in the values of our wildlife habitats would see direct benefits.</li> <li>• Council previously gave away copies of the Family Outings Around Armidale booklet but did not fund production of a new edition</li> <li>• WHG suggestion that ARC have a native floral emblem and a native animal emblem and work to protect these species in the wild</li> <li>• ARC could work with other local councils, Southern New England Landcare, Armidale National Parks Association, other community groups, Local Land Services, Armidale Tree Group and other managers of Crown Land to identify opportunities for collaborative promotion particularly to residents but also to tourists, of natural areas and sustainably managed rural lands. (2)</li> <li>• It is clear from our investigations of other cities and towns with water as a focus that they are attractive to tourists.</li> <li>• Think very carefully before putting our beautiful city on severe levels of water restrictions – surely council must realise the importance of parks and gardens for tourism</li> </ul>
<b>5. Arts, Culture and Social</b>	5a. Facilities/ services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a decent performing arts facility (2)-The town hall is an abomination and embarrassment.- need to travel to Tamworth to see most things</li> <li>• Armidale needs a public theatre (3) - -Arpac has worked hard at this and is willing to help contribute</li> <li>• Open the railway line north of Armidale of weekend/holiday excursion trains to coincide with special regional events</li> <li>• The old courthouse should be made available for cultural/community events – ideal location and sits there unused</li> <li>• Review the plans for the Armidale Civic Precinct (2) – good idea not adopted by Council - by 2040 we need a world class performance venue in operation - has all the elements needed for breathing</li> </ul>



		<p>life back into the Mall - the plan can be reviewed if Council is looking for ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A train with café between Tamworth and Glen Innes - get an old train compartment with a café running between these two locations with stops in Armidale to attract visitors to the town</li> <li>• Ensure NERAM is adequately funded</li> <li>• Ensure continued funding for the Aboriginal Keeping Place</li> <li>• Encourage investigations of the possibility of an outdoor performance space or amphitheatre within the creeklands precinct</li> <li>• Reopen old theatre in Guyra that recently became vacant</li> <li>• Utilising Guyra showground / pavilions for youth services / entertainment, skating, music etc</li> </ul>
	5b. Events/ Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera New England was a terrific summer event that was well supported -I reinstate it, preferably in its own performing arts centre – the venues make these events terrible.</li> <li>• An artist (or writer) in residency project at the waste management centre would add creative community thinking to this very good place.</li> <li>• Develop a permanent outdoor sculpture exhibition connecting Aboriginal Keeping Place, NERAM, Black Gully and the Community Garden - -Perhaps an annual outdoor sculpture competition with City retaining winning sculpture</li> <li>• Support NECOM and local music events, e.g. Music a Viva, The Bach Festival, Black Gully Festival, and the many venues and pubs in town that support concerts.</li> <li>• Need for low cost entertainment</li> <li>• Maintain a strong arts, culture and social calendar on the Council website</li> <li>• Support for a City of the Arts strategy should be reinstated</li> <li>• -Institutions like the ACCKP, NERAM and NECOM are the envy of the nation</li> <li>• Levy developers to provide a public art fund</li> <li>• Things for youth in Guyra</li> <li>• Theatre group for young people</li> <li>• Dancing / art / crafts</li> </ul>
	5c.Promote Armidale as a City of the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have the best regional art gallery in NSW, an orchestra and extremely active theatre group</li> </ul>
	5d. Aboriginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erect memorial and recognition statues to the traditional owners</li> </ul>

	recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace reconciliation a 'la Myall Creeksite</li> <li>• Liaise with local Aboriginal community representatives and Council should share their view that the creeklands be recognised as an important area of significant cultural heritage for our first peoples. It may be appropriate to rename the creek to reflect its long use by Aboriginal people.</li> </ul>
	5e. Armidale natural features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Armidale's winter climate a point of celebration in promotion of the city – a winter wonderland</li> <li>• Everyone can connect with a starry night sky, one sky, one planet, one people. The night sky has been an inspiration for all cultures and needs to be preserved</li> <li>• Support our historic heritage and promote it, think NERAM and Saumarez</li> </ul>
<b>6. Housing</b>	6a. Architectural Style/ Council requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New housing should complement the Amidale unique heritage styles while incorporating water and energy efficiency (2)</li> <li>• No more substandard, mediocre, inappropriate and unattractive looking housing!</li> <li>• No more estates with small plots and unattractive looking dwellings</li> <li>• Poor quality/ eyesore of some housing renovation. How did it get through Council?</li> <li>• Lobby State Government to promote local variation in BASIX and to increase standards significantly</li> <li>• Specific technology for building new houses - Fastbrick Hadrian X Robotic construction</li> <li>• Accommodation / housing for tomato farm workers</li> <li>• Adaptable housing "lifetime homes"</li> </ul>
	6b. Planning / Council requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newer developments should be made to maintain trees</li> <li>• New LEP reflecting appropriate large lot zoning -The merging of the Armidale and Guyra LEPs has no focus on rectifying the restrictions on rural lifestyle and larger residential lot development</li> <li>• All new and old residential housing be required / given incentives to have a water tank (2) - installation of an additional rainwater tank enables creation of vegetable gardens and keep the garden alive despite water restrictions</li> <li>• Major housing developments should be close to employment to minimise travel (2)</li> <li>• Apply rigorous bushfire codes to all new property and renovations to ensure appropriate ventilation, while minimising possible inflow of poor air quality</li> <li>• Promote efficient lot sizes and dwelling types – not more foothills</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths for scooters etc</li> <li>• Environmentally sensitive housing</li> <li>• Building approvals need to exclude environmentally unsustainable architectural designs</li> <li>• Old and existing buildings need to be upgraded with water saving technology and solar power capture and storage</li> <li>• Property owners need to be required to upgrade the efficiency of rental properties</li> </ul>
	6c. Real estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement local governance for Armidale Real Estate Agents - competitions for listing amongst real estate agents is so high agents buy listing by over inflating price expectations to vendors and houses are listed for extended periods.</li> <li>• Ensure rental properties meet building codes and duty of care</li> </ul>
	6d. Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New, affordable disability housing for the disabled to live independently with dignity. Let's be a leader in the field. (2)</li> <li>• Affordable housing can and should complement the region as well as being environmentally sustainable in all ways.</li> <li>• Use "tiny house" technology to provide low cost entry-level housing for homeless people- Clusters of tiny houses can form informal communities, centred on a community space or garden to allow single people a sense of privacy, but connection with others</li> <li>• Foster more affordable housing, but ensure it is energy efficient with extensive insulation, good ventilation and efficient appliances</li> </ul>
	6e. Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past Council subsidised insulation in existing houses. Essential for reduction of energy use. Advocate this to State Government</li> <li>• Lobby other levels of government for energy efficient grants</li> <li>• ARC should promote and encourage the reduction of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in housing design, construction and renovation (3)</li> <li>• allocation of resources towards energy efficient housing design, construction, retrofitting and behavioural change could play a substantial role to reduce these emissions</li> <li>• Building regulations that require solar passive design</li> <li>• Solar electricity: water efficiency, water tank etc</li> <li>• What happened to solar lots for subdivisions?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened to council incentives for greener housing?</li> <li>• Don't allow houses to face the wrong way or with garages and laundries to the north and east</li> </ul>
	6f. Opportunity with the creekland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A boon for house prices when they have an overview of an attractive parkland with healthy waterways along the entire length of the city and beyond - Instead of fences, people will create bay windows overlooking the beautiful flowing water and birdlife of the creekland</li> </ul>
<b>7.Sport, Recreation &amp; Open Space</b>	7a. Creeklands Upgrade (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has happened following the community consultation a year ago? -What action is required to get it going?</li> <li>• The beautification of the Creeklands would be attractive to visitors and locals - for athletics and for walking, cycling, picnicking or just sitting and reading or talking or thinking (3)</li> <li>• Drought perhaps affected plantings but once there is enough rain the Creeklands should be actioned</li> <li>• Develop bike trails along the length of Dumaresq Creek from Dumaresq Dam all the way to Armidale and beyond to Blue Hole 16km to the south-east of the city.</li> <li>• Causeways would be better as attractive bridges (2), for example a bridge crossing just north of Centro especially if the creek were enlarged into a billabong or lake and moved north away from the new motel being built at the Ex-Services Club</li> <li>• Long cycle trails to avoid crossing busy roads</li> <li>• Example of Toowoomba Creek</li> </ul>
	7b. Facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A well designed exercise area</b> specifically for seniors</li> <li>• <b>The super park development</b>- Like Tamworth we need the super park developed in the Curtis Park area to bring visitors, provide recreation activity for local families, improve visitor numbers/foot traffic to retailers and cafes in the CBD</li> <li>• <b>AstroTurf all playing fields</b> -or maybe just some - AstroTurf now has taller pile systems using materials to better replicate natural turf</li> <li>• <b>Armidale city footpaths</b>. Have a plan over say 10 years to install safe concrete footpaths on at least one side of every street (2)</li> <li>• <b>Small outlying communities need</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exciting playgrounds for kids of all ages</li> <li>• more kid friendly spaces, e.g., Hillgrove.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How about a climbing frame like the one at MacDonald Park in town</li> <li>• Hillgrove has a spring rocker and a 2-seat swing for toddlers, nothing for bigger kids</li> <li>• safe places for kids to ride their BMX bikes and motorbikes</li> <li>• Multisport courts to encourage active lifestyles and foster skills in our future sporting stars</li> <li>• <b>Multisport courts</b> to play handball, basketball, tennis, soccer, practice with a hitting wall and hopscotch on the side. -Old tennis courts would be ideal conversion projects given the funding.</li> <li>• <b>Lambert Park needs facilities</b> for year-round use for sporting teams. Currently there are no change rooms or other amenities at the ground for the use of the home and away teams (2)</li> <li>• <b>Parks must be maintained</b> with more shade trees in summer with seating to allow people to get out of stuffy houses</li> <li>• <b>Maintain amenities: public toilets, shade, seating</b> (3)</li> <li>• <b>Sporting fields</b></li> <li>• in the future should be above the flood zone.</li> <li>• When drought is over must be brought back to previous condition</li> <li>• <b>Sports Council has a priority list</b> from \$2m to \$5,000-need more seating at most venues</li> <li>• <b>Improve car parking</b> (incl. RV's) at mother of ducks</li> <li>• <b>Bubblers in parks</b> - drinking fountains</li> <li>• <b>Permanent table tennis table in a park or the mall</b>-they are all over China</li> <li>• <b>Install a track around the lagoon in Guyra.</b></li> <li>• Raceway?</li> </ul>
	7c. Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a facility with proper motocross tracks for pee wees up to Junior MX - great for the community and attract riders and families from all over</li> </ul>
	7f. Council Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question about Council expenditure on <b>Senior's recreation</b> when U3A, Care for Seniors, Legacy, Probus, National Seniors and churches etc do the same things?</li> </ul>
	7l. Flora and Fauna and open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As population grows ensure maintenance of open space with particular reference to the survival of native flora and fauna</li> <li>• <b>Retain beautiful exotic street trees</b> that can withstand periodic drought - retain those in Central Park even if they need watering</li> <li>• Program of tree planting and other vegetation throughout the region will contribute to the Zero30</li> </ul>

		<p>project by sequestering carbon (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote public enjoyment of natural areas and healthy exercise by maintaining and improving the network of walkways that use and link remnant natural vegetation - suitable tracks, signage or promotion of routes on websites, simple well-positioned seating, and shelters in key locations to walk to and meet with friends</li> <li>• HICUB plantings very successful</li> <li>• A koala plan of management with more stringent S44 removals of veg</li> <li>• Plant more trees – 10 for each that is removed through development or storms</li> <li>• Build a decent bird hide</li> </ul>
<b>8. Transport &amp; Connectivity</b>	8a. Airport and air services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage development and investment into the airport for transport of goods within Australia and internationally (3)</li> <li>• opportunity to get New England's fresh produce to market in South East Asia via our airport</li> <li>• Council or the Chamber to attract a budget airline like Virgin or Tiger Air (2)– airfares to Sydney are expensive</li> <li>• Keep airport landing fees low</li> </ul>
	8b. Cycleways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle way beside Bundarra Road - There is plenty of room for a multi-use path -Cycling on the road is dangerous for cyclists and motorists.</li> <li>• A path would encourage alternative transport options between Armidale and Invergowrie</li> <li>• We need more cycle ways through and around Armidale to encourage more people to cycle to work in safety (4).</li> <li>• Plan better and invest in bicycling facilities including shared off-road paths, road crossings, rest stops and bicycle parking</li> <li>• Pay a small toll to cycle on a designated path?</li> <li>• Publicise the existing bikeways, good signage and trail maps (2)</li> <li>• Establishing routes for schools - Schools seem disconnected from CBD bike lanes (2)</li> <li>• More funding for local government cycling initiatives</li> <li>• Driver awareness programs</li> <li>• Lobby RMS to ensure bicycle awareness and laws part of driving tests and training</li> <li>• ARC region wide transport plan and actions to increase cycling, walking and use of public transport</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and transition to electric vehicle fleet (2)</li> <li>Better plan and invest heavily in on-road bicycle facilities</li> <li>Some effort with bike paths in the past bit needs revitalisation and optimisation, particularly to encourage e-bikes</li> </ul>
	8c. Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate, encourage and promote increased local transport trips by emission-free modes of bus, taxi, motorcycle and electric cars</li> <li>Develop more intra and inter-regional rail and bus services (working with other local governments and service providers)</li> <li>Why are we still running the so-called “Driverless Bus” - initiative is a disaster for the council and the rate payers - experiment needs to be cancelled as it is not used - Sell the electric bus to the highest bidder (2)</li> <li>Preserve public bus services</li> <li>Regular bus service Armidale to Guyra 5 days a week – both ways am/pm incl. Uralla</li> <li>Local “uber”</li> <li>Electric bus is a great initiative for future electric car fleet powered by renewable energy</li> <li>Much more visible bus presence connection to Inverell</li> <li>Clear safe pathways from north to south or a solar tram with music and coffee on board</li> </ul>
	8d. Railways (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider reopening the rail line north of Armidale, preferably all the way to Brisbane - A rail trail will end any hope of reinstating the rail line (2)</li> <li>A faster train to complement existing one to Newcastle/Sydney – this would attract more visitors and residents (e.g., retirees) (3)</li> <li>Airfares can be prohibitive if one has to go to Sydney for medical and other need</li> <li>Improve track between Tamworth and Armidale to allow commuting including between Uralla and Armidale</li> <li>Ensure train services to Sydney are retained – support of rail</li> </ul>
	8e. Environmental initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council should allocate resources for implementation of its EcoArc strategic initiatives</li> <li>It also should investigate and implement measures to significantly reduce emissions arising from air transport</li> <li>Other actions to create an environment conducive to maximising trips made by alternative model</li> </ul>

		to petrol or diesel-powered private cars
	8f. Electric vehicles (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council to move to all electric vehicle fleet</li> <li>• Increase steadily availability of fast charging stations (2) - at some of the service stations (shared investment) and/or at Airport (before the bypass)</li> <li>• Add solar panels to roof of parking areas to supplement electricity at recharging stations</li> <li>• Introduce development controls to mandate provision of electric vehicle charging stations</li> </ul>
	8g. Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pavements, where they exist</li> <li>• Add benches on common routes into town</li> <li>• Expand and publicise walking tracks and notable views throughout region</li> <li>• Facilitate, encourage and promote increased local transport trips by emission-free modes of foot and bicycle</li> <li>• Plan better and invest in walking facilities including footpaths, shared off-road paths, road crossings, rest stops</li> </ul>
	8h. Telecommunication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical in minimising the need to travel</li> <li>• Lower air travel by providing excellent video communication that is open to the public and to all our local businesses</li> </ul>
	8i. Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure bus, taxi and rail services meet the needs of people with mobility limitations</li> <li>• Coordinate transport needs of older people</li> <li>• Dial up transport services for the aging</li> <li>• More thoughts for transport for lower socioeconomic populations</li> </ul>
	8j. Transport Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key axis is between Dangar and Faulkner Streets from Central Park to CBD to Dumaresq Creeklands with an exciting visual connection</li> <li>• Upgrade of roads linking Guyra to other centres, Armidale etc</li> <li>• Keep roads and bridges upgraded. B doubles are the economical transport and more regional roads should be accessible</li> </ul>
<b>9.Sustainability, Biodiversity &amp; Smart City</b>	9.a Wastewater recycling/ reuse/ conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the feasibility</li> <li>• Maximise use of treated sewage - Egypt is reclaiming deserts for reforestation via smart use of treated sewage</li> <li>• Encourage water conservation and reward residents who conserve water - -Residents who save</li> </ul>



		<p>water should be rewarded by paying less and heavy water users should pay more (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water problems can be fixed almost immediately by putting in atmospheric water machines that run off solar power - -They can produce from 10 litres per day to 1 million litres per day</li> <li>• Meet NSW Best Practice Water Charging to encourage water security and reward residents who conserve water – introduce this system now as the best way to minimise the substantial price increase required to extend water supplies -If the charge is levied on water consumption those who do the right thing pay less and users pay more</li> <li>• Rebates for retention tanks to be connected</li> <li>• Level 3 water restrictions as a baseline</li> <li>• 160 litres per day is too much. It is possible to use much less (4)</li> <li>• Waste/water/energy audit to identify excesses and correct inefficiency</li> </ul>
	9b. Water collection and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect on all industrial roof tops</li> <li>• Treated water should be prioritised for domestic consumption</li> <li>• Collect water for non-drinking purposes by installing water tanks on all large-scale roof tops in the urban area.</li> <li>• Need to ensure all water is collected and stored</li> <li>• Tanks should be integral to all new housing/recreation areas to reduce dependence on Council water</li> <li>• Provide and plumb water tanks to every household instead of investing in boring</li> <li>• When Malpas Dam was constructed the then council promised that Armidale would never again be on Water Restrictions.</li> <li>• Suggest that Council investigate the possibility of a large dam in the Ebor district and then pump water to Armidale or Malpas</li> <li>• Need a more robust water supply</li> <li>• Creative use of water recycling and treatment of city run-off through natural filtration systems in purpose-built ponds as developed by UNE's aquatic ecology group (2)</li> </ul>
	9c. Trees /Plants/ Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More native tree plantings all types, trees, shrubs and ground covers (2)- Work with Armidale Tree Group, Landcare and Armidale Urban River Group to continue and increase the plantings of local tree species</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps Council could have native plant giveaways (3)</li> <li>• Establish a central register for gardeners. List plants that are both frost hardy and drought tolerant</li> <li>• Sponsor Tree Planting - Involvement with an organisation like Greenfleet to have trees planted to offset our carbon footprint and beautify our landscape (3)</li> <li>• Encourage local landowners to partner with Greenfleet to revegetate their land at no cost</li> <li>• Growing Community Gardens - Council could foster and drive greater involvement in urban garden spaces - concepts such as waterwise, permaculture and sustainability could be incorporated</li> <li>• Protect native habitat with particular emphasis on threatened species</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate corridors for native birds and animals</li> <li>• If trees need to be cut down, those responsible should contribute adequately to a fund to replant trees elsewhere in the city.</li> <li>• Develop and enhance the Region's Native Wildlife and its habitat - -Native vegetation should be protected, preserved and extended (2)</li> <li>• -Developments must include green spaces for recreation (3)</li> <li>• -LEPs should include "Koala" corridors</li> <li>• ARC should ensure waterways are restored to conditions which create habitat for animals such as the platypus</li> <li>• Wildlife Habitat Group asks that ARC's 2020-2040 strategy             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aim to maintain and enhance all of the biodiversity values of the region -In the past Council has managed high conservation land and this should continue and be extended</li> <li>• ARC identify and protect items of particular natural value (be they on public and private land) including large trees</li> <li>• Educate the community about the time it takes to develop habitat values like hollows</li> <li>• Many natural items warrant recognition such as fossil sites of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos</li> <li>• Encourage community members to identify and place them on a Natural Heritage Register</li> <li>• Develop guidelines to protect these items</li> <li>• Protect wetlands</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for maintaining and improving habitat for aquatic species such as native fish, platypus and Golden bellied Water Rats and potential threats to them - -Maintaining</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		hiding places for water rats rather than making Dumaresq Creek neat and tidy
	9d. Council Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Emergency Declaration should inform all business of Council and our development for future sustainability</li> <li>• All council buildings and facilities powered by renewable energy</li> <li>• All council fleet vehicles to be powered by renewable energy - as fleet vehicles are replaced, they should be with those powered by renewable energy</li> <li>• This requires installing more charging stations</li> <li>• Better Local Environmental Plans to improve sustainability and liveability - Revision of Council LEP to ensure future urban developments are close to employment areas such as UNE and consider distance to schools and commercial/ employment areas including the CBD</li> <li>• EcoARC or Greenprint to inform/ be incorporated into the Regional Plan 2020 (with Consultation) - The Council meeting December 2019 endorsed the draft EcoARC or “greenprint” strategy for environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Support the enhancement of Armidale as a smart city</li> <li>• Implement recommendations of 2018 NSW regional climate resilience report (developed by OEH in consultation with council)</li> <li>• Adequately resource environmental compliance, instances of illegal dumping are reported but not actioned</li> <li>• Commit to carbon neutral council and stop delaying real action on climate</li> <li>• Audits of Council’s activity-reduce and limit resource use</li> </ul>
	9e. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating everyone about recycling and human impacts to the environment -If educators could go around to schools and teach kids about recycling and wasting less, they will consider using those techniques in the future.</li> </ul>
	9f. House design/ Building standards (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House designs to minimise energy usage - Too many are built to minimise construction cost with little or no thought about environmental savings and ongoing running costs.</li> <li>• Renewable energy available for all homes - ways of getting all homes and businesses running on local renewable energy</li> <li>• Better Building Standards- planning requirements to achieve high quality standards for all new construction in our region -Energy efficiency initiatives and benefits</li> </ul>

	9g. Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage more people to cycle/walk to work -Create a network of cycle ways that allow people to ride/walk in safety</li> <li>• Council's facilitation of Armidale Secondary College should ensure students and teachers can walk or cycle to school and given priority over buses and cars (2)</li> <li>• Increase driver awareness of cycling to make cycling and walking safety a city priority</li> <li>• A free bus operated by Council -Other cities have this service, e.g., Parramatta, Noosa - useful for elderly and those with different abilities to come to town.</li> <li>• Better bicycle signs and planning to encourage cycling and improve health - 2013 Australian Government Discussion Paper: "Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport</li> <li>• Signs to indicate bicycle routes and "You are Here" maps on the cycleway to show cyclists and walkers distances to UNE, CBD or East Armidale</li> <li>• Cycleways eastwards along Dumaresq Creek could provide a more attractive route and offers greater tourist potential than the proposed Rail Trail</li> </ul>
	9h. Waste and packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise packaging -Council needs to encourage all local businesses to reduce the amount of packaging for goods/food sold</li> <li>• Build on recycling initiatives, particularly composting of food waste plus waste reduction - Council's City to Soil initiative has decreased food waste to landfill and created soil - There needs to be greater participation by institutions and businesses (3)</li> </ul>
	9i. Climate Change Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, Council needs to help businesses, individuals and animals adapt to symptoms of climate change</li> <li>• Education about energy efficiency at home is important</li> <li>• Good work already in place includes Sustainable Living Armidale website and their on-line publication "Light Bulb Moments"</li> <li>• Be motivated by the fact that we are currently and will increasingly be affected by the worsening climate emergency</li> <li>• Take climate seriously</li> </ul>
	9j. Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A city-wide, public smart network - A smart wireless network would allow both council and private enterprise to innovate and provide additional services at low cost</li> <li>• Develop new locally owned, or at least controlled, technology</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with UNE on Zero30 project</li> <li>• Lobby State Government to support ways to share electricity in a peer to peer system</li> <li>• Development of a local grid and local energy supplier – including sharing between homes (3).</li> <li>• Local rooftop solar farms on CBD buildings</li> <li>• Explore and install effective electricity storage facilities</li> <li>• Wildlife habitat group asks that ARC recognise that a smart city is not simply known for its focus on digital technology</li> </ul>
	9k. Waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to enhance urban and creekside vegetation with a focus on providing habitat and safe corridors for movement of wildlife (2)-Healthy creekside vegetation is rare due to intense pressure for human use of riparian zones.</li> <li>• Enhance semi natural features and wetland filtration function of Dumaresq Creek while avoiding major earthworks or reconstruction (2) - Re-establish semi natural creek bed and bank profiles to enhance the aesthetic quality, ecological function and safety of the creek, particularly between Marsh and Dangar Streets.</li> <li>• Restore waterways to ensure they provide habitat for local aquatic species</li> <li>• Gradual revegetation of city waterway to replace exotic trees with native vegetation</li> <li>• Need to clean up the city's central creeklands and the gas works</li> <li>• Need a long-term plan to put our sewer, water and electricity systems away from the creeklands</li> <li>• No buildings should be constructed within the flood prone zone of Dumaresq Creek</li> <li>• Environmental flows in Dumaresq Creek have been substantially reduced due to Dumaresq Dam</li> <li>• Support the removal of weedy species and planting with native species along the creeklands by Armidale Urban Rivercare Group</li> <li>• Pipe water from below sewage works to lake to provide oxygenated constant flow to Dumaresq Creek</li> <li>• Recharge the aquifers for future generations</li> <li>• Thomas Lagoon needs to be better managed – lease to an enviro group for no money</li> <li>• Lagoons, WSUD</li> </ul>
	9l. Support for organisation/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• those that work towards biodiversity enhancement as well as carbon sequestration</li> <li>• Organisations such as Southern New England Landcare and its volunteer groups and Armidale Tree</li> </ul>

	volunteers	Group have a proven track record in effective tree planting and biodiversity enhancement and Council can call on their expertise
	9m. Food Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote resilience through local food production - A substantial increase in Armidale's ability to produce food is needed if our community is to remain resilient.</li> </ul>
	9n. Solar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All schools and pre-schools should be encouraged by Council to install solar panels. The same for the hospital and any new buildings</li> </ul>
	9o. Education on efficiencies in behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy efficient behaviours - Turn down air conditioning in summer by at least two degrees in all public buildings, vice versa in winter</li> <li>Increase insulation throughout public buildings, and encourage greater insulation in houses and businesses</li> <li>Efficient lighting</li> <li>Turn off lighting, computers etc when not in immediate use</li> <li>Increased renewable energy and storage to run public and private facilities</li> <li>Support energy saving devices</li> <li>Replace wood stoves with modern heat pumps or other forms of solar heating</li> <li>Possible rebates to replace faulty refrigerators with new ones</li> <li>We need to be able to monitor energy use and decrease load whenever the system is threatened</li> <li>A smart city would use controls on street lighting to dim or turn off after 11pm to early morning</li> <li>Introduce competitions in schools to teach kids to read water meters and have rewards for schools who use the least</li> <li>Provide local expert assistance and education, e.g., plumbers and builders</li> </ul>
	9ay. Engaging the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHG urges ARC to seek and encourage inputs to decisions using all parts of the community with its diverse skills and knowledge</li> <li>Communicate with us</li> </ul>
<b>10. Agriculture</b>	10a. Regenerative / sustainable practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support/incentives for Regenerative Agricultural Practices (6)-Help our farmers make their farms drought-resistant by facilitating and incentivising the adoption of these methods</li> <li>Collaborate with experts and researchers from UNE and the farming community to identify and promote sustainable farming methods - Agriculture has potential to contribute substantially to the goal of local food resilience as well as carbon sequestration</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• needs to be investigated further and acted upon, consistent with Council's goal of zero contribution to global temperature rise by 2030</li> <li>• Work with UNE to encourage regenerative agriculture throughout our region and link to tourism</li> <li>• Work with UNE to foster research into and implement ways to handle drought, to minimise soil and vegetation loss and minimise frequency, severity and impact of fires.</li> <li>• Work with LLS and Landcare to promote regenerative agriculture and re-hydration of the landscape</li> </ul>
	10b. Harnessing rainwater for agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build dams to harness rainwater and redistribute for agriculture</li> </ul>
	10c. Agricultural products for local consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up cooperatives to market to locals</li> <li>• Support a strong farmers' market committed to local food production</li> </ul>
	10d. Feed for cattle and sheep can be produced hydroponically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One kilogram of barley can produce 6-8 kgs in five days grown on plastic trays, use very little water and very little to maintain</li> <li>• Northern Tablelands is in a "high rainfall" zone, with productive soil and is a precious resource to the nation</li> <li>• Intensive glasshouse horticulture on an industrial scale has been chosen near Guyra</li> <li>• Extensive cultivation of trees for harvest and storage of carbon and for downstream processing would be feasible in the region</li> <li>• Careful management of water in our environment is absolutely key to the future of this region</li> </ul>
	10e. Water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dredge Malpas of toxic silt and address blue green algae problems from agricultural run off</li> <li>• Pipe water from Queensland to NSW</li> </ul>
	10f. Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a diversity of agricultural opportunities to help diversity of economy</li> <li>• Prepare for longer and more severe droughts</li> <li>• Rethink grazing</li> <li>• Develop urban/rural fringe to allow urban related development in poor agricultural land areas and preserve fringe productive agricultural land</li> </ul>
	10g. Labour support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work for dole to help farmers improve/upgrade farm properties</li> </ul>



