



# Shape your region

## Community Plan 2022-2032 Engagement summary

### We are creating a Community Plan for the next ten years.

During October and November 2021 Armidale Regional Council consulted with the community about what they want to see in 2032, what they love about their region and what needs to be improved.

This engagement is a core part of a larger project to review council's Community Plan and associated documents including the Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy – all key parts of the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This Framework is a legislative requirement that seeks to deliver a community-led process for local government strategic planning.

Our aim with this engagement was to give the entire community the opportunity to tell us what is important to them and what they want for their future.

We looked to inspire participation through widespread promotion, interesting and engaging activities and a willingness to have frank discussions and to actively listen.

The results of this engagement are contained in this summary report.

### Website

The Shape Your Region website featured available activities, information sheets, surveys, FAQs, videos and event timelines and was available at [shapeyourregion.com.au](http://shapeyourregion.com.au)

### Activities

#### Postcard Survey

Reply paid postcards and an information sheet were sent to all households in the Local Government Area. The postcard asked: What do you love about the Region, what would you like improved in the Region, and describe what our region should be like in 2032?

#### Detailed Survey

The detailed survey looked more deeply at the type of region our community wants to see. It utilised rankings, emojis, and open questions to get a clear vision for the region.

## How we engaged



### Events

- Community groups and services BBQ Breakfast
- **Listening Posts - 12 total**
  - 5 villages** – Ebor, Hillgrove, Ben Lomond, Black Mountain and Wollomombi
  - 3 Guyra events** – Bradley Street, Australian Poetry Hall of Fame Markets and an Aboriginal Community BBQ in Volunteer Park
  - 3 Armidale events** – Mall, Centro and an Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place Community BBQ
- **Library displays** • **Staff briefings**

### \$100 challenge

This activity gave the community the opportunity to allocate budget across Council services.

### Postcards from the Future

School children also had the opportunity to participate through a postcard asking them what they want the future to look like. Postcards were distributed to all participating schools in the region – mainly Years 5/6 and Years 9/10.

### Phone survey

400 community members participated in a telephone Community Satisfaction Survey conducted by Taverner Research in late November. This data will be collected annually to allow Council to track its progress and community satisfaction.

# Participation

The number of participants for each element of community engagement was:

|                                           |              |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Postcards - online                        | 184          |
| Postcards – returned via mail             | 253          |
| Detailed survey – online                  | 175          |
| Phone survey                              | 400          |
| Face to face engagement (Listening Posts) | 192          |
| Postcards from the Future                 | 523          |
| \$100 Challenge - online                  | 121          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>1,848</b> |

# Phone survey results

17% of respondents were satisfied with council’s overall performance (against 53% dissatisfied and 30% neutral)

## Highest satisfaction services

- Parks, reserves and playgrounds
- Sporting facilities
- Waste and recycling

## Lowest satisfaction services

- Economic development and attracting investment
- Planning and development
- Being a well-run and managed council

## When satisfaction scores were ranked against perceived importance, the priorities for Council that emerged were:

- Sealed roads
- Community information and consultation
- Development applications and planning
- Economic development and attracting new investment
- Being a well-run and managed Council

## 70% would recommend living in the Armidale Region

Respondents said that more economic development, entertainment and attractions, retail opportunities, better roads and tourism advertising would add to the Armidale Region’s appeal to visitors or residents.

# Results

## Postcards (Returned via mail & online)

### What you love about our region

| 1                                                                   | 2                                 | 3                              | 4                                | 5                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Our natural environment</b>                                      | <b>Our community</b>              | <b>Education and training</b>  | <b>Heritage</b>                  | <b>Location</b>                                 |
| Climate, seasons, weather, natural beauty, wildlife, National Parks | The people, diversity, volunteers | Opportunities and institutions | Architecture, history, buildings | Between Sydney and Brisbane, proximity to coast |

### What you want improved about our region

| 1                                                                                                               | 2                                                                                                                            | 3                                                                                 | 4                                                                          | 5                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Transport Infrastructure</b>                                                                                 | <b>Environmental sustainability</b>                                                                                          | <b>Economic development growth</b>                                                | <b>Shopping variety</b>                                                    | <b>Tourism</b>                                                                                                                       |
| Maintained roads, cycling infrastructure, shaded and increased parking, upgraded bus stops, more traffic lights | Green power, response to climate change, water security, waste collection, cleaner air, more recycling, feral animal control | More industry, business, jobs, population and completion of Airside Business park | More shops, bigger variety, affordable shop rents, more support for retail | Variety of events, larger events, better attractions, promotion of arts and culture, better signage, free caravan camping facilities |

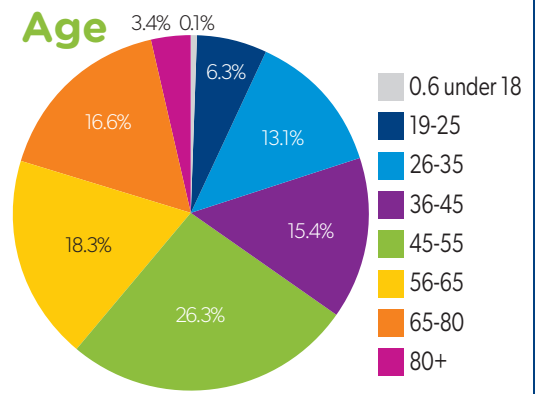
### What you think our region should be like in 2032

| 1                                                                                                                                | 2                                                                                                 | 3                                                                                                    | 4                                                                                               | 5                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Economically robust</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Environmental sustainability</b>                                                               | <b>Led through good governance</b>                                                                   | <b>Strong tourism sector</b>                                                                    | <b>A cohesive community</b>                               |
| A supported and thriving business and industry sector, a growing population, more job opportunities, thriving shopping precincts | Environmentally conscious society, maintained Creeklands, clean environment, water sustainability | Stable and progressive council, strong Community-Council relationship, affordable rates and charges. | Well marketed, many local attractions, events and activities for the local and visiting people. | Inclusive and diverse community, better community spirit. |

# Detailed survey Total responses: 175

## Demographics specific to survey results

|                            |            |                                                             |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Male</b>                | <b>40%</b> | <b>3.7% have a disability</b>                               |
| <b>Female</b>              | <b>57%</b> | <b>2.2% are Aboriginal/Torres Straits Islander heritage</b> |
| <b>Non-binary</b>          | <b>3%</b>  | <b>12.7% were not born in Australia</b>                     |
| <b>Lived in the region</b> |            | <b>Do you...</b>                                            |
| Less than 12 mths          | 2%         | <b>Live</b> 164                                             |
| 1-5 years                  | 12%        | <b>Work</b> 103                                             |
| 6-10 years                 | 13%        | <b>Visit</b> 11                                             |
| 11-20 years                | 22%        | <b>Own property</b> 109                                     |
| 20+ years                  | 50%        | <b>Own a business in region</b> 21                          |
| Don't live in the region   | 1%         |                                                             |



|                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| <b>Armidale</b>       | <b>78%</b>  |
| <b>Guyra</b>          | <b>12%</b>  |
| <b>Black Mountain</b> | <b>0.6%</b> |
| <b>Ben Lomond</b>     | <b>2.3%</b> |
| <b>Other</b>          | <b>6.3%</b> |

## What we value the most about living in our region

| 1                              | 2                                  | 3                                | 4                       | 5                                         |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Our natural environment</b> | <b>The people in our community</b> | <b>Educational opportunities</b> | <b>Arts and culture</b> | <b>Our parks, playgrounds and gardens</b> |
| 134 responses                  | 58 responses                       | 54 responses                     | 48 responses            | 42 responses                              |

## \$100 Challenge

If you had \$100 of council's budget, you would spend it on:

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Community facilities | \$18 |
| Community services   | \$15 |
| Water and waste      | \$14 |
| Roads                | \$12 |
| Economic and tourism | \$10 |
| Regulation           | \$10 |
| Capital works        | \$8  |
| Businesses           | \$6  |
| Customer services    | \$3  |

### Livability scorecard

How do you feel about...

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Living in our region</b> - housing, infrastructure, transport, health?<br><b>Happy</b>              | <b>Working in our region</b> - jobs, job support?<br><b>Happy</b>                                               |
| <b>Education</b> in our region - educational institutions, support and services?<br><b>Happy</b>       | <b>Shopping</b> in our region - essential and non-essential shopping/availability/experience?<br><b>Unhappy</b> |
| <b>Doing business</b> in our region - business support, opportunities and patronage?<br><b>Neutral</b> | <b>Tourism</b> in our region - attractions, events, accommodation?<br><b>Neutral</b>                            |
|                                                                                                        | <b>'Playing'</b> in our region - entertainment/sporting/recreation?<br><b>Happy</b>                             |

## The top three challenges we face in our community

| 1                                   | 2                                                   | 3                                                          |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Growth, economic development</b> | <b>Environmental sustainability, climate change</b> | <b>A financially sustainable and well-governed Council</b> |



## Other prevalent themes:

- Health and medical – adequate health facilities, attracting medical specialists and doctors
- Community cohesiveness and positivity
- Building lifestyle infrastructure
- Engaging youth through facilities and activities

78% 'Definitely agreed' or 'Agreed' with the current Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027 Community Vision:

*We want a harmonious region which celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of our communities, provides opportunities for all people to reach their potential, encourages engagement with our environment, cultures and lifestyles, while supporting growth, opportunity and innovation.*

## What you want council to focus on improving (through direct services, advocacy or support)

### Community

#### Top 5 ranked:

Health and community services  
Youth services and facilities  
Family and children's services  
Community safety  
Entertainment and events

### Environment

#### Top 5 ranked:

Water provision and sustainability  
Alternative energy sources  
Climate change  
Biodiversity preservation  
Reserves and open spaces (parks and gardens etc)

### Transport and Infrastructure

#### Top 5 ranked:

Footpaths  
Sealed roads  
Cycleways  
Unsealed roads  
Streetscapes, trees and verges

### Leadership

#### Top 5 ranked:

Community consultation  
Leadership and representation  
Level of service  
Ethical practices  
Customer service

### Economy

#### Top 5 ranked:

Job opportunities  
City/town activation  
Economic development  
New industry development  
Business support and growth initiatives

## Your vision for our region for the next 10 years

### Key themes:

- Economy and growth** – opportunities and support for business/industry; a growing and evolving region; an attractive region that retains our young people and attracts new residents with abundant employment/career opportunities, leading to prosperity for all.
- Environment and sustainability** – recognising and proactively responding to climate change; supporting renewable and alternative energy; promotion of carbon neutrality; a safe and healthy environment, with ecological sustainability and clean air.
- Tourism** – a thriving tourism sector; the choice for tourists coming to the New England; known for its events, beauty, lifestyle opportunities and attractions.
- Community and culture** – a cohesive, proud, engaged, supportive, family-friendly and welcoming community that practices cultural inclusiveness and diversity, celebrates and engages with our Aboriginal community, and supports a thriving arts and cultural scene.
- Retail** – vibrant shopping and business centres; a destination for regional shoppers; a thriving and unique Mall offering a diverse shopping and dining experience.
- Leadership** – a regional council that provides the stewardship for growth, development and prosperity that facilitates a unified and inclusive region, and maintains affordable rates and charges, quality services and financial sustainability.
- Transport** – quality transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs and cycleways, with excellent transport links to other regions, public transport and lifestyle infrastructure.

### Face to face engagement (Listening Posts) - Top 5 themes

| 1                                                                                   | 2                                               | 3                                                                                             | 4                                                                                                                                                      | 5                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sustainability</b>                                                               | <b>Youth</b>                                    | <b>Tourism</b>                                                                                | <b>Infrastructure</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>Governance</b>                                          |
| Biodiversity, renewable energy, more green spaces, tree maintenance and more nature | Activities, events, employment, drop-in centres | Promotion of our heritage and natural assets, more signage, more events, collaborate with UNE | Increased footpaths, maintenance of facilities, walking tracks, wider and better quality roads, consultation with the community, sealing of dirt roads | Consultative and transparent Council, lower rates and fees |

### Postcards from the Future - In 2032, the school children of today want to see...

| 1                                                                                                                                     | 2                                                                                                                                      | 3                    | 4                                                                                                                                    | 5                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Entertainment</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>Facilities</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>Shopping</b>      | <b>Environment</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>Youth activities</b>                  |
| Water park, Trampoline park, zoo/native animal sanctuary, entertainment centre, more Armidale Sport and Rec activities and facilities | More off-leash dog parks, playgrounds, fitness equipment, cycling/BMX tracks, heated indoor pools, cleaner public toilets, skate parks | More shops for youth | Cleaner and greener environment including less litter, better recycling, more bins, cleaner Creeklands, more green and native spaces | More youth-focused activities and events |