Delivery Program

2022-2026

Armidale Regional Council initiatives to help achieve the Advancing our Region Community Plan

ARMIDALE
Regional Council

Introduction

Armidale Regional Council is pleased to present its Delivery Program 2022-2026.

Along with residents, community groups, governments and industry, Armidale Regional Council is a key stakeholder in helping to achieve the Advancing our Region Community Plan.

Council provides many services, programs and regulatory functions that contribute to the stability, progression, and future of our community.

The Delivery Program 2022-2026 outlines the initiatives that Armidale Regional Council will undertake to help achieve the goals of the Advancing our Region Community Plan and be able to service our community.

The Delivery Program is Armidale Regional Council's commitment to the community for the duration of the Councillor Term and up to four years. It is informed by the community, through the Advancing our Region Community Plan, but also takes into consideration the resources of Council and its ability to deliver initiatives on top of its core operations and legislative requirements.

The program of initiatives will be supported by the operations of the Council, and the progress and results of the Program will be reported back to the community every six months, and as a final report following the end of the Council's Elected Term.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Armidale Regional Community pays tribute to their love of land, love of people, and love of culture.

Climate Change Declaration

At the Council Meeting of 23 October 2019, the Armidale Regional Council resolved unanimously to declare that we are in a Climate Emergency and that it acknowledges *'our local and global communities are facing a climate emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government; that human-induced climate change represents a great threat to humanity, civilisation and other species; and that, to prevent the most catastrophic outcomes, societies including local councils, need to take urgent action'*.

In the preparation of this document, Council has taken into consideration its important role in advocating for greater acceptance and action for Climate Change, as well as the actions that Council itself can undertake in its policies, processes, and services to adapt to Climate Change. Armidale Regional Council has marked (with the symbol 💧) all Council Initiatives that are:

- directly, or indirectly, impacted by Climate Change
- contribute positively towards Climate Change adaptation

This symbol demonstrates the broad reach of the impacts of Climate Change and acknowledges where consideration or action must be taken in relation to Climate Change by Council, its staff and the community.

Restore and Thrive
Mayor's Message

Armidale Regional Council is setting upon an exciting new course for success as a region and regional city of significance. This course is underpinned by an ambitious target of 4,000 new jobs by 2040 in order to grow our population to where it needs to be.

To achieve this vision there will, however, be challenges ahead. Our region is at a fork in the road. One route is to manage the inevitable decline of the Council and our region, the other is to take a bold approach and grow our way out of our current trajectory.

Growing our way out will ease the burden for all when our population increases, but it is going to take time. Managing a decline will see the vulnerable in our community suffer the most as the services and amenities they use will be reduced. Growth is our only option and this Delivery Program sets us on that course.

As a new group of councillors, we have invested a significant amount of time over the past few months reviewing council operations and putting together the draft budget, Delivery Program and Operational Plan. The new Council is focussed on a platform of economic responsibility and putting Armidale Regional Council back on its feet financially.

As a council we are determined to drive our growth strategy as this is the only way we can save our region. Turning around the fortunes of our region is going to take commitment from all of us. Not having rates appropriately set by councils before us has led to the revenue issues we face today. It won't be easy but it will be necessary to deliver the future we want for our families and the generations to come.

Council has a multi-million-dollar shortfall in asset maintenance and that backlog is swamping us – particularly our road network. While we want to be a progressive and expanding council, we also need to fix what has not been done in the past and get back to basics, increase efficiency, recover asset costs and deliver greater levels of service – issues that have been frustrating the community for many years.

This is not an overnight fix and will take years to rebuild but this plan is long-term and works towards sustainability for future generations. This Delivery Program is broken into two phases – "Restore" and "Thrive". The elected body has analysed countless scenarios and this Delivery Program presents the most feasible options fit for our region, now and into the future.

We have addressed the critical infrastructure for this growth including a water security package that is bold and achievable. This will tie in with our efforts to boost tourism, improve our amenities and inject life back into our economy. The right vision and strategies for success are starting to happen.

It's time to become a region of significance once again. A region that deliver the basics exceptionally and efficiently and is thriving and competitive in all aspects.

Mayor Sam Coupland

General Manager's Message

Since commencing with Armidale Regional Council (ARC) in January 2021 I have been focussed on taking ARC on a 'back-to-basics - turnaround strategy' driven in collaboration with staff and Councillors with a key focus over the last 12 months of seeking to set council on a path to 'Restore and Thrive'. A significant step in Council's roadmap has been to address the organisational culture.

A 'culture audit' was undertaken in late March 2021 with a 90% staff (and Councillor) participation rate as part of the audit debrief which was conducted by the Dattner Group. The challenges identified included financial constraints; an organisational structure that doesn't make sense; issues around loss, shortage and turnover of staff; instability at the top including management and councillors; Councillors not managing finances or community expectations; poor community reputation; lack of strategic direction; low morale and job satisfaction and a lack of unity.

The audit highlighted key organisational strengths including good people passionate about serving the community and that potential and current improvements were seeing positive change.

A team made up of leaders from all levels of the organisation and referenced as OPARC (Operation: Planet ARC) developed a draft turnaround strategy and roadmap as part of the back to basics approach that was to focus on vision, purpose, values, supporting and unsupporting behaviours.

The draft turnaround strategy was presented to all staff and councillors through an all-day World Café. The World Café is built on the assumption that … people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges; the answers we need are available to us; and we are wiser together than we are alone.

Staff feedback was incorporated into the final OPARC Strategy Map and Values and Behaviours. These documents are now the centrepiece by which staff hold each other accountable and will run through to the nominated strategy review date of January 2023. At that point we will reassess our progress and seek to take the next steps.

Delivery Program 2022-2026

Council's Delivery Program is a statement of commitment to the community by each newly elected Council. In preparing its four-year Delivery Program, the Council identifies and prioritises initiatives to achieve the community's long-term goals as outlined in the Community Plan.

ARC faces a number of significant financial challenges. There are broad challenges associated with servicing a region covering 7,818km2 and 1,858km of local roads with a population density of only 3.77 persons per square kilometre. With total assets of $1.3 billion (and growing) under management, a significant challenge exists to fund and maintain the network to even a minimum, but acceptable standard.

In addition, there are significant liabilities associated with landfill remediation, quarries and contaminated land, some of which have only become known in recent years. Their identification means Council must redirect funding to undertake the work identified by these liabilities and that is required to meet environmental standards.

In the first two years following the May 2016 merger, Council's financial position deteriorated significantly. A November 2020 review conducted by Finch Consulting and the resulting report "Review of Council Finances", contained a number of findings and recommendations. The ensuing Performance Improvement Order (PIO) as imposed by the Minister for Local Government referenced the PIO and required Council to implement the recommendations; these have been incorporated into an adopted Financial Improvement Plan. The 2020 review found that net current assets declined by $11m in the first three years of the Armidale Regional Council and management control, oversight and reporting experienced significant lapses during this time.

This exacerbated an already poor financial position resulting from the merger of two councils deemed financially unsustainable by the Office of Local Government through Fit for the Future assessments. Since 2019, Council sought to improve the financial position but continues to face significant challenges primarily due to a shortfall in funding for asset renewal and replacement.

The adopted 2021-22 budget projected a consolidated operating surplus of just over $1m with no changes forecast for the unrestricted cash position (Council's main buffer for unexpected events).

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast" – Peter Drecker

Council faced a projected $7.8m funding shortfall for core operational and capital service level and asset renewal requirements. Just maintaining current service levels would have required a 40% increase in general rate revenue.

This situation has not changed leading into the 2022-23 and in fact has been exacerbated; the Special Rate Variation (SRV) required to ensure ARC's future sustainability and longevity sits conservatively at approximately 50%.

The Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) forecasts an asset renewal ratio of 83% in 2021-22 and the average ratio for the General Fund over ten years is 58%. With a required industry benchmark of 100% or

greater and $1.2 billion of infrastructure assets under Council's control and management, the General Fund infrastructure ratios outlook is clearly not sustainable longer term.

Given the current financial trajectory ARC will not improve on these ratios and the outlook for unrestricted cash remains poor.

On current forecasting and without a sizeable SRV injection, ARC is looking at a minimum of five years of the current constrained operating and capital budget positions to ensure the unrestricted cash position does not deteriorate beyond current levels. We are essentially managing ourselves into severe decline.

A funding gap of this magnitude is significant and requires immediate action. It literally is now or never if ARC is going to be able to correct the current position and become a region of significance, capable of taking its place amongst the best regional centres in NSW.

The longer the investment in asset renewal remains as is, the significantly more costly it will be to bring assets back to a satisfactory and serviceable condition. The solution must come now.

While operational efficiencies are on foot, alone they will not provide the funding required to achieve financial sustainability. Efficiencies to improve ARC's financial position include reviewing the organisational structure, business systems, exploring opportunities for out-sourcing activities and improving project management capabilities. Council's Financial Improvement Plan includes 13 key recommendations to improve our financial position through savings and increased revenue, and indirectly via efficiency and productivity improvements.

In its 2021 SRV application, Council outlined the initiatives implemented since the merger which aimed to decrease costs and increase revenue. Initiatives implemented to that point were estimated to have provided approximately $6.2 million in savings or increased revenue, with approximately $2.2 million in annual ongoing savings.

Improving asset management

Asset management is a critical local government function; most councils manage a vast base of infrastructure assets. Within the ARC LGA there are 651 kilometres of sealed roads, 1,077 kilometres of unsealed roads and 122 kilometres of regional roads, all of which are maintained by Council. Council manages $1.2 billion in infrastructure assets (roads, bridges, stormwater, footpaths, buildings, water, and sewer) and total assets of $1.3 billion (including land, landfills, plant & equipment).

The breadth and diversity of these assets means Council must have systems and processes to manage assets based on quality data and strong technical expertise. There is large scope for improvement in this space. A key focus for Council is to develop the Asset Management Framework including an Asset Management Policy, Strategy and associated Plans. This is an area for improvement and will remain a focus in 2022-23 and beyond. Until there is strong implementation of the framework across Council, this will remain a critical risk.

Review of community expectations and service levels

Council's 2021 SRV application was made on the basis of maintaining (already reduced) service levels in the short-term. It was noted in the application that the option applied for would "result in current levels of service maintained in the short-term; however the asset renewal backlog would increase. This will increase costs in the medium to long term placing a financial burden on future generations. Council will have limited options to fund new assets as the region grows."

As such, Council still has significant work to do in evaluating service levels and aligning with community expectations within the funding available to it and this has been incorporated into the Financial Improvement Plan.

Turnaround strategy

Armidale Regional Council has had a systemic revenue problem for many years and for far too long previous councils have underestimated or ignored the real cost of maintaining assets such as our road network and providing services to the community - we must now turn this around in order to grow and be sustainable.

To do this, it is proposed that Council seek a SRV that would see rates increase by 50% over 3 years. While it hasn't been finalised, for an average Armidale home this increase would be in the order of $237 per year for three years and around $113 per year for three years for an average Guyra home.

In the 2022-23 financial year Council is proposing to go into deficit and dip into reserves to fund the budget. This approach is predicated around receiving approval for an SRV and being able to do much of the preparatory work required in 2022-23 to take full advantage of an approved SRV. That is because any meaningful rate increase would not come into effect until the 2023-24 financial year and at that point the financial improvement would start to be realised and ARC could start the continue the process to build a stronger and more resilient region.

The proposed SRV is part of the solution to:

i. Improve financial sustainability by eliminating the General Fund operating deficit;

ii. Deliver the services as outlined in the draft Integrated Planning and Reporting documents;

iii. Provide sufficient funding to meet asset renewal funding requirements and appropriately manage the infrastructure backlog; and

iv. Meet compliance obligations under the Local Government Act and other forms of legislation.

Without an SRV, Council has limited options to resolve the financial position it has inherited and would need to reduce and likely cease some service delivery.

This approach would be counter intuitive to seeing the region grow and will negatively impact the community. ARC does not see its future as a 'roads, rates and rubbish' entity.

Council's long-term vision is to retain future generations in the region and attract new residents through increased work opportunities, improved liveability and access to quality services. The Delivery Program 2022-2026 outlines this vision and the necessary actions required to make this happen.

James Roncon
General Manager

Armidale Regional Council

Councillors

Mayor
Cr Sam Coupland

Deputy Mayor
Cr Todd Redwood

Cr Margaret O'Connor

Cr Debra O'Brien

Cr Susan McMichael

Cr Paul Gaddes
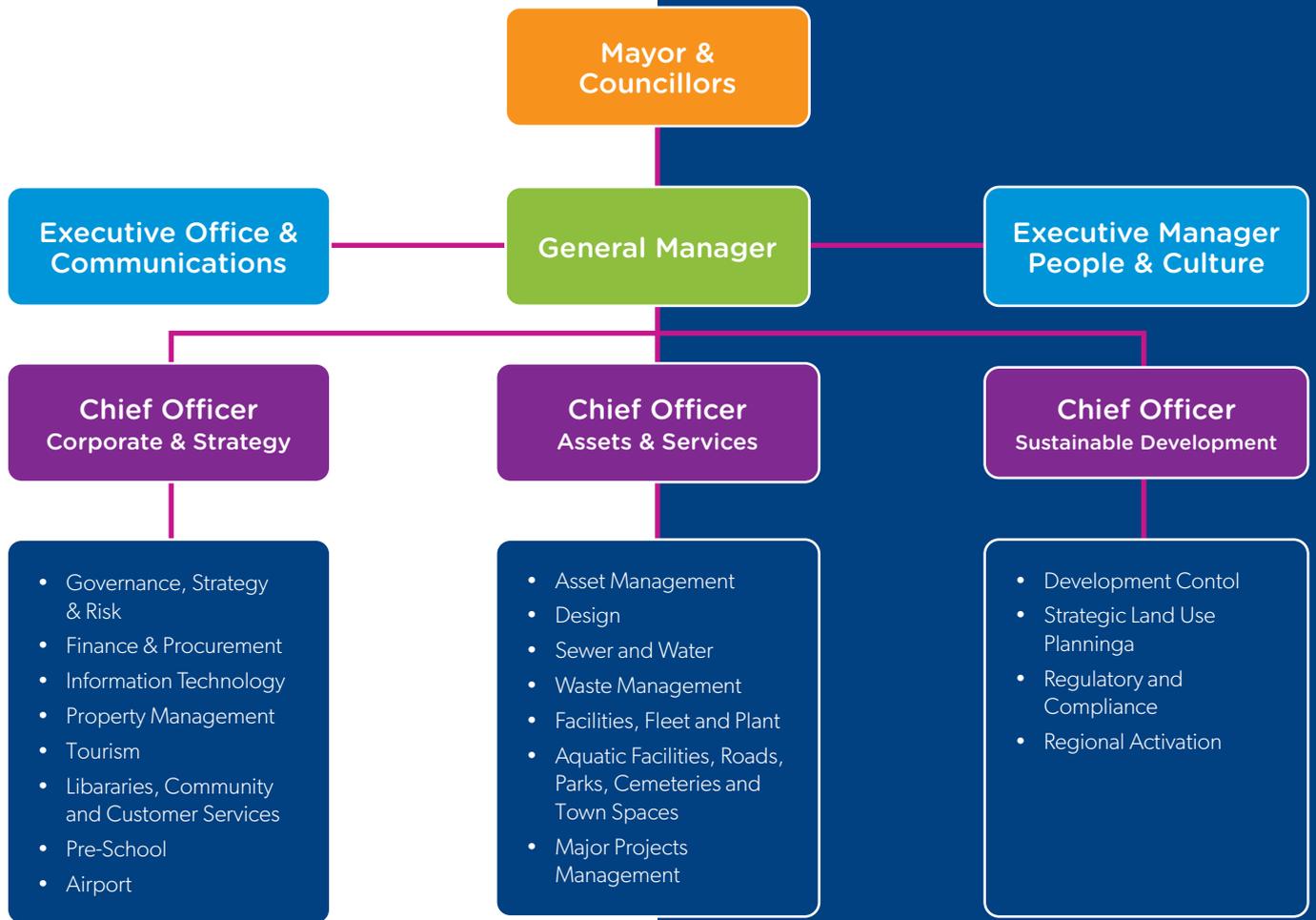
Cr Dorothy Robinson

Cr Steven Mepham

Cr Bradley Widders

Cr Paul Packham

Cr Jon Galletly

Organisational Structure

Mayor & Councillors

General Manager

Executive Office & Communications

Executive Manager People & Culture

Chief Officer
Corporate & Strategy

- Governance, Strategy & Risk
- Finance & Procurement
- Information Technology
- Property Management
- Tourism
- Libararies, Community and Customer Services
- Pre-School
- Airport

Chief Officer
Assets & Services

- Asset Management
- Design
- Sewer and Water
- Waste Management
- Facilities, Fleet and Plant
- Aquatic Facilities, Roads, Parks, Cemeteries and Town Spaces
- Major Projects Management

Chief Officer
Sustainable Development

- Development Contol
- Strategic Land Use Planninga
- Regulatory and Compliance
- Regional Activation

Our Workforce

73% Fulltime
15% Part-time
12% Casual
Roles

67% Male
33% Female
Gender

7.8 years
Average length of service

44 years
Average age

16.2%
Staff turnover

Our Workforce Values

Council is committed to creating a workplace where staff hold the below values at the core of our behaviour and conduct:

Inclusion

Having positive interactions with other staff and valuing all staff for who they are. Valuing diversity and allowing for real opportunities for all staff to have meaningful relationships.

Wellbeing

What is ultimately good for staff, and what is in the self-interest of staff, to ensure they are comfortable, healthy and happy in the workplace
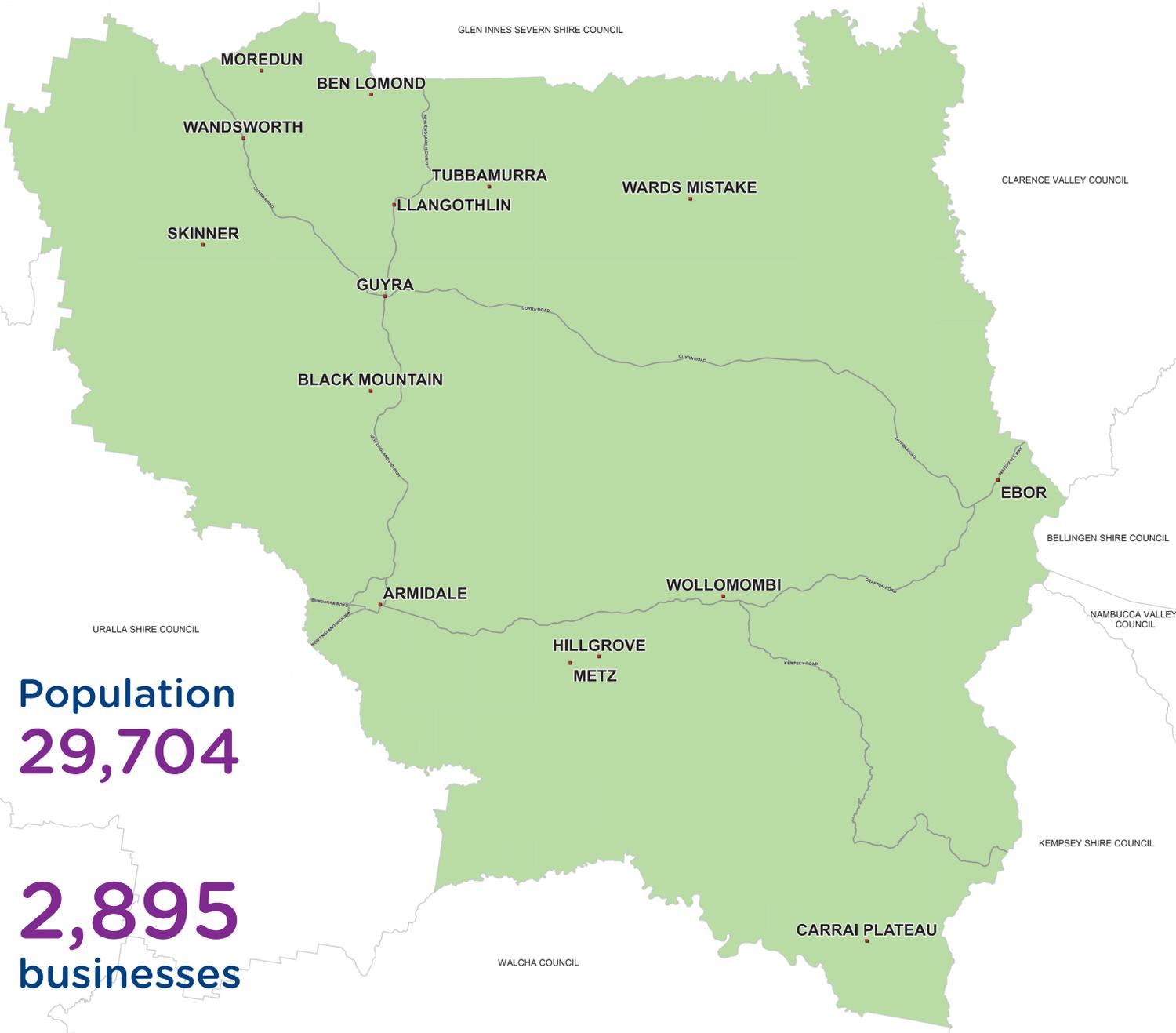
Transparency

Conducting duties in a way that creates openness between managers and staff by sharing information freely in an effort to benefit Council, staff and the Community.

Commitment

Taking ownership of work and being an ambassador for Council through a willingness to get involved.

Advancing our Region

The Armidale Region

GLEN INNES SEVERN SHIRE COUNCIL

MOREDUN

BEN LOMOND

WANDSWORTH

TUBBAMURRA

WARDS MISTAKE

LLANGOTHLIN

CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL

SKINNER

GUYRA

GUYRA ROAD

GUYRA ROAD

BLACK MOUNTAIN

EBOR

BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL

WOLLOMOMBI

ARMIDALE

NAMBUCCA VALLEY COUNCIL

URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

HILLGROVE

METZ

KEMPSEY ROAD

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

CARRAI PLATEAU

WALCHA COUNCIL

Population
29,704

2,895
businesses

6.8%
five year employment growth to 2020

Largest industry
Education & Training

GRP
$1.63
billion

Largest
renewable energy generator

Our plan for growth and development

There can be a no more significant path, or task for a council anywhere at this moment, than to shape an even better place; one which is attractive to new investment and talent which could benefit its community and business post-2022.

Council is committed to growing a prosperous and sustainable region over the next decade and beyond. We will ensure that we have a clear vision for the future of our region developed in partnership with our community. This will centre around the jobs of tomorrow and how we will grow whilst protecting and enriching the lives of our community and the region. We will work with all delivery partners including the Federal and State governments, and the private sector to support the delivery of our vision. We will get on with delivery, ensuring that catalyst projects are prioritised and that we are ready for investment and community building opportunities when they arise.

Turning our challenges into opportunities

Growing jobs

Recent Gross Regional Product (GRP) figures illustrate that our regional economy has flat lined over the last 20 years. Moving towards a strong regional vision and strong local delivery, Leadership, Vision and Collaboration will be critical ingredients to our region's future opportunities and growing the regional economy and jobs.

Engine room industries in the Armidale region are agriculture and education, with manufacturing and tourism also contributing, and renewable energy a future contributor.

Agriculture is the prime engine room industry and it directly accounts for 1,330 (about 11%) of jobs in the Armidale region. With the multiplier effects agriculture also supports about 2,500 jobs in enabling industries (about 2:1 ratio to direct jobs).

Council has a target to grow 4,000 local jobs by 2040 and 1,000 in the next 5 years. We will seek to bring more jobs in engine industries of agriculture, education, and energy to our region by providing region building infrastructure and Council-led strategic planning to ensure that the Armidale region attracts the jobs and investment that contribute to our long-term prosperity.

Assets

In regional NSW, the majority of infrastructure assets are under the management and control of the local Council. A key challenge for Armidale Regional Council is remaining financially sustainable whilst managing ageing infrastructure assets that could require renewal and replacement.

Council has a responsibility to continue to provide services to our community through the utilisation of these assets including consideration of how best to allocate funds for the operation, maintenance, renewal, replacement and upgrade of assets.

Within the Armidale Regional Council local government area, there are 651 kilometres of sealed roads, 1,077 kilometres of unsealed roads and 122 kilometres of regional roads, all of which are maintained by Council. Council is responsible for managing $1.2 billion in infrastructure assets (roads, bridges, stormwater, footpaths, buildings, water, sewer and airport) and total assets of $1.3 billion (including land, landfills, plant & equipment).

With such a large and diverse range of assets, Council requires a system and processes to manage assets utilising quality data and strong technical expertise.

Council is currently developing the Asset Management Framework, and this is an area for improvement and will remain a focus from 2022 onwards. Until there is a robust implementation of the Asset Management Framework across Council, this will remain a critical risk.

Water

As a Local Water Utility, Council is responsible for the safe and secure provision of water. Council has partnered with NSW Public Works Advisory to deliver an Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM Strategy) to meet Best Practice Water Management which is the industry standard for safe and secure water supply.

The recent severe drought that peaked in 2019 has highlighted the adverse impact that inadequate water supply can have on the economic and social fabric of our region. Investment in our water security is not only essential to ensure we can remain resilient through future droughts, but also has the potential to take the brakes off our growth potential and, will allow us to set on a growth path.

There is a significant shortfall of water capacity equal to about 40% of current demand. Raising the Malpas Dam wall by the maximum 6.5 metres would still leave us around 20% short of current demand. With any sort of growth, our region's shortfall will be back towards current levels in a short period. The reason for the shortfall is that the catchment for the Malpas Dam is reaching its limit.

Council has a $157 million Water Security Package which includes raising the Malpas Dam wall by the maximum 6.5 metres, acquiring and commissioning Oaky River Dam or alternatively building off-take from Styx River, and connecting it to Malpas Dam. This will secure the future needs of the region and support a population of around 50,000.

The safe and secure provision of water is an essential element for our region to grow and remain sustainable and Council will continue to advocate to State and Federal Governments to help fund our Water Security Package.

What the Community has told us

As part of the process of developing the Advancing our Region Community Plan on behalf of the community, Council conducted extensive community engagement in November 2021. Below is a summary of what the community told us that they want for their region, why they love our region and what they want improved in our region.

This feedback was utilised to develop the Advancing our Region Community Plan, and consequently inform the initiatives that Council commits to undertake through this Delivery Program. A full copy of the results of the 2021 community engagement can be found on Council's website under 'Council/Integrated Planning and Reporting'. The key themes across the engagement, in relation to our aspirations for the region, were economic activation, a focus on environmental sustainability, quality leadership and governance, and improvements to transport infrastructure.

Our community's 2032 vision for our region (rankings)	What we love and value about our region (top 6 listed)	What we want improved in our Region (rankings)
#1. Economically robust	Our natural environment	#1. Transport and Infrastructure
#2. Environmentally sustainable	Our community	#2. Environmental Sustainability
#3. Led through good governance	Education and training	#3. Economic Development
#4. Strong tourism sector	Parks and playgrounds	#4. Shopping
#5. A cohesive community	Arts culture and heritage	#5. Tourism
	Our location	

Community Satisfaction Survey

Armidale Regional Council engaged Taverner Research to conduct a community satisfaction phone survey of the community (n=400) in November 2021. The results of the feedback have informed the Advancing our Region Community Plan, Council's Delivery Program, as well as improvements in Council's general operations. The initial 2021 results will provide the benchmark for improvement over the next four years of the Delivery Program, with the survey to be conducted annually.

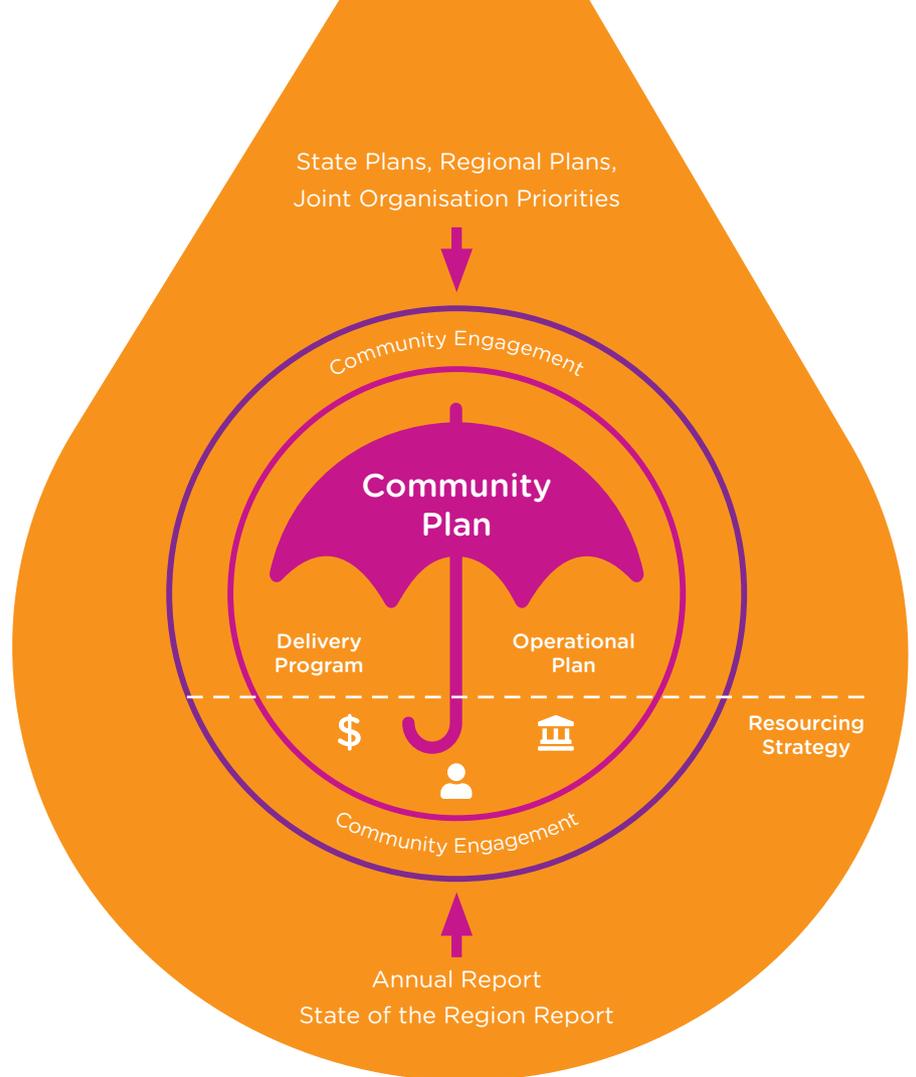| 2021 Community Satisfaction results	17% of respondents were satisfied with Council's overall performance, against 53% dissatisfied and 30% neutral	59% of respondents disagreed that Council spent its money wisely
Council's mean satisfaction score was 2.43 (on a five-point scale)	Satisfaction with specific Council services was highest for: • Parks, reserves, and playgrounds • Sporting facilities • Waste and recycling • Airport operations • Libraries • Council pools • Arts, cultural and heritage facilities	When satisfaction scores were ranked against perceived importance, some key priorities for Council emerged: • Sealed roads • Community information and consultation • Development Applications and planning • Economic development and attracting new investment • Being a well-run and managed Council

Integrated Planning and Reporting

All NSW Councils are required to develop and report on a set of plans and strategies which assist in identifying and responding to community aspirations and needs.

This framework is known as the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and aims to:

- Integrate and streamline statutory planning and reporting
- Strengthen strategic focus
- Align with national sustainability frameworks
- Ensure accountability and responsiveness to local communities

The key plans and reports under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework are outlined below, and all documents are guided by, and developed in consultation with, our community:

State Plans, Regional Plans, Joint Organisation Priorities

Community Engagement

Community Plan

Delivery Program

Operational Plan

Resourcing Strategy

Community Engagement

Annual Report
State of the Region Report

	Duration / timing	Outputs	Description
Community Plan	10 Years	Community Goals and Strategies	Outlines the goals and aspirations of the community, captured through extensive community engagement
Delivery Program	4 Years	Council Initiatives	A program of Council-led initiatives that achieve the goals of the Community Plan that are in Council's remit
Resourcing Strategy	4 Years	Council Resources: Finances, Assets, People	Asset Management Strategy, Workforce Management Plan, Long-Term Financial Plan. A set of plans and strategies that ensure Council has the necessary resources and assets, and that Council plans accordingly.
Operational Plan	1 Year	Council Actions	An annual plan of actions that support the Delivery Program initiatives.
Annual Report	1 Year	Reporting: Delivery Program, Operational Plan	An annual report to the community on the progress of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan
State of the Region Report	End of Council Term	Reporting: Community Plan	A report, published in the year of a Council Election, that assesses progress with respect to the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan

The six pillars
of the Community Plan

There are six key pillars in the Advancing our Region Community Plan. Within each pillar are two goals – these are the key community aspirations that we seek to achieve. The following sections of the Plan feature each of the Pillars, their prioritised goals, and several supporting strategies.

The impact of climate change

Climate change is having a broad-reaching impact on our lives including our health and wellbeing, natural environment, built environments and local economy. Many of the strategies in this Plan are impacted by climate change, both directly and indirectly, and will require consideration of the resources and response necessary to mitigate and plan for climate change risks. The Plan identifies these strategies and the impact of climate change by this symbol.

Our 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.

Thriving Region Economy & Tourism

Connected Region Transport & Technology

Future Region Sustainability & Resilience

Liveable Region Places & Spaces

Enriched Region Community & Culture

Strong Region Engagement & Responsibility

Goal 1
A strong economy, sustainable growth, and opportunity - Strategies:
- ➔ Attract new job creating investment to the region
- ➔ Support existing businesses and local industries to grow, prosper, change and adapt
- ➔ Plan and enable sustainable job and economic growth
- ➔ Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities
- ➔ Foster a culture of lifetime education and ensure local education services meet the needs of our community

Goal 2
A destination of choice, renowned for its beauty, heritage, and unique attractions - Strategies:
- ➔ Promote a regional approach to tourism that grows our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW
- ➔ Promote and enhance the extraordinary natural assets, beauty, climate, and location that our region enjoys
- ➔ Provide attractions and events that enhance our region's offering to locals and Tourists
- ➔ Encourage locals to shop in the region, and make our region the choice for shopping in the broader New England area

Goal 1
Quality infrastructure that makes it safe and easy to travel around our region - Strategies:
- ➔ Build and maintain quality, safe, and accessible road transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs, bus stops and parking facilities
- ➔ Support the implementation and usage of active transport infrastructure across the region

Goal 2
Transport and technology that enable connectivity both locally and outside the region - Strategies:
- ➔ Provide access to public and private transport services that link our community to our local towns and villages, other regions, our local attractions, and lifestyle infrastructure.
- ➔ Promote and encourage the establishment and uptake of sustainable transport options and services
- ➔ Utilise our access to the high-speed data and advancing technology to increase connectivity within and outside our region

Goal 1
A flourishing natural environment that is protected and enhanced - Strategies:
- ➔ Promote and support biodiversity protection and management
- ➔ Protect and enhance our waterways, catchments and creek lands
- ➔ Foster collaborations that improve understanding and action to protect our natural environment

Goal 2 A clean, green, and responsible region
Strategies:
- ➔ Proactively adapt to and mitigate the local impacts of climate change
- ➔ Promote and increase use of renewable resources and alternative energy sources
- ➔ Collect, handle, dispose, recycle and reuse waste responsibly and innovatively
- ➔ Create a cleaner, healthier environment with good air quality
- ➔ Ensure the community is provided with safe and accessible water that is sustainably managed now and into the future
- ➔ Prepare for, prevent, and manage natural disasters

Goal 1 Public spaces and infrastructure that facilitate health, community connections and opportunities - Strategies:
- ➔ Provide appropriate, planned and maintained facilities that allow people to meet, congregate and learn
- ➔ Enhance the public spaces and natural landscapes that are a part of our region's identity and provide beauty, vibrancy, community connection and healthy ecosystem.
- ➔ Foster towns and villages that are vibrant, well-serviced and supported to achieve their localised priorities
- ➔ Enhance and maintain sporting facilities to meet the needs of our local community and neighbouring regions, and to entice regional, state, and national events
- ➔ Enhance and maintain recreation spaces to offer quality of life, entertainment and family-friendly activities to residents and visitors

Goal 2 Proactive, responsible, and innovative regional planning that grows us sustainably - Strategies:
- ➔ Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy
- ➔ Ensure adequate and available housing to meet community needs
- ➔ Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage
- ➔ Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries

Goal 1
Access to the services and support that facilitate quality of life - Strategies:
- ➔ Ensure health and community service provision meets the needs of our growing and ageing population
- ➔ Recognise and support the diverse needs of our community
- ➔ Foster safety and security within our community and support the provision of basic needs

Goal 2
A proud, inclusive, and cohesive community that celebrates our region in all its diversity and culture - Strategies:
- ➔ Support artistic endeavours, events, and celebrations, creating a thriving arts and culture scene
- ➔ Provide public access to facilities that enhance our learning, social and culture fulfilment
  Celebrate our local Aboriginal history and traditions, and support cultural understanding and development
- ➔ Celebrate our rich regional history and heritage
- ➔ Create an inclusive and cohesive community that celebrates differences and similarities
- ➔ Encourage, support, and promote community groups and volunteers in their invaluable contributions to community life

Goal 1 An informed and actively engaged community, that builds partnerships and shapes its future - Strategies:
- ➔ Help the community to be informed and have input into decisions about its region and future
- ➔ Create partnerships between our community, levels of government and businesses that contribute to our growth and development
- ➔ Empower the community and our leaders to make positive change and to unify the region

Goal 2 Strong governance and leadership that supports our region to grow and prosper - Strategies:
- ➔ Provide a strong, transparent, sustainable, and responsive governance for our region
- ➔ Ensure that strategic directions are informed by, and with, the community and are delivered in consideration of available resources
- ➔ Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community
- ➔ Make open and transparent decisions that are informed by stakeholders, leading practices, systems, and technologies

Delivery Program 2022-2026

The Delivery Program

The Delivery Program 2022-2026 outlines the initiatives that Armidale Regional Council can and will undertake to help achieve the goals of the Advancing our Region Community Plan.

The Delivery Program is Armidale Regional Council's commitment to the community for the duration of the Councillor Elected Term, and up to four years.

Each of the Council initiatives outlined in this document has been developed in line with Council resources to ensure that Council can achieve them with the finances, people, and assets available to it.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Annual Operation Plan which details the service levels provided in each year of the four-year Delivery Program. In order to meet service levels and community expectations, some Delivery Program Initiatives will require additional financial contributions through a Special Rate Variation. These Initiatives are marked with the following: **$SRV**

Measuring our success

Armidale Regional Council will report back to the community at least every six months through a detailed Council Report. This report will outline progress and completion of the Council Initiatives in this Delivery Program and flag any potential issues with their completion.

The Annual Report is also one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community, and outlines Council's progress and success in achieving the Delivery Program. It is not a report to the Office of Local Government or the NSW Government – it is a report to the community. The Annual Report focuses on the council's implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan because these are the plans that are wholly the council's responsibility. The Annual Report must be presented to the Minister for Local Government and uploaded onto Council's website by 30 November each year.

Advancing our Region Community Plan

6 Pillars
↓
12 Goals
↓
48 Strategies
↓
Delivery Program
Council Initiatives

Resourcing the Delivery Program – Restore and Thrive Strategy

It is a requirement, under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, that Council plan out the financial, workforce and asset requirements that will support the Delivery Program 2022-2026. This information can be found in the Armidale Regional Council Resourcing Strategy.

Detailed long-term (10-year) financial forecasts can be found in the Resourcing Strategy, and this includes the estimates of what the Delivery Program could cost over the four years. The four-year forecast has been developed according to what elements of Council's contribution to achieving the Advancing our Region Community Plan will be delivered over the period of the Delivery Program 2022-2026.

Not dissimilar to many NSW Councils, Armidale Regional Council faces ongoing financial pressures, and must determine solutions to delivering quality programs and services within finite revenue and funding opportunities, as well as managing funding gaps in asset maintenance and renewals. This backlog in assets will continue to grow if not addressed in the short-term and will continue to place enormous pressure on the Armidale Regional Council's operating and capital budgets, while impeding the Council's ability to fund the initiatives that help our community grow, prosper and thrive.

There is also a strong push from the community to seize on our economic, population growth and tourism opportunities, and Council is committed to growing the region and providing prosperity for our community. However, in order to implement the growth and activation initiatives that will realise this prosperity, Council must first address the infrastructure backlog funding issues and undertake the necessary planning and strategic work that will begin the growth phase.

Council has undertaken, and will continue to undertake, improvements in productivity, cost recovery and cost efficiencies, however these improvements will not be able to fully fund the asset backlog. To restore Council's financial position and ensure that all assets are managed effectively, Council will be required to seek a Special Rate Variation.

This Delivery Program outlines the roadmap for a two-phase strategy to **Restore and Thrive.** This strategy is designed to restore financial viability and mitigate future funding gaps, in a financially responsible way in the short-term, and prepare Council and the region to create the growth and activation that will solidify the Armidale Region as a vibrant and popular major regional centre.

Phase 1

● Years 1 & 2 of the Delivery Program

RESTORE

- Get Council on track to financial sustainability
  - Realise efficiencies in processes, costs and cost-recovery of services and programs
  - Increase revenue to be self-sufficient and be able to restore our assets through the mechanism of a Special Rate Variation

- Plan for growth and activation
  - Implement an organisational structure that will support growth initiatives
  - Create the strategies, plans and organisational processes that will support growth and activation initiatives
  - Lobby and apply for funding to grow the region

Phase 2

● Years 3 & 4 of the Delivery Program

THRIVE

- Rationalise assets and restore remaining asset quality to improve condition and reduce ongoing maintenance and renewal costs
- Build internal reserves to mitigate unexpected expenses and invest in future initiatives in line with community needs
- Implement growth and activation initiatives
  - Industry attraction and retention strategies
  - Activation precincts
  - Sustainable job growth initiatives
  - Tourist attraction campaigns

Council is committed to balancing the financial and growth needs of the region, and the following pages show Armidale Regional Council's estimated budget statement for the four years (2022-2026).

By the Financial Year 2024-25, Council aims to meet all the Office of Local Government Performance Ratios, while providing an operating profit to allow Council to build internal reserves to deliver initiatives that will achieve the Advancing our Region Community Plan, prepare for unexpected events, fund initiatives that will grow our region, and to service the community to expected levels.

Income Statement

The following estimates assume Council is able to obtain a Special Rate Variation from the 2023-2024 financial year onwards.

	2022/23 $'000	2023/24 $'000	2024/25 $'000	2025/26 $'000
Revenue:				
Rates & Annual Charges	38,804	42,898	47,595	52,975
User Charges & Fees	28,485	21,990	22,775	23,591
Interest & Investment Revenue	1,534	1,315	1,333	1,337
Other Revenues	4,408	4,519	4,631	4,747
Operating Grants & Contributions	12,102	11,785	11,993	12,206
Capital Grants & Contributions	75,794	14,502	31,602	26,602
Total Revenue	161,128	97,008	119,929	121,458
Expenses:				
Employee Costs	28,846	28,256	28,962	29,686
Borrowing Costs	1,385	1,202	1,016	830
Materials & Contracts	32,452	27,668	28,709	29,602
Depreciation	21,789	22,334	22,892	23,464
Other Expenses	1,858	1,905	1,953	2,001
Total Expenses	86,330	81,364	83,532	85,584
Net Result	74,798	15,644	36,397	35,875
Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	(996)	1,143	4,795	9,273
Operating Result Summary				
General Fund Surplus/ (Deficit)	(3,193)	(1,616)	1,435	5,270
Water Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	1,285	1,660	2,061	2,489
Sewerage Fund Surplus/ (Deficit)	912	1,099	1,299	1,513
Consolidated Surplus/(Deficit)	(996)	1,143	4,795	9,273

Capital Works Program

	2022/23 $'000	2023/24 $'000	2024/25 $'000	2025/26 $'000
General Fund	84,245	19,758	16,971	23,367
Water Fund	12,126	25,650	29,650	26,450
Sewerage Fund	1,550	8,420	22,460	12,460
Consolidated	97,921	53,828	69,081	62,277

Quick reference guide

The Delivery Program is organised according to the six key pillars of the Advancing our Region Community Plan. In order to easily find the services or programs of interest, please use the following table:

6 Key Pillars	Council areas of interest		
Thriving Region Economy and Tourism	Regional activation Planning Tourism Education	Industry Business Employment Entertainment and attractions	CBD activation
Connected Region Transport and Technology	Roads Public and private transport Airport	Inter-regional train and bus travel Technology and data Footpaths	Cycleways Sustainable transport
Future Region Sustainability and Resilience	Biodiversity Waterways, catchments and creeklands Climate change	Renewable and alternative resources Waste Water	Air quality Natural disaster management
Liveable Region Places and Spaces	Buildings and facilities CBD infrastructure Creeklands	Parks, gardens and open space Sporting facilities Villages Recreation facilities	
Enriched Region Community and Culture	Health and community services Support for disadvantaged Community safety Regulatory functions	Aged services Youth services Disability services and support Volunteers	Aboriginal services and support Arts and culture History and heritage
Strong Region Engagement and Responsibility	Community engagement Community access to support Community and government partnerships	Council functions Governance Strategic directions of Council	Council resource management – assets, workforce and finance Systems and processes

How to read this Delivery Program

Council's role in each initiative is outlined in the following sections. The definitions for each role are:

Plan
Develop plans and strategies

Deliver
Implement plans and strategies

Provide
Provide services

Facilitate
Action things to happen

Regulate
Implement compliance

Partner
Work with other people, organisations and levels of government

Advocate
Promote and lobby for the needs of our community

In order to meet service levels and community expectations, some Delivery Program Initiatives will require additional financial contributions through a Special Rate Variation. These Initiatives are marked with the following.

$SRV

Thriving Region

Economy & Tourism

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **A strong economy, sustainable growth, and opportunity**

Strategies:

- Attract new job creating investment to the region
- Support existing businesses and local industries to grow, prosper, change and adapt
- Plan and enable sustainable job and economic growth
- Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities
- Foster a culture of lifetime education and ensure local education services meet the needs of our community

Goal 2 - **A destination of choice, renowned for its beauty, heritage, and unique attractions**

Strategies:

- Promote a regional approach to tourism that grows our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW
- Promote and enhance the extraordinary natural assets, beauty, climate, and location that our region enjoys
- Provide attractions and events that enhance our region's offering to locals and Tourists
- Encourage locals to shop in the region, and make our region the choice for shopping in the broader New England area

Community feedback rankings on economic development and tourism:

Q: What do you think our region should be like in 2032?

#1 - A robust economy

#4 - A strong tourism sector

Q: Top 3 Challenges for our region

#1 - Economic growth

Thriving Region

Goal 1

T1. A strong economy, sustainable growth, and opportunity

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
T1.1 Attract new job creating investment to the region	Deliver a targeted industry attraction package for engine industries including protected horticulture, renewables, small manufacturing, and education (T1.1.1) 💧	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development		■		
	Deliver a promotion package focused on our region's lifestyle proposition to encourage people to relocate to our region (T1.1.2)	Deliver	Sustainable Development		■		
	Deliver activation precincts package for engine industries including the Airside Precinct (T1.1.3)	Deliver	Sustainable Development	■			
	Leverage our status as a Renewable Energy Zone to attract new engine room industries and negotiate community benefit sharing arrangements that deliver a long-term dividend for the region (T1.1.4) **$SRV** 💧	Deliver	Sustainable Development			■	■
T1.2 Support existing businesses and local industries to grow, prosper, change and adapt	Partner with local business groups and industry bodies to develop initiatives to support local businesses (T1.2.1)	Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	
	Assist local businesses to develop their skills and online presence (T1.2.2)	Facilitate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	
	Enhance and maintain Council's Local Procurement Policy and associated targets for local procurement (T1.2.3)	Deliver	Finance	■	■	■	■
T1.3 Plan and enable sustainable job and economic growth	Prepare a 20-year planning vision for the region (T1.3.1)	Plan	Sustainable Development		■		
	Review the Local Environmental Plan to ensure industries and land uses that are compatible with the region's vision are welcomed in (T1.3.2)	Plan	Sustainable Development	■			
	Provide planning and business concierge services for engine industries (T1.3.3) **$SRV**	Provide	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
T1.4 Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities	Partner with the local TAFE to encourage local employers to employ apprentices and trainees (T1.4.1)	Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Increase the number of apprentices and trainees employed by Council and promote the successes of the employment and training (T1.4.2)	Provide	People and Culture	■	■	■	■
T1.5 Foster a culture of lifetime education and ensure local education services meet the needs of our community	Provide contemporary library services that support education and learning (T1.5.1)	Provide	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Support the UNE Smart Region Incubator by providing an appropriate facility within the Old War Memorial Library (T1.5.2)	Provide	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■

Thriving Region

Goal 2

T2. A destination of choice, renowned for its beauty, heritage, and unique attractions

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
T2.1 Promote a regional approach to tourism that grows our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW	Promote the ARC Local Government Area via the development of a regional brand (T2.1.1) **$SRV**	Plan, Deliver	Communications, Marketing, Community Services			■	■
	Deliver the ARC Tourism Strategy initiatives (T2.1.2) **$SRV**	Deliver	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Enhance signage, visitor information and traffic direction through our regional city, town, and villages (T2.1.3)	Provide	Communications, Marketing, Community Services		■	■	■
T2.2 Promote and enhance the extraordinary natural assets, beauty, climate, and location that our region enjoys	Attract increased visitors through promotion of our natural assets and local attractions (T2.2.1) **$SRV**	Plan, Deliver	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Partner with, or advocate on behalf of, National Parks and other stakeholders to develop an integrated plan for our natural assets (T2.2.2)	Partner, Advocate	Communications, Marketing, Community Services			■	■
	Continue to partner with neighboring Councils to leverage the broader area, via New England High Country campaigns (T2.2.3)	Partner	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■	■	■	■
T2.3 Provide attractions and events that enhance our region's offering to locals and tourists	Partner with community groups and organisations to plan and support events that will attract tourism and provide entertainment to our local community (T2.3.1)	Partner	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Investigate future entertainment, attractions and lifestyle infrastructure that would enhance the region's offering (T2.3.2) **$SRV**	Plan	Communications, Marketing, Community Services		■	■	■
T2.4 Encourage locals to shop in the region, and make our region the choice for shopping in the broader New England area	Partner with local business groups to create a 'shop local' campaign (T2.4.1)	Partner, Deliver	Sustainable Development			■	
	Develop CBD Activation Plans (T2.4.2)	Deliver	Sustainable Development		■		
	Host events and engagements in the Mall and regional CBDs to attract additional foot traffic (T2.4.3)	Facilitate, Provide	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■

Connected Region

Transport & Technology

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **Quality infrastructure that makes it safe and easy to travel around our region**

Strategies:

- Build and maintain quality, safe, and accessible road transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs, bus stops and parking facilities

- Support the implementation and usage of active transport infrastructure across the region

Goal 2 - **Transport and technology that enable connectivity both locally and outside the region**

Strategies:

- Provide access to public and private transport services that link our community to our local towns and villages, other regions, our local attractions, and lifestyle infrastructure.

- Promote and encourage the establishment and uptake of sustainable transport options and services

- Utilise our access to the high-speed data and advancing technology to increase connectivity within and outside our region

Community feedback rankings related to transport:

Q: What do you want improved about our region?

#1 Transport Infrastructure

Connected Region

Goal 1

C1. Quality infrastructure makes it safe and easy to travel around our region

| Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
C1.1 Build and maintain quality, safe, and accessible road transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs, bus stops and parking facilities	Partner with Transport for NSW to deliver the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity (HVSP) Strategy (C1.1.1) **$SRV**	Partner	Roads and Parks		■	■	■
	Upgrade and maintain transport infrastructure in accordance with the ten-year Capital Works Program and service levels (C1.1.2) **$SRV**	Provide	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Deliver federal and state funding agreements to improve safety including the Blackspot program (C1.1.3)	Partner	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Partner with the NSW Government to restore and reclassify Armidale-Kempsey Road (C1.1.4)	Partner	Project Management Office	■	■	■	
	Design and deliver the Saumerez Road Upgrade as part of the National Trust Sustainable Saumarez Homestead Tourism Project (SSHTP) (C1.1.5)	Partner, Provide	Roads and Parks		■		
C1.2 Support the implementation and usage of active transport infrastructure across the region	Develop a Walking and Cycling Strategy that links residents with business, attractions, and lifestyle infrastructure and upgrade infrastructure accordingly (C1.2.1) **$SRV** 💧	Plan	Sustainable Development		■		
	Develop an Open Spaces Strategy and upgrade infrastructure accordingly (C1.2.2)	Plan	Sustainable Development		■	■	■

Connected Region

Goal 2

C2. Transport and technology that enable connectivity both locally and outside the region

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
C2.1 Provide access to public and private transport services that link our community to our local towns and villages, other regions, our local attractions, and lifestyle infrastructure.	Partner with community groups and other tiers of government to advocate for additional transport options to other regions and cities (C2.1.1)	Advocate, Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Partner with the UNE and transport providers to investigate and improve campus-to-CBD transport links (C2.1.2)	Partner	Sustainable Development		■	■	■
	Advocate for improved transport options between Armidale, Guyra and our villages (C2.1.3)	Facilitate	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Improve and maintain air services at the Armidale Regional Airport (C2.1.4)	Facilitate	Airport	■	■	■	■
	Conduct effective airport stakeholder engagement with local commercial airport operators (C2.1.5)	Facilitate	Airport	■	■	■	■
	Seek funding for the New England Rail Trail from Ben Lomond to Armidale (C2.1.6)	Plan	Communications, Marketing, Community Services	■			
	Construct Rail Trail infrastructure from Ben Lomond to Armidale (C2.1.7)	Deliver	Roads and Parks			■	■
C2.2 Promote and encourage the establishment and uptake of sustainable transport options and services	Provide increased electric car charging points across the region to promote usage and visitor spending (C2.2.1) 💧	Provide	Sustainable Development			■	■
	Develop a regional map series featuring popular and available cycling and walking routes and infrastructure (C2.2.2) 💧	Deliver	Communications, Marketing, Community Services		■		
C2.3 Utilise our access to the high-speed data and advancing technology to increase connectivity within and outside our region	Plan, seek funding and implement Smart Communities Framework in line with the NSW Smart Public Places Guide including streets, public facilities, and open spaces (C2.3.1)	Plan	Sustainable Development			■	
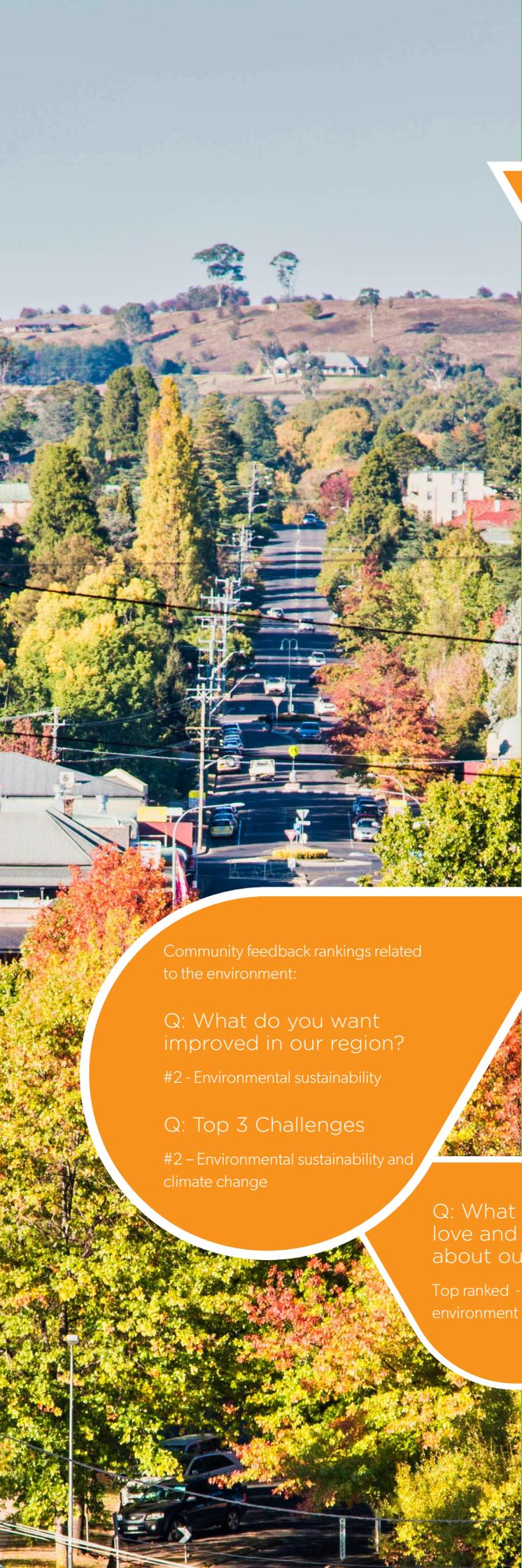
Future Region

Sustainability & Resilience

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **A flourishing natural environment that is protected and enhanced**

Strategies:
- Promote and support biodiversity protection and management
- Protect and enhance our waterways, catchments and creek lands
- Foster collaborations that improve understanding and action to protect our natural environment

Community feedback rankings related to the environment:

Q: What do you want improved in our region?

#2 - Environmental sustainability

Q: Top 3 Challenges

#2 – Environmental sustainability and climate change

Q: What do you love and value about our region?

Top ranked - Our natural environment

Goal 2 - **A clean, green, and responsible region**

Strategies:
- Proactively adapt to and mitigate the local impacts of climate change
- Promote and increase use of renewable resources and alternative energy sources
- Collect, handle, dispose, recycle and reuse waste responsibly and innovatively
- Create a cleaner, healthier environment with good air quality
- Ensure the community is provided with safe and accessible water that is sustainably managed now and into the future
- Prepare for, prevent and manage natural disasters

Future Region

Goal 1

F1. A flourishing natural environment that is protected and enhanced

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
F1.1 Promote and support biodiversity protection and management	Develop a Biodiversity Strategy (F1.1.1) **$SRV** 💧	Plan	Sustainable Development				■
	Identify parcels of land for the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (F1.1.2) 💧	Plan	Sustainable Development				■
	Maintain and implement Council's Crown Land Plans of Management (F1.1.3)	Provide	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
F1.2 Protect and enhance our waterways, catchments and creeklands	Work with key stakeholders to support the clean-up and remediation of creeks and waterways through agreed provisions and services (F1.2.1) 💧	Partner	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
F1.3 Foster collaborations that improve understanding and action to protect our natural environment	Partner with environmental, Land Care and business groups to promote local environmental, biodiversity and agricultural events and programs (F1.3.1) 💧	Partner	Roads and Parks		■	■	■
	Support local environmental groups through in-kind and financial support, where agreed, to facilitate improved environmental outcomes (F1.3.2) 💧	Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■

Future Region

Goal 2

F2. A clean, green, and responsible region

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
F2.1 Proactively adapt to and mitigate the local impacts of climate change	Deliver actions from Project Zero30 and Council's EcoARC strategies (F2.1.1)	Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Maintain Council's commitment to the Climate Emergency Declaration and promote further community-led action (F2.1.2) 💧	Facilitate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Partner with community groups to educate and promote urban sustainability initiatives (F2.1.3) 💧	Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Deliver the Renewable Energy Action Plan a program of sustainable initiatives for Council operations (F2.1.4) 💧	Deliver	Corporate and Strategy		■	■	■
F2.2 Promote and increase use of renewable resources and alternative energy sources	Advocate for greater access to renewable energy for the local community as part of Renewable Energy Zone (F2.2.1) 💧	Advocate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Attract further local investment in renewable energy in line with community expectations (F2.2.2) 💧	Facilitate		■	■	■	■
F2.3 Collect, handle, dispose, recycle and reuse waste responsibly and innovatively	Operate Council's Waste Transfer Stations and Landfills in line with current and future needs and environmental standards (F2.3.1) 💧	Provide, Regulate	Utilities	■	■	■	■
	Review village waste collection and waste sites to meet EPA standards and community expectations (F2.3.2)	Plan	Utilities		■		
	Negotiate and manage contractual arrangements with recycling operators to provide recycling services (F2.3.3)	Provide	Utilities	■	■	■	■
	Enhance and maintain 'reuse' operations and services including 'City to Soil,' Refuse Farm, the Resource Recovery Centre (2.3.4) 💧	Provide	Utilities	■	■	■	■
F2.4 Create a cleaner, healthier environment with good air quality	Advocate to the NSW and Federal Governments real time and publically accessible monitoring of the Armidale air quality during the winter months (F2.4.1)	Advocate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Advocate to the NSW and Federal Governments for assistance to develop a Clean Air Strategy and deliver an education program on the causes, impacts and ways to improve air quality in the Armidale Region (F2.4.2)	Advocate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
F2.5 Ensure the community is provided with safe and accessible water and that our water availability is sustainably managed now and into the future.	Collect, store, treat and distribute quality water in line with community needs, availability, and future requirements (F2.5.1) 💧	Provide	Utilities	■	■	■	■
	Finalise and implement the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy to plan for future infrastructure and water service needs (F2.5.2) 💧	Plan	Utilities	■	■	■	■
	Work with Southern New-England Landcare, under a Memorandum of Understanding and the 10 Year Catchment Water Quality Strategic Plan to improve the environment and water quality around ARC water catchments (F2.5.3) 💧	Partner	Utilities	■	■	■	■
	Investigate options and funding for the replacement of the Armidale Sewer Plant (F2.5.4)	Plan	Utilities	■	■	■	
	Operate, maintain, and update the sewer networks and plants to minimise blockages, overflows, and environmental impact (F2.5.5)	Provide	Utilities	■	■	■	■
F2.6 Prepare for, prevent, and manage natural disasters	Work with local and state emergency services to prepare for and respond to natural disasters (F2.6.1) 💧	Partner	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Complete and maintain a fit-for-purpose Business Continuity Plan that facilities Council's effective recovery and resilience building from a disaster (F2.6.2)	Plan	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Support local emergency services with administration and facilities as agreed and available (F2.6.3)	Facilitate	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■

Liveable Region

Places & Spaces

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **Public spaces and infrastructure that facilitate health, community connections and opportunities**

Strategies:

- Provide appropriate, planned and maintained facilities that allow people to meet, congregate and learn

- Enhance the public spaces and natural landscapes that are a part of our region's identity and provide beauty, vibrancy, community connection and healthy ecosystem.

- Foster towns and villages that are vibrant, well-serviced and supported to achieve their localised priorities

- Enhance and maintain sporting facilities to meet the needs of our local community and neighbouring regions, and to entice regional, state, and national events

- Enhance and maintain recreation spaces to offer quality of life, entertainment and family-friendly activities to residents and visitors

Goal 2 - **Proactive, responsible, and innovative regional planning that grows us sustainably**

Strategies:

- Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy

- Ensure adequate and available housing to meet community needs

- Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage

- Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries

Liveable Region

Goal 1

L1. Public spaces and infrastructure that facilitate health, community connections and opportunities

| Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
L1.1 Provide appropriate, planned and maintained community facilities that allow people to meet, congregate and learn	Develop and maintain Council-owned facilities and service infrastructure in line with Asset Management Plans and community needs (L1.1.1) **$SRV** 💧	Deliver	Plant and Facilities	■	■	■	■
	Regularly review Council's property portfolio for functionality and seek opportunities for development or divestment (L1.1.2)	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Support local groups and advocate on behalf of the community to seek grants and project manage upgrades of local facilities and infrastructure (L1.1.3)	Advocate	Plant and Facilities	■	■	■	■
L1.2 Enhance the public spaces and natural landscapes that are a part of our region's identity and provide beauty, vibrancy, community connection and healthy ecosystem	Deliver Stage 1 of the Creeklands Masterplan through Public Spaces Legacy Program funding and investigate further funding for Stages 2-5. (L1.2.1) 💧	Deliver	Roads and Parks	■	■		
	Continue community partnerships and investigate further opportunities to support future public space upgrades and developments (L1.2.2)	Partner	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Continue to deliver the Armidale Mall Vibrancy Plan and seek future funding to upgrade and enhance the Armidale Mall and regional CBDs (L1.2.3)	Deliver	Roads and Parks		■	■	■
	Maintain Council-managed parks, gardens, verges, and other shared spaces to provide attractiveness and usability in line with an Open Spaces Strategy (L1.2.4) 💧	Provide	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
L1.3 Foster towns and villages that are vibrant, well-serviced and supported to achieve their localised priorities	Support villages to develop, or deliver existing, strategic priorities. (L1.3.1)	Provide	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Create partnerships with Villages to enhance service provision and collaboration to enhance their liveability (L1.3.2) **$SRV**	Partner	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Develop a Guyra Precinct Group to assist in guiding the planning and economic development directions of Guyra (L1.3.3)	Facilitate	General Manager's Office	■			
L1.4 Enhance and maintain sporting facilities to meet the needs of our local community and neighbouring regions, and to entice regional, state, and national events	Enhance and maintain our sporting facilities to expected levels of service (L1.4.1)	Provide	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Attract regional, state, and large-scale sporting events, and increase sports tourism visitors by enhancing, maintaining and promoting our high-quality sports facilities (L1.4.2)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services		■	■	■

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
L1.5 Enhance and maintain recreation spaces to offer quality of life, entertainment and family-friendly activities to residents and visitors	Upgrade and maintain Council owned and managed recreation spaces (L1.5.1) **$SRV** 💧	Provide	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■
	Consider and implement the YMCA report on the optimisation of our aquatic facilities including future viability and enhancements (L1.5.2)	Plan	Plant and Facilities / Roads and Parks	■	■		
	Complete funded Stage 1 upgrades to the Dumaresq Dam Recreation area and plan for Stage 2 upgrades (L1.5.3)	Provide	Roads and Parks	■		■	
	Seek opportunities to enhance recreational areas that are within resource capacity and community interest (L1.5.4)	Plan	Plant and Facilities / Communications, Marketing and Community Services		■	■	■
	Consolidate and upgrade our regional playgrounds to meet community demand and operational efficiencies and plan for Curtis Park Playground upgrades Stage 2 (L1.5.5)	Plan, Deliver	Roads and Parks	■	■	■	■

Liveable Region

Goal 2

L2. Proactive and innovative regional planning that grows us sustainably

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
L2.1 Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy	Prepare and implement a water security and economic activation package (L2.1.1)	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Prepare and implement an airport and airside precinct economic activation package (L2.1.2)	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
L2.2 Ensure adequate and available land and housing to meet community needs	Develop and implement a Housing Strategy (L2.2.1) **$SRV**	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
L2.3 Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage	Review heritage related planning controls and supporting heritage studies (L2.3.1)	Plan	Sustainable Development			■	
L2.4 Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries	Prepare a Rural Futures Land Use Strategy to identify and protect prime agricultural land (L2.4.1)	Plan	Sustainable Development	■			
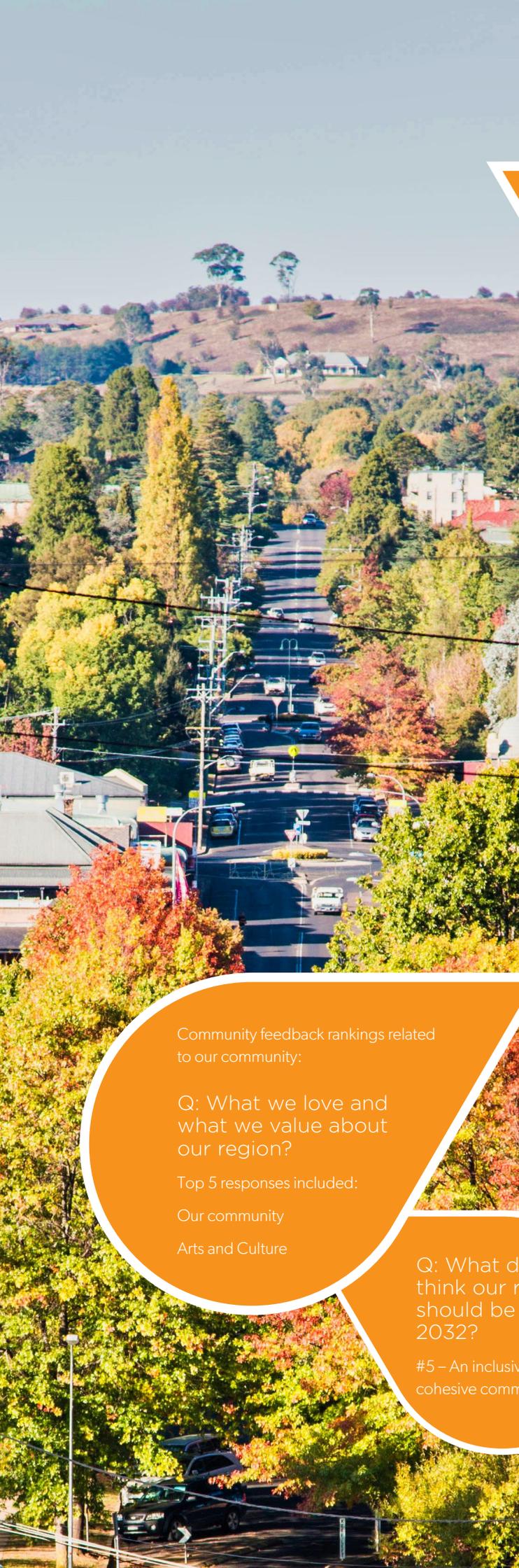
Enriched Region

Community & Culture

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **Access to the services and support that facilitate quality of life**

Strategies:

- Ensure health and community service provision meets the needs of our growing and ageing population

- Recognise and support the diverse needs of our community

- Foster safety and security within our community and support the provision of basic needs

Goal 2 - **A proud, inclusive, and cohesive community that celebrates our region in all its diversity and culture**

Strategies:

- Support artistic endeavours, events, and celebrations, creating a thriving arts and culture scene

- Provide public access to facilities that enhance our learning, social and culture fulfilment

- Celebrate our local Aboriginal history and traditions, and support cultural understanding and development

- Celebrate our rich regional history and heritage

- Create an inclusive and cohesive community that celebrates differences and similarities

- Encourage, support, and promote community groups and volunteers in their invaluable contributions to community life

Community feedback rankings related to our community:

Q: What we love and what we value about our region?

Top 5 responses included:

Our community

Arts and Culture

Q: What do you think our region should be like in 2032?

#5 – An inclusive and cohesive community

Enriched Region

Goal 1

E1. Access to the services and support that facilitate quality of life

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
E1.1 Ensure health and community service provision meets the needs of our growing and ageing population	Advocate and lobby on behalf of the community to see more specialist and general health and community services (E1.1.1)	Advocate	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■		
	Provide preschool, childcare, and long-daycare services to the Guyra community (E1.1.2)	Provide	Preschool	■	■	■	■
	Finalise the business case for an upgrade or rebuild of the Guyra Preschool and Long Daycare Centre and adopt the preferred solution (E1.1.3)	Plan, Facilitate	Corporate Strategy	■			
E1.2 Recognise and support the diverse and changing needs of our community, including those who are disadvantaged	Implement the Disability Inclusion and Action Plan (E1.2.1)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Provide youth services, events and support including coordinating Youth Week and developing a Youth Working Group (E1.2.2) **$SRV**	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Participate in local Inter-Agency meetings to foster links between agencies and community services (E1.2.3)	Partner	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Promote events, training, and job opportunities for young people through Council's information channels (E1.2.4)	Facilitate	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Support our ageing population with services, support and infrastructure. Provide Home Support Services in Guyra and Tingha in accordance with funding arrangements (E1.2.5)	Plan, Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Provide support to local settlement services to assist in successfully integrating refugees into our community (E1.2.6)	Provide, Partner	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
E1.3 Foster safety and security within our community and support the provision of basic needs	Implement and operate initiatives such as improved CCTV and street lighting, through grant opportunities, to assist in making our community safer (E1.3.1)	Deliver	Plant and Facilities	■	■	■	■
	Develop partnerships and advocate to improve local housing and homelessness to be considered through the Council Key Pillar Working Groups (E1.3.2)	Partner, Advocate	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Undertake regulatory controls that maintain community order and safety including Companion Animals Regulation, parking management, building compliance, and Development Applications (E1.3.3)	Regulate	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■

Enriched Region

Goal 2

E2. A proud, inclusive, and cohesive community that celebrates our region in all its diversity and culture

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
E2.1 Support artistic endeavours, events, and celebrations, creating a thriving arts and culture scene	Develop and deliver a revised Arts and Culture Strategic Plan (E2.1.1)	Plan, Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X		
	Promote regional arts and culture events and opportunities (E2.1.2)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
	Support arts and culture organisations to continue to provide artistic entertainment and programs across the region (E2.1.3)	Partner, Facilitate	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
E2.2 Providing public access to facilities that enhance our learning, social and culture fulfilment	Maintain an educational, inspirational, and accessible public library network across the region, including improved outreach services (E2.2.1)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
	Deliver actions from the Library Strategic Plan to enhance the library experience, services, and community contribution (E2.2.2)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
E2.3 Celebrate our local Aboriginal history and traditions, and support cultural understanding and development	Adopt and deliver a Reconciliation Action Plan to actively promote and encourage reconciliation across the region and address the Closing the Gap priorities (E2.3.1)	Plan, Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services		X		
	Actively engage with the local Aboriginal Community to assist in the development of Aboriginal resources and collections at our Libraries that showcase the unique story of our area. (E2.3.2)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services		X	X	X
E2.4 Celebrate our rich regional history and heritage	Provide and support museum experiences including exhibitions and events across the region and maintain relevant and engaging collections (E2.4.1)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
	Investigate opportunities to digitise the ARC museum collections to facilitate preservation and online access (E2.4.2)	Plan	Communications, Marketing and Community Services		X		
	Promote the tourism value and opportunities of our local history, heritage, and collections (E2.4.3)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
	Support community organisations to promote and preserve heritage and history collections (E2.4.4)	Facilitate	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X
	Continue to operate and expand our local heritage tours and investigate future partnerships (E2.4.5)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	X	X	X	X

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
E2.5 Creating an inclusive and cohesive community that celebrates differences and similarities	Encourage, promote, or deliver community events that bring people together and celebrate our community (E2.5.1)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■			
	Access and promote opportunities that enhance community cohesiveness and inclusion (E2.5.2)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Provide fit-for-purpose shared spaces for community groups that support diversity, shared interests, and community spirit (E2.5.3)	Provide	Plant and Facilities	■	■	■	■
E2.6 Encourage, support, and promote community groups and volunteers in their invaluable contributions to community life	Operate the Volunteer Rural Referral Service within the ARC local government area (E2.6.1)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Provide volunteer service opportunities and positions within Council (E2.6.2)	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Advocate on behalf of, and provide support for, volunteer-led initiatives (E2.6.3)	Advocate, Partner	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■

Strong Region

Engagement & Responsibility

Advancing our Region Community Plan

Goal 1 - **An informed and actively engaged community, that builds partnerships and shapes its future**

Strategies:
- Help the community to be informed and have input into decisions about its region and future
- Create partnerships between our community, levels of government and businesses that contribute to our growth and development
- Empower the community and our leaders to make positive change and to unify the region

Goal 2 - **Strong governance and leadership that supports our region to grow and prosper**

Strategies:
- Provide a strong, transparent, sustainable, and responsive governance for our region
- Ensure that strategic directions are informed by, and with, the community and are delivered in consideration of available resources
- Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community
- Make open and transparent decisions that are informed by stakeholders, leading practices, systems, and technologies

Community feedback rankings related to leadership:

Q: What do you think our region should be like in 2032?

#3 – Led through good governance

Q: Top 3 Challenges

#3 – Good leadership and governance

Strong Region

Goal 1

S1. An informed and actively engaged community that builds partnerships and shapes its future

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
S1.1 Help the community to be informed and have input into decisions about its region and future	Implement the Community Engagement Strategy, including its supporting framework and processes (S1.1.1)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing & Community Services				
	Deliver an effective Communications Strategy to inform the community of Council activities. (S1.1.2)	Deliver	Communications, Marketing and Community Services				
	Review and implement a customer experience strategy to improve community and council interactions (S1.1.3)	Plan, Deliver	Corporate and Strategy				
	Improve customer experience for residents and ratepayers through enhancements to technology systems including enquiries, applications, bookings, compliments, and complaints (S1.1.4) **$SRV**	Provide	Corporate and Strategy				
S1.2 Create partnerships between our community, levels of government and businesses that contribute to our growth and development	Establish Council Key Pillar Working Groups to deliver initiatives that achieve the Community Plan Goals and Strategies (S1.2.1)	Facilitate	General Manager's Office				
	Work across the region's neighbouring LGAs with the New England Joint Organisation to advocate for broader regional priorities (S1.2.2)	Partner	General Manager's Office				
	Foster constructive relationships with State and Federal representatives and agencies to ensure our voices, challenges and opportunities are heard (S1.2.3)	Partner, Advocate	General Manager's Office				
	Partner with the UNE, as our major educational institution, to enhance regional opportunities (S1.2.4)	Partner	General Manager's Office				
S1.3 Empower the community and our leaders to make positive change and to unify the region	Provide administration and professional support to Councillors to assist them to undertake their duties (S1.3.1)	Provide	General Manager's Office				
	Ensure community accessibility of information pertaining to Council Meetings (S1.3.2)	Provide	General Manager's Office				
	Promote and facilitate 'Have Your Say' opportunities on Council Meeting Agenda items (S1.3.3)	Provide, Facilitate	General Manager's Office				

Strong Region

Goal 2

S2. Strong governance and leadership that supports our region to grow and prosper

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
S2.1 Provide a strong, transparent, sustainable, and responsive governance for our region	Satisfy the Office of Local Government Compliance and Reporting Requirements (S2.1.1)	Deliver	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Deliver quality governance frameworks and reforms in line with remaining Performance Improvement Order and Governance Review actions (S2.1.2)	Deliver	Governance	■	■		
	Implement robust Audit and Risk and Improvement processes and frameworks and undertake the requirements of the Internal Audit and Risk Management Framework for Local Councils (S2.1.3) **$SRV**	Deliver	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Implement a robust Risk Management Framework for Council including operational, strategic and climate change risk (S2.1.4) **$SRV** 💧	Deliver	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Deliver actions and outcomes as defined in the Workforce Management Plan (S2.1.5) **$SRV**	Deliver	People and Culture	■	■	■	■
	Foster a culture of safety and wellbeing for our workforce (S2.1.6)	Facilitate	People and Culture	■	■	■	■
	Implement strategies to support the development of an inspiring organisational culture that motivates, sustains and rewards growth (S2.1.7) **$SRV**	Deliver	People and Culture	■	■	■	■
S2.2 Ensure that strategic directions are informed by, and with, the community and are delivered in consideration of available resources	Implement the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework in compliance with legislation (S2.2.1)	Plan, Deliver	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Implement an effective Project Management Framework across the organisation (S2.2.2)	Deliver	Project Management Office	■			
	Seek funding opportunities where they achieve the Community Plan Goals and Strategies or agreed priorities (S2.2.3) 💧	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Deliver a program of Service Planning and Review to ensure services are delivered efficiently and to service levels (S2.2.4)	Plan, Deliver	Governance	■	■		
	Ensure the Asset Management Framework is current and in line with Council's future growth and development (S2.2.5)	Plan, Deliver	Assets and Services	■	■	■	■

Community Plan Strategy	Council Initiatives	Role	Responsible Department	Year of Delivery			
				1	2	3	4
S2.3 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community	Provide high quality, targeted and sustainable services to the community that remain affordable (S2.3.1) **$SRV** 💧	Provide	Communications, Marketing and Community Services	■	■	■	■
	Maintain financial sustainability by meeting Performance Ratios and Fit For the Future Benchmarks, while ensuring sustainable cash reserves to support service levels and assets. (S2.3.2) **$SRV**	Facilitate	Finance	■	■	■	■
	Deliver a Financial Improvement Program that determines the future efficiencies and revenue sources required to fund current and future service levels (S2.3.3) **$SRV**	Deliver	Finance	■	■	■	■
	Explore the need with the community to secure additional funding through changes to the rating system to provide the quality of services and facilities expected by our community. Options will include special rate variations and rating category restructures (S2.3.4) **$SRV**	Plan, Deliver	Finance	■	■	■	■
	Manage our assets responsibly to ensure greater lifespan and usability and to reduce financial burden (S2.3.5)	Plan, Deliver	Assets and Services	■	■	■	■
	Maintain a property portfolio relevant to the services of Council and future growth (S2.3.6)	Plan, Deliver	Sustainable Development	■	■	■	■
	Maintain an appropriate Insurance Portfolio in relation to Council's assets and operations (S2.3.7) 💧	Facilitate, Deliver	Governance	■	■	■	■
	Investigate and develop Council business opportunities (S2.3.8)	Plan, facilitate	Plant and Facilities			■	■
S2.4 Make open and transparent decisions that are informed by stakeholders, leading practices, systems, and technologies	Develop and commence implementation of an information technology long-term strategy including ICT governance (S2.4.1) **$SRV**	Deliver	Corporate and Strategy		■		
	Improve user experience, including capability and capacity, of internal enterprise systems (S2.4.2) **$SRV**	Deliver	Corporate and Strategy		■	■	■
	Provide access to Council Meetings in compliance with legislation and with online accessibility (S2.4.3)	Facilitate	General Manager's Office	■	■	■	■

ARMIDALE
Regional Council

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