



Advancing our region

Your Community Plan

2025-2034

Prepared by
Armidale Regional Council
with, and on behalf of,
the community

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.



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Our Community's Plan

The Advancing Our Region Community Plan sets out the vision and goals for our region. It is a 10-year plan that aims to clearly identify the community's main priorities and future aspirations, and the strategies required to achieve them.

This plan is not Armidale Regional Council's plan, it is our community's plan - and responsibility to deliver the Plan rests with the entire community including Council, other levels of government, community organisations, industry, residents and ratepayers.

Armidale Regional Council is the caretaker of the 'Advancing our Region Community Plan' (the Plan) and ensures it is developed with, and on behalf of, the community, but we all have a role to play in delivering the Plan and making our region the best it can be.

The Plan has been shaped by over 1,800 community contributions gathered during a 2021 engagement program, and an additional 72 contributions collected during the 2024 Community Plan review engagement program. The goals and strategies of this Plan are guided by the feedback that was received in 2021 and 2024, this ensures that the future directions of the community align with its aspirations.



The Plan is presented in six themes:



A university city
that prides itself
on being dynamic,
progressive, and
innovative.



Armidale Region

Armidale – Australia’s highest city, is centrally located between Brisbane and Sydney. With a cosmopolitan culture, it is a university city that prides itself on being dynamic, progressive, and innovative.

Armidale Regional Council is located in NSW in the picturesque New England High Country region and boasts spectacular waterfalls, World Heritage listed national parks, a fascinating and diverse cultural heritage, and a thriving arts scene. It enjoys great natural beauty, with vast and productive agricultural land, cohesive local towns and villages, and a progressive Armidale city that provides many essential services to the region.

Our Opportunity

The Armidale region has faced significant challenges over the past 20 years, with stagnant population and job growth due to a lack of private and government investment.

However, several key opportunities have been identified to drive growth and improve the quality of life for residents. One major opportunity lies in the development of key industries such as Controlled Environment Horticulture, Renewable Energy, and Manufacturing. These industries have the potential to create thousands of new jobs and attract investment to the region. Additionally, the community is focused on enhancing water security, which will support industrial expansion and population growth.

Another significant opportunity for the Armidale region is its central role in the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), the largest in Australia. This zone will play a vital role in replacing coal-fired power stations in NSW and is projected to offset more than 11 million tonnes of CO₂ annually. The community is actively working to ensure that energy projects within the REZ provide environmental and community benefits. By leveraging these opportunities, the Armidale region aims to attract investment, create jobs, and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Armidale region at a glance

30,166

Estimated population (2024)



52.6%

Male



47.4%

Female

(2021)



36

Median Age

56.0%

Employed

5.7%

Unemployed

(2021)

27%

Unpaid work
(volunteer)

\$1.99 billion

Gross Regional Product
(2023)

\$256.3 million

Income generated from tourism
(2022/23)



Distance to:

500kms> Sydney

350kms> Newcastle

200kms> Coffs Harbour

500kms> Brisbane



2,900

Local businesses (2023)



Sustainability

Largest regional renewable
energy generator

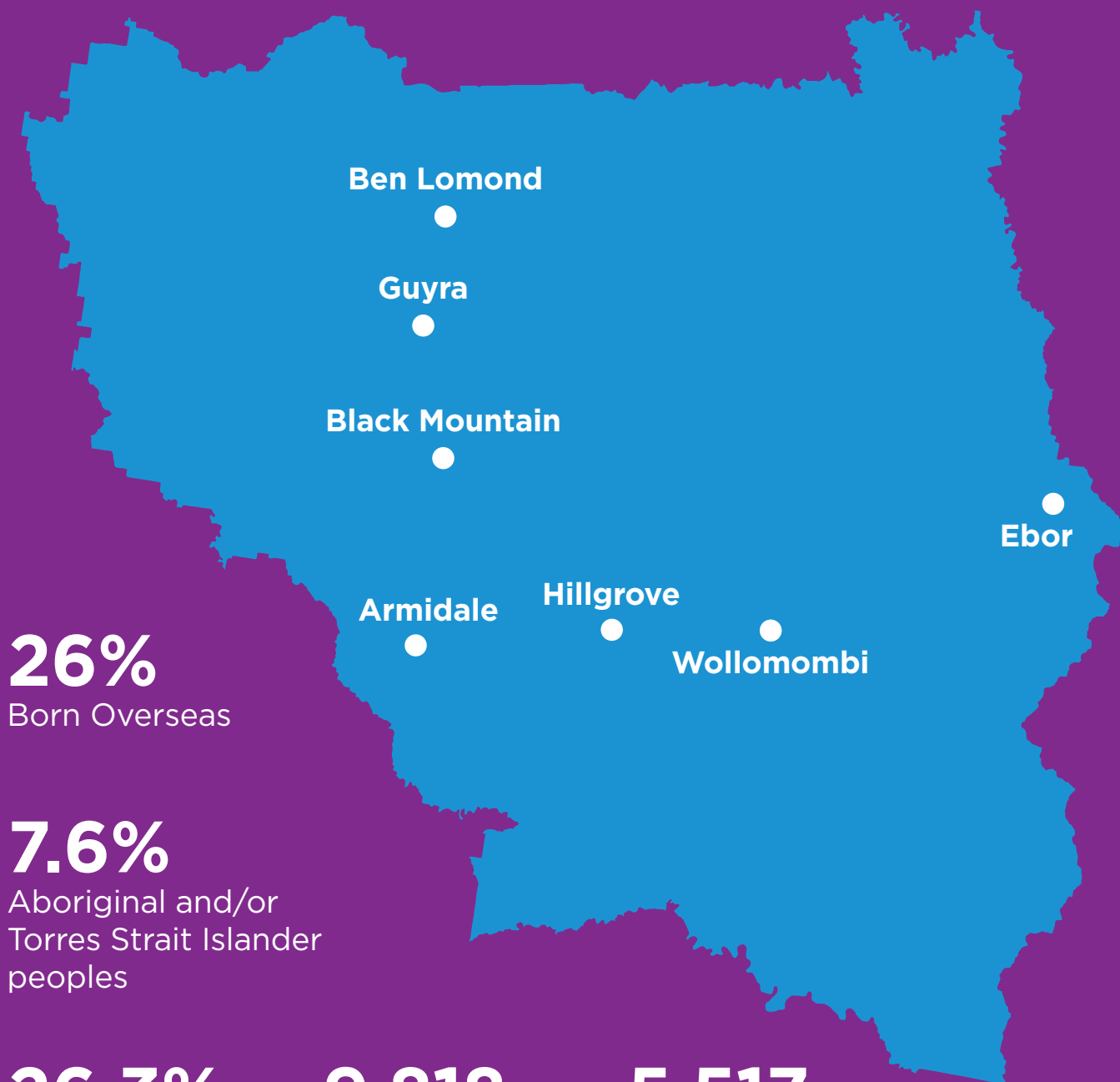


Largest industry

Education & Training



Local Government Area



26%
Born Overseas

7.6%
Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander
peoples

26.3%
Aged under
19 years

9,818
Dwellings

5,517
Family
Households

36
Median Age

36.3%
University or
Tertiary Education

14,970
Local Jobs

What we love and value about our region



Our Natural Environment:

Our climate, seasons, natural beauty, wildlife and National Parks.



Our Location:

Halfway between Sydney and Brisbane, and a short drive to the coast.



Our Community:

The people, diversity and volunteers that make up our community.



Parks & Playgrounds:

Our many beautiful outdoor spaces including parks, gardens, local playgrounds.



Arts, Culture & Heritage:

Beautiful architecture, local history and the many arts organisations, events and performances in the region.



Education & Training:

Long-established university, TAFE digital hub, variety of local schools.





Our community's 2034 vision for our region (rankings)

1. Economically robust and diverse
2. Environmentally sustainable
3. Led through good governance
4. Strong tourism sector
5. A cohesive community

2032 vision

1. Economically robust
2. Environmentally sustainable
3. Led through good governance
4. Strong tourism sector
5. A cohesive community

What we want improved in our Region (rankings)

1. Transport and infrastructure
2. Environmental sustainability
3. Economic development
4. Tourism
5. Health

2021 rankings

1. Transport and Infrastructure
2. Environmental Sustainability
3. Economic Development
4. Shopping
5. Tourism

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.

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.



The Plan identifies these strategies and the impact of climate change by this symbol.

Thriving Region

Economy and Tourism

Goal 1: A strong economy, sustainable growth, and opportunity

- Support existing and new businesses and industries in the Region
- Plan for sustainable growth and deliver infrastructure that enables jobs and improves liveability
- Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities
- Ensure local education and entrepreneurship opportunities support a thriving community

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

- Enhance our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW
- 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

Connected Region

Transport and Technology

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

- 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

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



Future Region

Sustainability and Resilience

Goal 1: A flourishing natural environment that is protected and enhanced

- 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

- 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, secure and accessible water that is sustainably managed now and into the future
- Prepare for, respond to, and assist in the recovery from natural disasters

Enriched Region

Community and Culture

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

- Ensure health and community service provisions meet the needs of our growing and ageing population
- Recognise and support the diverse and changing needs of our community, including those who are disadvantaged
- 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

- 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

Liveable Region

Places and Spaces

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

- Provide appropriate, planned and maintained community 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

- Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy
- Ensure adequate and available land and housing to meet community needs
- Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage
- Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries

Strong Region

Engagement and Responsibility

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

- 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

- 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



Thriving Region

Economy and Tourism

We will broaden our economic base and develop initiatives to grow existing and new business, and we will attract new residents and tourists to our region.

What the community said it wants:

- Opportunities and support for business/industry
- A growing and evolving region
- An attractive region that retains our young people and attracts new residents
- Abundant employment and career opportunities, leading to prosperity for all
- A thriving tourism sector – the choice for tourists coming to the New England
- A region known for its events, beauty, lifestyle opportunities and attractions




Our Goals

A strong economy, sustainable growth, and opportunity

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
T1.1	 Support existing and new businesses and industries in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses • Business groups • Council • Developers • Industry • Media • Residents • Education and training providers
T1.2	Plan for sustainable growth and deliver infrastructure that enables jobs and improves liveability	
T1.3	 Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities	
T1.4	Ensure local education and entrepreneurship opportunities support a thriving community	

A destination of choice, renowned for our beauty, heritage, and unique attractions

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
T2.1	Enhance our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Local businesses • Local Members • Residents • Community groups • Tourism and events industry • Natural assets managers • Business groups
T2.2	 Provide attractions and events that enhance our region's offering to locals and tourists	
T2.3	Encourage locals to shop in the region, and make our region the choice for shopping in the broader New England area	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
Regional population	30,166 (2024 Estimated Population)	Increase	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Forecast ID	T1.1, T1.2, T1.3
Number of employed residents	14,966 (2023)	Increase	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)	T1.4, T1.1
Growth in Gross Regional Product	\$1.99b (2023)	Increase	National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)	T1.3
Number of local businesses	2,900 (2023)	Increase	Counts of Australian Businesses Entries and Exits, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	T1.3, T2.3
Number of people with formal education beyond high school	14,672 (2021)	Increase	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	T1.4
Income generated from tourism in the region	\$256.3m (2022/23 Financial Year)	Increase	National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)	T2.1
Domestic visitor numbers	871,553 (2022/2023 Financial Year)	Increase	Tourism Research Australia	T2.1
Satisfaction with council run events	Question to be introduced to Community Satisfaction Survey	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	T2.2
Number of TAFE courses offered · On campus · Online	18 On Campus (2024) 126 Online (2024)	Maintain/ Increase	TAFE NSW	T1.4
Number of General Practitioners (GPs) in the Local Government Area (LGA) registered via Health Share	39 (2025)	Maintain/ Increase	Health Share	T1.3





A dynamic
destination for
tourists and
residents.



Connected Region

Transport and Technology

We will provide and improve high quality connections within, and outside of the region.


What the community said it wants:

- Quality transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs and cycleways
- Excellent transport links to other regions, public transport and lifestyle infrastructure



Our Goals

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

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
C1.1	Build and maintain quality, safe, and accessible transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs, bus stops, parking facilities and cycleways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council State and Federal Government Community groups • Residents
C1.2	 Support the implementation and usage of active transport infrastructure across the region	

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

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
C2.1	 Provide access and advocate for public and private transport services that link our community to our local towns and villages, other regions, our local attractions, and lifestyle infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council State and Federal Government Community groups • Community services UNE Local businesses Transport industry • Residents
C2.2	 Promote and encourage the establishment and uptake of sustainable transport options and services	
C2.3	 Utilise our access to high-speed data and advancing technology to increase connectivity within and outside our region	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
Satisfaction with local roads (sealed and unsealed)	2.52/5 (unsealed) (2023) 2.74/5 (sealed) (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	C1.1
Number of vehicle crash injuries and fatalities	43 (2023)	Decrease	Transport NSW (Road Traffic Crashes NSW)	C1.1
Growth in active network – footpaths, cycleways	437 metres (2023-24 Financial Year)	Increase	Council data	C2.2
Average Number of weekly train services from Sydney	7 (2024)	Maintain/ Increase	Transport NSW data	C2.1
Average number of passengers on flights per month	8318 (2023-24 Financial Year)	Maintain/ Increase	Council data	C2.1
Total number of public electric car charging units	1 (2024)	Increase	Council data	C2.3
Satisfaction with footpaths and cycleways	2.90/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	C1.1
Number of people who walk or cycle to work	478 (2021)	Increase	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	C2.2
Satisfaction with car parking	2.99/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	C1.1
Percentage of people with internet connections	89.6% (2021)	Maintain/ Increase	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	C2.3



A region
that is safe
and connected.





Future Region

Sustainability and Resilience

We will enhance the natural beauty of the region, and will create a region that is sustainable and resilient.




What the community said it wants:

- Preservation of our valued natural environment
- Protected biodiversity
- Sustainable management of our resources including water
- To recognise and proactively stem climate change
- Support renewable and alternative energy
- Promote carbon neutrality
- A safe and healthy environment
- Ecological sustainability
- Clean air



Our Goals

A flourishing natural environment that is protected and enhanced

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
F1.1	 Promote and support biodiversity protection and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Community Groups • State and Federal government agencies • Farmers • Residents
F1.2	 Protect and enhance our waterways, catchments and creek lands	
F1.3	 Foster collaborations that improve understanding and action to protect our natural environment	

A clean, green, and responsible region

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
F2.1	 Proactively adapt to and mitigate the local impacts of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Community Groups • State and Federal government agencies • Industry • Local businesses • Community groups • Residents • Media • Emergency services
F2.2	 Promote and increase use and awareness of renewable resources and alternative energy sources	
F2.3	 Collect, handle, dispose, recycle and reuse waste responsibly and innovatively	
F2.4	 Create a cleaner, healthier environment with good air quality	
F2.5	 Ensure the community is provided with safe, secure and accessible water that is sustainably managed now and into the future	
F2.6	 Prepare for, respond to, and assist in the recovery from natural disasters	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
Annual Green House Gas (GHG) emissions reduction calculated using principles from ISO14064	In Progress	Increase	Council data	F2.4
Solar power usage rates - number of Small Generation Units (SGU) Solar in Armidale and Guyra	5,200 (2024)	Increase	Solarquotes	F2.2
Number of threatened ecological communities and species in Armidale Plateau IBRA Bioregion (includes Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha)	121(2024)	Maintain/ Decrease	NSW Department of Planning and Environment & NSW Environment, Energy and Science	F1.1
Average number of exceedances per month of the Air NEPM	173 (2023)	Decrease	National Environment Protection Measure of Ambient Air Quality Standards (Air NEPM)	F2.4
Number of approved wood heaters installed in the Armidale Region	32 (2023)	Decrease	Council data	F2.4
Amount of domestic waste sent to landfill	16,891T (2023/24 Financial Year)*	Decrease	Council data	F2.3
Amount of waste able to be recovered / recycled	14,109T (2023/24 Financial Year) 45.5% Resource Recovery Rate	Increase	Council data	F2.3
Water consumption rates	199.83L/person/day (2024)	Maintain/ Decrease	Council data	F2.5
Number of exceedances per winter of the World Health Organisation PM2.5 Air Quality Guidelines	163 (2023)	Decrease	NSW DPE and PurpleAir PM2.5 measurements	F2.4
Meeting the requirements set out in NSW Public Health Act (2010) and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG, 2011)	95% met (ADWG, 2011) the values in the water quality results reported in NSW Health Drinking Water Database	Maintain/ increase	NSW Health Drinking Water Database ARC Annual Drinking Water Quality Reports	F2.5

*Total for both landfills (including asbestos). Does not include VENM/timber used for daily cover





A region
that is
sustainable
and resilient.



Liveable Region

Places and Spaces

We will develop and maintain pristine places and spaces, and provide facilities to foster an active and healthy community.

What the community said it wants:

- Beautiful and practical parks, playgrounds and gardens
- Improved reserves, open and green spaces
- Vibrant and independent villages
- Effective regional planning to support the community to grow, develop and attract more residents and investment
- Affordable and available housing



Our Goals

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

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
L1.1	 Provide appropriate, planned and maintained community facilities that allow people to meet, congregate and learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • State and Federal governments • Natural asset and crown land managers • Community groups • Residents • Local Members • Community and sporting groups
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 a healthy ecosystem	
L1.3	Foster towns and villages that are vibrant, well-served and supported to achieve their localised priorities	
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	
L1.5	 Enhance and maintain recreation spaces to offer quality of life, entertainment and family-friendly activities to residents and visitors	

Proactive, responsible, and innovative regional planning that grows us sustainably

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
L2.1	 Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council State and Federal agencies • Local Members • Developers • Residents • Community groups • Community services • Housing services • Farmers • Renewable Energy Industry
L2.2	Ensure adequate and available land and housing to meet community needs	
L2.3	Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage	
L2.4	 Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
New dwelling approvals	106 (2023)	Increase	Council data	L2.1
Number of new dwellings in R1 or R2 zones	127 (2024)	Increase	Council data	L2.2
Number of new dwellings in R5 and other rural/ environmental zones	17 (2024)	Decrease	Council data	L2.2
Occupancy of private dwellings	85.9% (2021)	Increase	Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	L2.2
Number of listed heritage items (as per planning definition)*	272 (2024)	Maintain/ Increase	Council data	L2.3
Satisfaction with parks, reserves, and playgrounds	3.74/5 (2023)	Maintain/ Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	L1.1
Satisfaction with sporting facilities	3.64/5 (2023)	Maintain/ Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	L1.4
Area of National Parks and Reserves in the Region	149,383h (2024)	Maintain	NSW Planning and Environment	L1.2
Average timeframe for development approvals and housing development	74 Days (2024)	Maintain/ Decrease	Council data	L2.1
Community satisfaction with open spaces	Question to be introduced to Community Satisfaction Survey	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	L1.5
Total number of service requests	4496 (2024)	Maintain/ Decrease	Council data	L2.1

*Heritage item means a building, work, place, relic, tree, object or archaeological site the location and nature of which is described in Schedule 5 of the Local Environmental Plan (LEP)



A full-page photograph of a sunny day at a community swimming pool. In the foreground, a man in a dark blue shirt is in the water, holding up a young girl in a pink and blue swimsuit who is jumping towards him. To the left, a boy in green shorts and goggles stands on a yellow and blue inflatable slide. In the background, another child is visible in the water, and a black metal fence surrounds the pool area. The sky is clear and blue. A large, semi-circular magenta graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

Community
vibrancy
improves our
liveability.



Enriched Region

Community and Culture

We will improve the quality of life for our community and celebrate its culture and diversity.

What the community said it wants:

- A cohesive, engaged, supportive, family-friendly and welcoming community
- A community that embraces cultural inclusiveness and diversity
- Celebration and engagement with our first nation's people
- Support for a thriving arts and cultural scene
- Specialist health and community services to improve quality of life
- A safe and welcoming community
- Services for disadvantaged sectors of the community



Our Goals

Access to the services and support that facilitate quality of life

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
E1.1	Ensure health and community service provisions meet the needs of our growing and ageing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health providers • Community services • Community groups • Local Members • State and Federal government agencies • Council • Residents
E1.2	Recognise and support the diverse and changing needs of our community, including those who are disadvantaged	
E1.3	Foster safety and security within our community and support the provision of basic needs	

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

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
E2.1	Support artistic endeavours, events, and celebrations, creating a thriving arts and culture scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and cultural groups • Local businesses • Arts and Cultural organisations • Artists • Council • Consumers • State and Federal governments • Aboriginal community • Local members • Residents • Community groups and organisations • Local businesses • Industry • Community services
E2.2	Provide public access to facilities that enhance our learning, social and culture fulfilment	
E2.3	Celebrate our local Aboriginal history and traditions, and support cultural understanding and development	
E2.4	Celebrate our rich regional history and heritage	
E2.5	Create an inclusive and cohesive community that celebrates differences and similarities	
E2.6	Encourage, support, and promote community groups and volunteers in their invaluable contributions to community life	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
Total Emergency Department Presentations - Armidale Hospital	19,240 (2022/23 Financial Year)	Decrease	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	E1.1
Index of disadvantage - Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)	976 (2021)	Decrease	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)	E1.2
Satisfaction with disability inclusion and access	3.19/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	E1.2
Regional homelessness rates	100 (2021)	Decrease	Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	E1.3
Satisfaction with libraries	4.36/5 (2023)	Maintain	Community Satisfaction Survey	E2.2
Satisfaction with arts, culture and heritage facilities and services	3.64/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	E2.4
Number of Closing the Gap targets improved on in the Region	*Completion of year 12 or equivalent: 1.8% *Employment: 86.7% *No long-term health condition: 58.6% *Indigenous Languages (spoken at home): 1.8% *Personal Income: \$479 (2021)	Increase all	Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	E2.3
Non-proficiency in English language	5% (2021)	Decrease	Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	E1.2
Number of volunteers registered - Rural Volunteer Referral Service	644 (2024)	Increase	Council data	E2.6
Yearly visitation numbers at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place	Approx. 12,000-15,000 visits (2023)	Maintain/ Increase	Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place data	E2.1, E2.6, E2.4, E2.5, E2.6
Yearly visitation numbers at NERAM	90,000 visits (2023-2024)	Maintain/ Increase	NERAM Annual Report	E2.4



A group of people, mostly young men, are gathered outdoors at night. They are wearing black long-sleeved shirts and black beanie hats. They are holding up flaming torches that have a circular metal frame with several small cylindrical containers attached, each containing a flame. The background shows dark trees and a clear night sky. A large orange semi-circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

A culturally
inclusive
and diverse
community.



Strong Region

Engagement and Responsibility

We will be a productive, transparent and strong community always putting the needs of our community first.

What the community said it wants:

- To be led through good governance
- To have strong community consultation and partnerships.
- A regional council that provides the stewardship for growth, development and prosperity
- Facilitation of a unified and inclusive region
- A region that maintains affordable rates and charges, quality services and financial sustainability








Our Goals

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

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
S1.1	Help the community to be informed and have input into decisions about its region and future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council• Residents• Media• Local members• State and Federal agencies• Community groups• Community organisations• Local businesses• Industry
S1.2	Create partnerships between our community, levels of government and businesses that contribute to our growth and development	
S1.3	Empower the community and our leaders to make positive change and to unify the region	

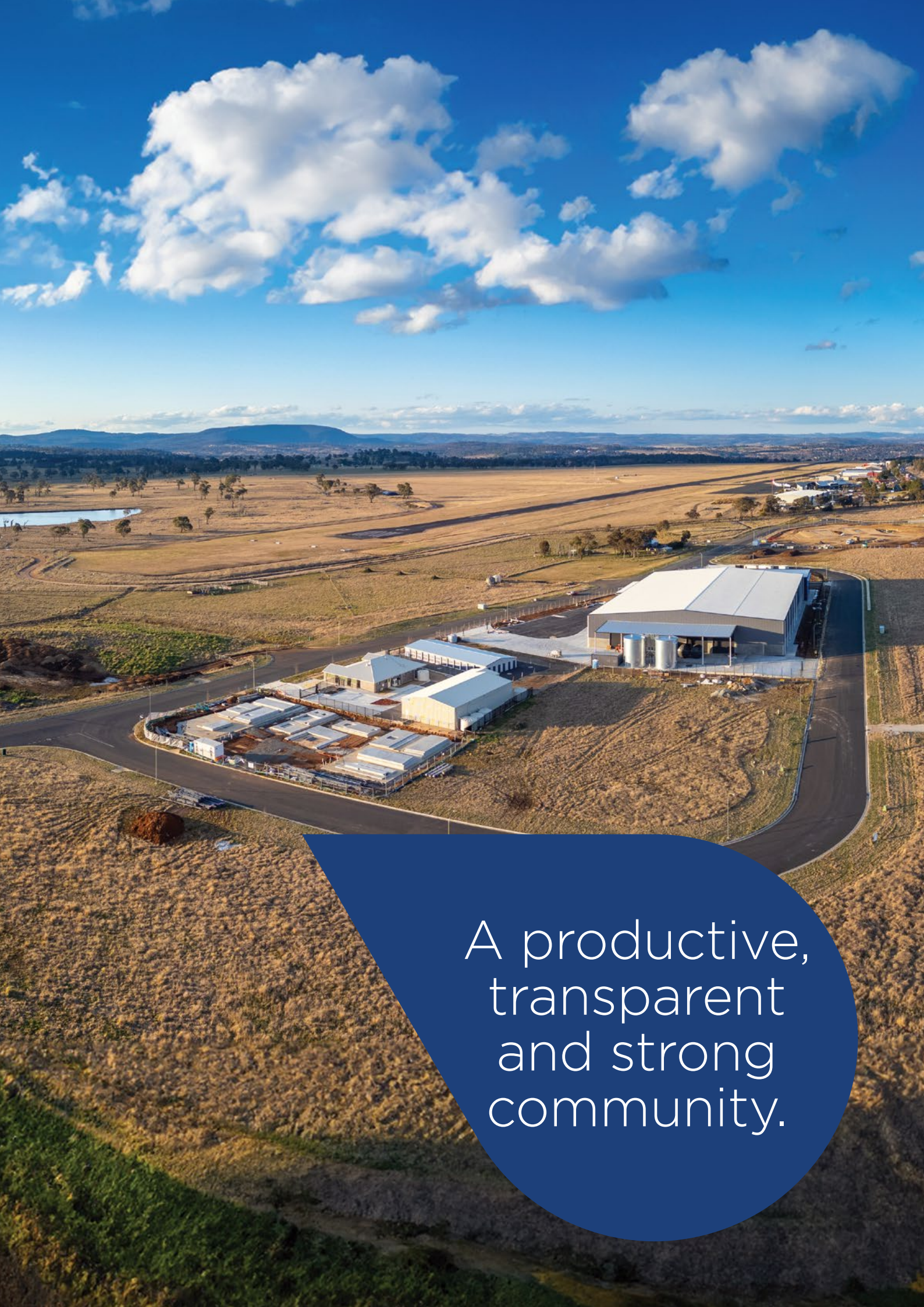
A destination of choice, renowned for our beauty, heritage, and unique attractions

Ref.	How will we get there?	Who can help?
S2.1	Provide a strong, transparent, sustainable, and responsive governance for our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council• Residents• Local members• State and Federal governments
S2.2	 Ensure that strategic directions are informed by, and with, the community and are delivered in consideration of available resources	
S2.3	 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community	
S2.4	 Make open and transparent decisions that are informed by stakeholders, leading practices, systems, and technologies	

How do we know we have arrived?

	Baseline	Target Trend	Source	Ref.
Improvement on Community Plan measures	Met: 29 Not Met: 12 Unknown: 14 Total = 55 (2024)	Increase	State of the Region Report	S1.3, S2.4
Number of Delivery Program Council Initiatives achieved	68 Complete 70 Progressing 17 Future Year Initiative 1 Not Progressing Total = 156 (2024)	Increase	State of the Region Report	S2.2, S2.4
Satisfaction with community information and consultation	2.67/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	S1.1
Number of Armidale Regional Council Financial Sustainability Ratios met	6/7 (2023/24 Financial Year)	Increase	Armidale Regional Council Annual Financial Statements	S2.3
Dollar figure of Federal and State Government infrastructure investment in the region (Council-led grants)	\$16.6m (2023/24 Financial Year)	Maintain/ Increase	Council data	S1.2
Satisfaction with Council (Overall, including rates and charges, service delivery, and confidence with Council's efficiency when responding to service requests and public consultation)	2.76/5 (2023)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	S2.1
Satisfaction with Council's allocation of resources	2.36/5 (2021)	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey	S2.3





A productive,
transparent
and strong
community.

What is the Community Plan?

The Community Plan (or Community Strategic Plan) is part of a broader strategic framework, called Integrated Planning and Reporting, which transforms community aspirations and priorities into meaningful action at the local government level.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework's highest order plan is the Community Plan, which Council initiates, prepares, maintains, and monitors with and on behalf of, the community.





The purpose of the Community Plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations and plan strategies for achieving them. The Community Plan outlines:

Key Questions	Relationship with the Community Plan
Where are we now?	2025
Where do we want to be?	Goals (2034)
How will we get there?	Strategies
How will we know when we have arrived?	Measures

Council has endeavoured to create equitable and accessible processes to allow residents and ratepayers equal opportunity to participate in the Plan formation without discrimination.

The ten-year Community Plan informs Council's Delivery Program (4-year plan), Resourcing Strategy, and Operational Plan (1-year plan).

Council encourages organisations, agencies and community groups within the region to consider and utilise the Plan in their own strategic decision making.



State and Regional Priorities Alignment

The Armidale Region does not operate in isolation, and we must consider the priorities of the State and Federal governments, local organisations, businesses and other councils. These stakeholders all play a part in achieving the aspirations of the community. There are a number of overarching priorities and plans that guide our state and region and that have been considered in the preparation of this Community Plan.

The first is the NSW Premier's Priorities* including the following:

- More teachers in our schools
- More healthcare workers and beds in our hospitals
- A thriving manufacturing sector with well-paid jobs
- A world-class education system
- Enforceable minimum safe staffing levels in our public hospitals
- A focus on delivering cleaner and more reliable energy

*As per Chris Minns MP Message from the Premier on the NSW Government's website



New England North West Regional Plan 2041 Priorities

The second set of overarching priorities is the New England North West Regional Plan. Alignment with these priorities and the Advancing Our Armidale Region Community Plan is demonstrated below. The Plan also considers the elements of the Quadruple Bottom Line, which is demonstrated in the following table.

	Thriving Region	Connected Region	Future Region	Liveable Region	Enriched Region	Strong Region
Growth, change and opportunity						
Coordinate land use planning for future population growth, community need and regional economic development	✓			✓		
Productive and innovative						
Protect the viability and integrity of rural land				✓		
Expand agribusiness and food processing sectors	✓					
Sustainably manage mineral resources						
Enhance the diversity and strength of Central Business Districts and town centres	✓			✓		
Coordinate the supply of well-located employment land	✓			✓		
Support a diverse visitor economy	✓				✓	
Sustainable and Resilient						
Adapt to climate change and natural hazards and increase climate resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lead renewable energy technology and investment	✓		✓			
Support a circular economy			✓			
Sustainably manage and conserve water resources			✓			
Protect regional biodiversity and areas of High Environmental Value			✓	✓		
Housing and place						
Provide well located housing options to meet demand				✓		
Provide more affordable and low cost housing				✓		
Understand, respect and integrate Aboriginal culture and heritage					✓	
Support the aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities in local planning				✓	✓	
Celebrate local character				✓	✓	
Public spaces and green infrastructure support connected and healthy communities			✓	✓		
Connected and accessible						
Leverage new and upgraded infrastructure	✓	✓		✓		
Improve state and regional freight connectivity		✓				
Improve active and public transport networks		✓				
Utilise emerging transport technology		✓				
Quadruple Bottom line						
Social		✓		✓	✓	
Environmental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic	✓	✓				✓
Civic Leadership						✓

Council's Role in Delivering the Plan

T1.1	Support existing and new businesses and industries in the Region	Provider, Partner & Advocate
T1.2	Plan for sustainable growth and deliver infrastructure that enables jobs & improves liveability	Provider & Partner
T1.3	Champion local employers to provide employment and training opportunities	Partner & Advocate
T1.4	Ensure local education and entrepreneurship opportunities support a thriving community	Partner & Advocate
T2.1	Enhance our reputation as a destination of choice in NSW	Provider & Partner
T2.3	Provide attractions and events that enhance our Region's offering to locals and Tourists	Provider, Partner & Advocate
T2.4	Encourage locals to shop in the Region, and make our Region the choice for shopping in the broader New England area	Partner & Advocate
C1.1	Build and maintain quality, safe, and accessible road transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs, bus stops and parking facilities	Provider, Partner & Advocate
C1.2	Support the implementation and usage of active transport infrastructure across the region	Deliver & Advocate
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 & Advocate
C2.2	Promote and encourage the establishment and uptake of sustainable transport options and services	Provider, Partner & Advocate
C2.3	Utilise our access to the high-speed data and advancing technology to increase connectivity within and outside our region	Advocate
F1.1	Promote and support biodiversity protection and management	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F1.2	Protect and enhance our waterways, catchments and creek lands	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F1.3	Foster collaborations that improve understanding and action to protect our natural environment	Partner & Advocate
F2.1	Proactively adapt to and mitigate the local impacts of climate change	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F2.2	Promote and increase use of renewable resources and alternative energy sources	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F2.3	Collect, handle, dispose, recycle and reuse waste responsibly and innovatively	Provider & Partner
F2.4	Create a cleaner, healthier environment with good air quality	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F2.5	Ensure the community is provided with safe, secure and accessible water that is sustainably managed now and into the future	Provider, Partner & Advocate
F2.6	Prepare for, respond to, and assist in the recovery from natural disasters	Provider, Partner & Advocate
L1.1	Provide appropriate, planned and maintained community facilities that allow people to meet, congregate and learn	Deliver
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 a healthy ecosystem.	Deliver & Partner



L1.3	Foster towns and villages that are vibrant, well-served and supported to achieve their localised priorities	Provider, Partner & Advocate
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	Deliver & Partner
L1.5	Enhance and maintain recreation spaces to offer quality of life, entertainment and family-friendly activities to residents and visitors	Deliver & Partner
L2.1	Plan for and enable growth that supports a sustainable local economy	Deliver
L2.2	Ensure adequate and available land and housing to meet community needs	Partner & Advocate
L2.3	Preserve and enhance our architecture and heritage	Provider, Partner & Advocate
L2.4	Protect prime agricultural land and support future innovations and industries	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E1.1	Ensure health and community service provisions meet the needs of our growing and ageing population	Partner & Advocate
E1.2	Recognise and support the diverse and changing needs of our community, including those who are disadvantaged	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E1.3	Foster safety and security within our community and support the provision of basic needs	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E2.1	Support artistic endeavours, events, and celebrations, creating a thriving arts and culture scene	Partner & Advocate
E2.2	Provide public access to facilities that enhance our learning, social and culture fulfilment	Deliver & Partner
E2.3	Celebrate our local Aboriginal history and traditions, and support cultural understanding and development	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E2.4	Celebrate our rich regional history and heritage	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E2.5	Create an inclusive and cohesive community that celebrates differences and similarities	Provider, Partner & Advocate
E2.6	Encourage, support, and promote community groups and volunteers in their invaluable contributions to community life	Provider, Partner & Advocate
S1.1	Help the community to be informed and have input into decisions about its region and future.	Provider, Partner & Advocate
S1.2	Create partnerships between our community, levels of government and businesses that contribute to our growth and development	Partner & Advocate
S1.3	Empower the community and our leaders to make positive change and to unify the region	Provider, Partner & Advocate
S2.1	Provide a strong, transparent, sustainable, and responsive governance for our region	Deliver
S2.2	Ensure that strategic directions are informed by, and with, the community and are delivered in consideration of available resources	Deliver
S2.3	Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community	Deliver
S2.4	Make open and transparent decisions that are informed by stakeholders, leading practices, systems, and technologies	Deliver

