



Strengthening Basin Communities

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS for Balranald and Euston 2012-16



'The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created first in mind, next in will, then in activity. The future is not a place to which we are going; it is a place we are creating. The paths to the future are not found, but made and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination'.
(John Schaar)

Acknowledgements

The formulation of *Community Plans* for the communities of Balranald and Euston was initiated by the by the Balranald Shire Council as part of their commitment to create prosperous, sustainable, inclusive and proactive communities.

Funding for this initiative was provided by the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities through their *Strengthening Basin Communities Project*, a joint initiative with the Wentworth and Hay Shire Councils.

The *Strengthening Basin Communities Project* focuses on exploring a future with less water. Preparation of the *Community Plans* was undertaken by a team from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. comprising Peter Kenyon, Uschi Steedman and Stephen Wills. Special thanks to the many residents, community groups and agencies of the Balranald and Euston communities who so generously gave of their time, unique local knowledge and ideas, and the staff of the Balranald Shire Council for their leadership and organisation of the formulation process.

The *Community Plans for Balranald and Euston* acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Shire of Balranald – the Mutthi Mutthi, Paakantyi and Ngiampa tribes - and their continuing connection to their Country and communities. We pay our respect to them, their cultures, and to elders both past and present.

Disclaimer

In undertaking the formulation of the *Community Plans for Balranald and Euston*, the Balranald Shire Council and the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. have attempted to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the information utilised and presented. All recommendations made in these *Community Plans* are done in good faith and the Balranald Shire Council and the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. take no responsibility for how this information and the *Community Plans* are subsequently used by others. Accordingly, future action based on these *Community Plans* should be used in conjunction with ongoing research, consultation and professional technical assistance.



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities

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1. Forward by the Mayor

This Community Plan focuses on the sustainability of the Shire and represents a significant step forward for Balranald Shire community.

The funding of this project is through the Strengthening Basin Communities Project, in partnership with the Wentworth and Hay Shire Councils.

Community planning provides the processes to bring people together to produce a collective vision and priorities for action.

Council's role in community planning is to facilitate those processes, provide information, and design a framework to coordinate strategies and actions to support the community vision and priorities – i.e. make a community plan happen.

The Community Plan does not replace Council's normal strategic planning or the decision making role of democratically elected Councillors. However, the Community Plan does play a pivotal role in influencing Council's policy making, planning and allocation of resources.

The Community Plan brings together different political and organisational dimensions: individuals, groups and networks, Council policies and programs, other levels of government, locally based businesses, and community service organisations.

From the community consultation it is evident that our community has many core values that are vital to our resilience.

Our community has many things to look forward to in the future such as the development of new industries which will assist the economic growth of our area and create employment opportunities.

Council, as the community leader will work collaboratively with the community and other stakeholders to build a vibrant, engaging and resilient Shire.



*'What we have got, we
want to keep.'*
(Shire Mayor)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'D. Purtill'.

Cr Alan Purtill
MAYOR, BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL

The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organisation may make in terms of community building is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered.'
(William Greinder)

2. Preamble

The *Community Plans for Balranald and Euston* focus on strategies for community and business recovery based on trends identified through a Project being undertaken by the Balranald Shire Council (BSC) in collaboration with the Wentworth Shire Council (WSC) and the Hay Shire Council (HSC), namely the *Strengthening Basin Communities Project (SBCP)*. The SBCP has been exploring a future with less water for the set of small communities within the Shires of Balranald, Wentworth and Hay, exploring the current status of each community, and the key trends and drivers of change in water availability, and future water availability scenarios.

The formulation of the *Community Plans* has involved two elements. Firstly, a review of existing studies, base line data and reports related to these communities (see Section 8 for key reference documents and websites). In particular, it utilised the Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan – *Balranald Shire 2022* as the base document.

Secondly, an extensive '*Community Conversations Week*' was held (29 November -3 December 2011), which involved:

- 28 group conversation sessions involving 316 participants;
- Engagement with 72 local businesses with 35 returning a business survey form (see Appendix (i) for summary of results); and
- 125 ideas generated from returned "*My Big Idea for My Community*" postcards (see Appendix ii).

Two Community Plans for the townships of Balranald and Euston, the two key townships within the Balranald Shire, are presented below. In addition, there is a Shire-wide Plan that encapsulates a set of strategic actions that are best implemented across the Shire. In total, a total of 19 strategic planned actions are recommended and detailed. The context and the framework for the *Community Plans* are provided through the provision of *Shire Vision Statement*, *Community Pillars of Well Being*, *Community Goals* and a set of *Guiding Principles*.

Each planned action follows four broad processes of development, namely –

- **Organisation:** "*Let's begin to organise by identifying who will lead the project.*"
- **Assessment:** "*What is currently happening, what can we learn from elsewhere and what do we want to achieve?*"
- **Planning, Communication and Funding:** "*Ways we can make it happen.*"
- **Implementing and Monitoring:** "*Let's get on with it.*"

Regarding the timeframe, the following definitions apply –

- **Immediate:** Already underway or achieved within the next six months.
- **Short term:** Achieved within one year.
- **Medium term:** Achieved within three years.
- **Long term:** Achieved within five years.
- **Ongoing:** Continuous.

3. Community Vision, Pillars of Well Being and Strategic Objectives

A community vision statement is a vivid description of what a community aspires to become, without the current barriers and tied to what it values. The statement below is the intended outcome for the Balranald Shire through the implementation of the *Balranald Shire 2022*, the Shire's community strategic plan:–

“To create a better, more vibrant, more resilient and more engaged community, by capitalising upon its human, cultural, environmental and business assets and encouraging a strong sense of civic participation and pride”.

The *Community Vision Statement* is based upon what the six community *Pillars of Well Being* that *Balranald Shire 2022* identified as central to achieving the Shire's potential and designed state, namely –

1. A community that is proactive, engaged, inclusive and connected.
2. A liveable and thriving community that maintains lifestyle opportunities and addresses levels of hardship and disadvantage experienced by some residents.
3. A community that ensures a strong and resilient economy.
4. A community that respects and celebrates its diverse cultures, heritage and arts.
5. A community that maintains and strengthens its natural and built environment.
6. A community that values and fosters leadership, lifelong learning, innovation and good governance.

These *Pillars of Well Being* also are the source for the Shire's 18 *Strategic Objectives*, namely –

OUR PEOPLE

A. A community that is proactive, engaged, inclusive and connected.

- Create more opportunities for community members to socialise and connect in our community.
- Create and promote opportunities for greater community awareness and participation in the life of our community.
- Involve, support and prepare our young people.

*‘A plan, which usually contains objectives, strategies and initiatives, tells us how to get there. A community vision statement tells us where “there is” – what the community aspires to become.’
(Bank of I.D.E.A.S.)*

Our Place

B. A liveable and thriving community that maintains lifestyle opportunities and addresses levels of hardship and disadvantage experienced by some residents.

- Promote our community as a lifestyle, work and business destination.
- Create opportunities to assist community members who are disadvantaged or at risk.
- Provide a wide range of passive and active recreation and sports events, clubs, facilities and opportunities.

Our Economy

C. A community ensures a strong and resilient economy.

- Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for our local business communities.
- Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay and experience the Outback and river environments of Southern NSW.
- Increase the net number, quality and variety of employment and training opportunities for our community members.

Our Culture

D. A community that respects and celebrates its diverse cultures, heritage and arts.

- Promote opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate our diverse cultures and faiths.

Our Infrastructure

E. A community that maintains and strengthens its natural and built environment.

- To preserve and enhance our natural environments ensuring they remain sustainable, healthy and clean.
- Promote key communications and infrastructure improvements.
- Undertake key transport and energy infrastructure improvements.

*‘There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.’
(Margaret Wheatley)*

Our Leadership

F. A community that values and fosters leadership, lifelong learning, innovation and good governance.

- Enhance our community capacity through building the local leadership base of the community.
- Maintain a lifelong learning focus in our Shire by providing an ever growing range of skill development, education and training opportunities and facilities.
- Strengthen interagency collaboration and partnerships and facilitate synergistic actions.
- Continually identify and service the necessary financial and technical support to achieve our community aspirations.
- Operate an effective and efficiently managed Council that provides strong civic leadership, sound governance and facilitates community participation and decision making.

'A Team is a group of people who need one another to take action.'
(Peter Senge)

‘Guiding principles are the fundamental, moral and ethical beliefs that we share as a group. They represent core values and describe what our community considers important. They serve to –

- define the boundaries of our conduct;*
- act as driving forces for our plans and actions;*
- represent the culture that we desire to live in; and*
- foster trust, teamwork and unity.’*

(Bank of I.D.E.A.S.)

4. Community Guiding Principles

The following *Community Guiding Principles* derived from *Balranald Shire 2022* provide the context for the *Community Plans*. They are a product of the extensive community consultation process undertaken as part of the preparation of *Balranald Shire 2022*.

Any proposed community action should be measured against these ten guiding principles, namely –

- **Social inclusiveness** – valuing and respecting the contribution of all community members, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, cultural background or length of residency.
- **Partnership and collaboration** – all organisations committing to cooperate, collaborate and network to ensure maximum positive outcomes for the residents of the Shire.
- **Sense of community** – retaining the unique sense of village, country feel, heritage, safety, freedom and family/community connection.
- **Positive mindset** – fostering community attitudes that embrace change, proactive ‘can do’ behaviours, optimism, hopefulness and the belief in the community being architects and builders of their social and economic future.
- **Access and equity** – providing all residents with adequate health, educational, learning, housing and recreational opportunities, facilities and programs.
- **Asset and Opportunity Focus** – building upon local assets, capacities, creativity, diversity and existing initiatives; and facilitating opportunities and experiences that enable all residents to see and experience their communities as places of potential and opportunity.
- **Respect for the environment and sustainable practices** – respecting the natural environment, cultures and heritage and ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- **Celebration** – encouraging pride and times of celebration relating to the community’s heritage, uniqueness, cultures and achievements.
- **Transparency and Accountability** – ensuring all initiatives, programs and services have transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation.
- **Business Excellence** – encouraging a strong, innovative, customer-focused, profitable and collaborative business environment.

5. Shire-wide Snap Shot

5.1 Overview

Balranald Shire is located in the south western district of NSW, approximately 850km south west from Sydney and 450km north of Melbourne. It covers an area of approximately 21,400 square kilometres, making it the fifth largest shire in the state. The main townships are Balranald (population: 1,200) and Euston (population: 600), located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers respectively. Other localities in the Shire include Kyalite, Oxley, Penarie (Homebush), Hatfield and Clare. The total population of Balranald Shire is approximately 2500 persons. Approximately 7 percent of the Shire's population is indigenous.

The Balranald Shire is often described as *'a potential geographer's living classroom'* (Toohey, 2010). It is the pivotal place of two great Australian landscapes: to the east the Riverine Plain and to the west the Murray darling Depression. Their respective formation processes have created today's unique vegetation landscape.

The economy of the Balranald Shire Council is strongly connected to agriculture including grains (including dryland and irrigated), sheep and cattle. However diversification has occurred to encompass horticulture, viticulture, organic agriculture, tree (fruit and nut), timber harvesting and tourism. The Sturt Highway provides the east west route for flow of goods, services and visitors to the Shire.

5.2 Community Assets and Opportunities

- **People Assets**
 - Many passionate and proud residents.
 - Community spirit, connectedness and friendliness.
 - Willingness of neighbours and community members to help one another.
 - Valued lifestyle- small town feel, space, climate, sense of safety, peaceful and relaxed nature.
 - Balranald Shire Council's extensive set of Development Committees with both councillor and community representation.
 - Diverse mix of cultures, faiths and ethnicities.
 - Significant Indigenous population (7 percent)
 - Strong and engaged Council.
 - Strong sporting activities - football, netball, cricket, fishing, motor X, bowls, golf, pony clubs.
 - Youth council.
 - Balranald Shire Council's extensive set of Development Committees with both councillor and community representation.
 - Lifestyle opportunities afforded within the shire.



'Kids can be kids here.'
(Little Bunyips
Playgroup Parent)

*'If I lived in the city I
would really feel stressed
about my kids...I feel safe
letting my son play outside
on his own – you can't do
that everywhere.'*

**(Little Bunyips
Playgroup Parent)**

- **Industry/Business**

- Strong and diversified agricultural economy
- Mining industry potential - potential of 200 start-up employment positions, 100 permanent employment positions and potential population and service growth.
- Comprehensive commercial and retail centre in Balranald.
- Majority of local businesses have a positive attitude about the future.
- Highway location advantages and close proximity to Mildura and Swan Hill.
- Employment significance of the Balranald Council (67 staff).
- Tourism and Development Committee of Council.

- **Infrastructure/Services**

- Competitive price of housing.
- Educational assets – state primary schools; Catholic primary school; state secondary school; trade training centre.
- Balranald Hospital - new \$14 million facility that can provide a wide range of health services. It has 16 long term beds and nine acute beds.
- Extensive sporting infrastructure – Greenham Park (race course, swimming pool, sporting ovals, lawn tennis courts, netball courts and club facilities, golf course) in Balranald and multipurpose sports centre and Euston Sports and Bowls and Recreation Club in Euston.
- Training facilities for skill development, workshops and conferences – Trade Training Centre, Theatre Royal, Balranald Hospital, Clubs.

- **Tourism Assets and Potential**

- Natural aesthetic features of the Shire's five rivers - the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Murray, Edward and Wakool Rivers.
- Inland port, pastoral and irrigation heritage.
- Attractive climate.
- Local Indigenous culture and history - extensive Indigenous sites of significance (108 known sites).
- Rising visitor numbers.
- Proximity to Mungo National Park, Yanga National Park and the Outback.
- Natural tourist attractions - Lake Yanga. Euston State Forest and its wetlands
- Built Heritage sites – Heritage Park, Euston Weir and Lock 15, inland port heritage, heritage trails, Balranald streetscapes, historic buildings.
- River accessibility for water sports and Murray Cod fishing.
- Calendar of special events.

- Euston Club and Resort and Balranald District Ex-Servicemen's Memorial Club with their gaming, accommodation, dining and conference facilities.
- Range of accommodation experiences in towns and on stations (authentic outback experiences).
- Art gallery, strong arts community and the Growling Grass Frog public art collection.
- Proximity to north and central Victoria, and their tourism attractions and promotions.
- Bird watching opportunities.
- 2200 vehicles on Sturt Highway each day.

5.3 Community Challenges and Issues

- A future with less water and uncertainty associated with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Plan.
- Agricultural viability challenges given high dollar, climate change, water security uncertainty and international competitiveness in horticulture.
- Deteriorating economic base and waning business confidence compounded by a period of long term drought – decline in the 4 'W's – wool, wheat, wood and water.
- Decline of businesses and services in some townships – the need for business expansion and business/industry attraction.
- Stagnant or declining population in most settlements- retention and attraction of young people/ young families and planning for an ageing population.
- Closure of the timber harvesting industry.
- Declining employment levels in the agricultural sector.
- Lack of employment diversity.
- Lack of secondary industry.
- Varying standards in customer service.
- Level of disadvantage and financial hardship being experienced by some residents.
- Disengaged young people - lack of youth participation and leadership.
- Limited youth services and programs in both communities. There is no youth worker. There are no public, safe and comfortable meeting places for young people to gather. There are also very limited after-school or holiday activities for young people – particularly for those that do not play team sports (e.g. no music or drama).
- Mining industry challenges including their growing need for skilled labour.
- Lack of a detailed people asset/resource map of the shire.
- Deterioration of infrastructure (roads, footpaths, sewerage).
- Transport connectivity and access.
- ICT challenges, including lack of fast internet and not being included in the initial priority communities for the National Broad Network (NBN).
- Degree of factionalism and negative attitudes within community.
- Lack of community-focused events (other than sporting) that enable people to socialise and connect with one another.
- No local newspaper/newsletter.
- Need to engage more residents to create and be part of future /solutions.

'You don't know about a lot of stuff here unless someone tells you about it.'
(Balranald Resident)



'What we have got, we want to keep.'
(Shire Mayor)

- Sustainability of sporting clubs, especially for clubs required to import and pay players.
- Volunteer burnout – a sense that ‘the same old people’ do everything.
- Perception that racism and racial divides are still present in parts of the community.
- Service and resource disparity between NSW and Victorian communities.
- Potential community social challenges with the growth of mining activity.
- Lack of business training opportunities.
- Lack of leadership development strategy and fund.

5.4 Directions Forward and Recommended Actions

Recommended Action 1: Expand Opportunities for Community Interaction

There is strong expressed interest from the community to create more opportunities for community members to meet and socialise. Suggestions included Christmas street parties/fete, dances at the Theatre, resurrect the ‘Community Gloom Chasers’ Group and expand the Euston Mum’s group.

Key Steps:

1. Investigate opportunities for social & cultural interaction & determine possibilities
2. Consultation with local community.
3. Instigation of initiatives.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 1.1: *Create more opportunities for community members to socialise and connect in our community.*

Timeline: Immediate

Responsibility: Community, BI

Possible Partners: community organisations and Clubs

Possible Resources:

Success Indicators:

- Enhanced social energy, community connection, trust, community participation and volunteerism.
- Stronger positive mindset.

Recommended Action 2: Implementation of a Population Retention and Attraction Strategy

There is an obvious need to retain and attract population, especially in that critical 25-40 years age group – that group that are having babies, buying homes, and creating businesses.

Key Steps:

1. Development of brief.
2. Source project finding
3. Identification of resources to prepare Strategy.
4. Formulation of Strategy.
5. Promotion of Strategy and its recommendations.

6. Assistance to communities wanting to implement.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective: *Promote our community as a lifestyle, work and business destination.*

Timeline: Medium term

Responsibility: BSC, BI

Possible Partners: TI, TIRIS, RDA Murray

Possible Resources: TI, CBFP, RDAF

Success Indicators:

- Stronger and more sustainable communities.
- Population retention and population attraction with focus on young families.
- Retention and expansion of businesses and services.

Recommended Action 3: Formulation and Implementation of a Balranald Shire Tourism Plan

Balranald Shire has the potential for a significant tourism sector. To underpin its development and create further opportunities, there is a need for a *Tourism Plan* that outlines practical strategies for enhancing the contribution of tourism to local economic, employment, community and cultural development.

Key Steps:

1. Development of brief outlining Tourism Plan expectations.
2. Creation of a budget to achieve the required *Tourism Plan*.
3. Identification and recruitment of technical resources to formulate desired *Tourism Plan*.
4. Formulation of *Tourism Plan* through extensive dialogue with all stakeholders.
5. Implementation of recommended action.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.2: *Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay and experience the Outback and river environments of Western NSW.*

Timeline: Short term

Responsibility: BSC, BI

Possible Partners: INT, RDA Murray, MN, NPWS

Possible Resources: RTPFP, TQUAL grants, RRGRECF

Success Indicators:

- Production and implementation of a practical plan.
- Enhanced tourism appeal as a destination.
- Stronger and more diversified local tourism base.
- Local job creation.
- Enhanced community pride.
- Improved feeling in the community that people are working together.
- Better trained front line tourism staff and champions for local tourism product.

*‘A full time permanent job
is created by every
additional 18
international visitors or
177 domestic trips in
NSW.’
(Tourism New South
Wales)*

*'In an information age,
leadership not location is
the most important factor
in a community's
survival.'*
(Jack Shultz)

Recommended Action 4: Implementation of a Community Leadership Strategy

There is national recognition of the critical factor of local leadership in terms of effective community and economic development, and the need to strategically develop this resource. Currently in the Balranald Shire, there is no systematic community leadership development strategy, coordination or budget.

Key Steps:

1. Creation of Leadership Development network.
2. Audit of current initiatives, and regional, national and international leadership development opportunities.
3. Review of initiatives occurring in other communities.
4. Formulation and implementation of Leadership Strategy.
5. Investigate funding opportunities for a Community Leadership Development Fund

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 6.1: *Enhance our community capacity through building the local leadership base of the community.*

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: BI, RDA Murray

Possible Resources: FYA, CBFP, RDA Murray

Success Indicators:

- Growth in number and quality of local leaders.
- Increased volunteerism and community involvement.

Recommended Action 5: Implementation of an Asset Mapping Project

Balranald Shire is an exceptionally asset rich set in terms of community, economic, environmental and cultural resources. However, there has never been any systematic audit of the physical, people, organisational, network and Diaspora assets. This Project seeks to create such a resource.

Key Steps:

1. Review of similar activities in other communities.
2. Identification of potential resources to assist with exercise.
3. Design of asset mapping strategy and tools, including use of social networking technology to keep lines to young people who grew up in the shire (the Diaspora)
4. Implementation of mapping exercise.
5. Connection of identified assets, and promotion
6. Continuous updating of the audit.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 1.2: *Create and promote opportunities for greater community awareness and participation in the life of our community.*

Timeline: Short term and ongoing

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: BSC, RDA Murray, BI

Possible Resources: FRRR, TI, CBFP, RDAF

Success Indicators:

- Systematic audit and connection of community assets.
- Discovery and use of unknown or underutilised resources.
- Identification of windows of opportunity where connected resources can be utilised.
- Wider community participation and volunteerism.

Recommended Action 6: Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program

Internationally, it is recognised that 60-80% of new jobs in a local economy result from the growth of the local business base. Local communities and regions across the globe are now becoming very aware of the need to put in place initiatives that both retain and expand the existing business base, and not just focus on business attraction or new business start-up. This recommended BEAR Program is based on a national methodology successfully implemented by many Australian communities that begins with an in-depth conversation with the local business operators by community volunteer teams and results in a systematic local Business Development Strategy. An element of the '*Community Conversations Week*' was interaction with local businesses through personal visitation and a survey (see appendix (ii)). This exercise showed the willingness and appreciation of businesses to share their opinions and ideas. This Project would be an expansion of that process.

Key Steps:

1. Formation of Task Teams in both communities to implement initiative.
2. Review of the BEAR manuals, DVD and experiences from elsewhere.
3. Design of local program.
4. Recruitment and induction of volunteer interviewers.
5. Coordination of a community wide business visitation/interview program where businesses respond to what helps and hinders their business, and their ideas to improve the local business environment.
6. Analysis of information from the interviews, which provides the basis of a Business Development Strategy.
7. Implementation of the Strategy actions including initiatives related to the digital economy, business incubation, business networking etc.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.1: *Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for our local business communities.*

Timeline: Short term

Responsibility: BI, Business Community

Possible Partners: DSRD, Deniliquin BEC, RDA Murray, BSC

Possible Resources: IDEAS, TI, RDA Murray, RRGRECF

Success Indicators:

- Production of a *Business Development Strategy*;
- Local business retention and expansion.
- Increased job opportunities.
- Volunteer engagement.
- Local leadership development.
- New ideas related to new business creation.

Recommended Action 7: Inclusion in Australia's National Landscapes Program (NLP)

Tourism Australia and Parks Australia have formed a partnership between tourism and conservation to identify Australia's iconic landscapes, which capture and promote areas of outstanding natural beauty and cultural significance. This partnership has seen the creation of *Australia's National Landscapes*, an initiative that aims to achieve conservation, social and economic outcomes for Australia and its regions via the promotion of superlative nature based tourism experiences. Currently there are 10 identified National Landscapes, and applications are currently open for new landscapes to be included. Mungo National Park would make an ideal addition to NLP.

Key Steps:

1. Familiarisation by NPWS and Shire leaders with this NLP and its benefits.
2. Preparation of application for inclusion in NLP.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.2: *Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay and experience the Outback and river environments of Western NSW.*

Timeline: Immediate

Responsibility: BSC, NPWS

Possible Partners: INT, MN

Success Indicators:

- Enhanced tourism appeal.
- Job/business creation.



*‘There’s starting to be a sense of trust around sharing resources.’
(BIG Member)*



6. Community of Balranald

6.1 Overview

Balranald is located 859 kms south west of Sydney where the Sturt Highway crosses the Murrumbidgee River. Balranald is the oldest European settlement on the lower Murrumbidgee, and the Shire administrative and commercial centre.

6.2 Community Assets and Opportunities

- **People Assets**
 - Balranald Inc. – a community based group committed to enhancing the town of Balranald and working on issues of mutual interest with Council, local businesses and other community groups
 - Strong sporting clubs – football, Motor X, field and game. Pony, golf
 - Community groups/agencies: Balranald Interagency Group (BIG), Crime Prevention Committee, Little Bunyips Playgroup, Mallee Family Care, MADEC, Volunteer Rescue Squad, Fire Brigade, CWA, , Men’s’ Shed, Landcare, St Vincent’s de Paul, Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican churches.
- **Infrastructure/Services**
 - K to Year 12 Central School which graduated 12 students in Year 12 in 2011.
 - Catholic Primary School to year 12.
 - Pre-primary school and Early Years facility.
 - New trade training facility.
 - Balranald Hospital - new facility that can provide a wide range of health services. It has 16 long term beds and nine acute beds.
 - Local HACC service.
 - Bidgee Haven - 15 bed age care facility including three independent units (Balranald Manor).
 - Mandela Place - six units for people with disabilities.
 - Presence of a doctor, dentist and pharmacy in Balranald.
 - Extensive sporting infrastructure – Greenham Park (race course, swimming pool, sporting ovals, lawn tennis courts, netball courts and club facilities, golf course)
 - Sealed airstrip.
 - Comprehensive commercial and retail centre, with most businesses having a long term connection with the town.
 - Well maintained parks and gardens.
 - Redevelopment of Royal Theatre as a multipurpose hall facility.
- **Location**
 - Proximity to Swan Hill and north and central Victoria.
 - Location on Sturt Highway.

'I'm astounded at the level of negativity around town, because this place has potential beyond belief.'
(Balranald Resident)

"We are a small town, and we can't do it" is a common attitude.'
(Balranald Business Operator)



- **Tourism Assets and Potential**

- Strategic location of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and Heritage Park and their planned transformation into a major Interpretative Centre site.
- Significant Indigenous cultural sites and the Lowbidgee Aboriginal Mapping Project.
- Special events – two horse race meetings a year, Balranald Murrumbidgee Classic Fishing Competition.
- Extensive Bodinnar historic photograph collection.
- Growling Grass Frog public art collection.
- Natural aesthetic features of the Murrumbidgee River.
- Inland port and pastoral industry heritage connections.
- Proximity to Mungo National Yanga National Park.
- NPWS presence at Yanga and active participation in town's development activities.
- Art Gallery and active arts community.
- Balranald District Ex-Servicemen's Memorial Club.

6.3 Community Challenges and Issues

- Decline in population, businesses and services
- Ageing population.
- Lack of employment diversity.
- Lack of secondary industry.
- Degree of factionalism and negative attitudes within community.
- Limited youth services and programs.
- Heavy traffic in mainstreet.
- Declining school attendances with an increasing number of students bussing to Swan Hill each day.
- Tired appearance of main commercial and retail areas – lack of WOW factor.
- Lack of business association.

6.4 Directions Forward and Recommended Actions

Recommended Action 1: Development of Youth Programs.

Conversations with young people clearly highlighted the need for more youth-focused activities in Balranald. Their ideas included youth centre/club, appointment of a youth worker and the construction of the skate park.

Key Steps:

1. Re-establish the Youth Council.
2. Investigate the establishment of a Youth Centre.
3. Investigate the appointment of a Youth Worker.
4. Construct a skate park.

*'If you don't sport in
Balranald, there is not
much life.'
(Young Balranald
Resident)*



5. Facilitate school holiday programs
6. Expand options at the swimming pool
7. Provision of new youth opportunities.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 1.3: *Involve, support and prepare our young people.*

Timeline: short term

Responsibility: BSC, Community

Possible Partners: MFC, SHRCC

Possible Resources: YDSP, BFP, FRRR

Success Indicators:

- Increased range of non-sporting opportunities for young people.
- Enhanced youth participation and empowerment.
- Less unacceptable juvenile social behaviours.

Recommended Action 2: Establishment of a Leisure Centre

The establishment of a leisure centre was overwhelmingly the most popular idea to emanate from the community, especially from children, young people and young adults.

Key Steps:

1. Examine options in other similar sized communities and formulate a range of possibilities.
2. Consultation with the community, and promotion of opportunities
3. Development of business plan.
4. Identification and acquirement of funding.
5. Establishment and operation.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.3: *Provide a wide range of passive and active recreation and sports events, clubs, facilities and opportunities.*

Timeline: medium term

Responsibility: BSC, Community

Possible Partners: BI, community clubs, RDA Murray

Possible Resources: RDAF, CBO, CDDGP, FRRR, YDSP, RRGRECDP

Success Indicators:

- Establishment and functioning of a multipurpose centre.
- Provision of a range of new recreational opportunities.
- Healthy lifestyles for residents.
- Enhanced community participation and social energy.

Recommended Action 3: Signage and Town Entrance Strategy

The lack of strong attractive town entrance statements and adequate signage detract from the visitor experience in Balranald - *"One does not get a second chance at a first impression."*

Key Steps:

1. Undertaking of an entrances /signage audit.
2. Development and implementation of an improvement plan

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective: *Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay and experience the Outback and river environments of Western NSW.*

Timeline: Immediate

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: Business Communities

Possible Resources: FRRR, RRGRECDF

Success Indicators:

- Attractive town entrances.
- Enhanced community pride.
- Increased tourism benefits.
- Clear and easy navigation for tourists.
- Signage reflecting the spirit and key messages the town wants to portray to visitors.

Recommended Action 4: Establishment of a Balranald Business Association

The lack of a local business networking group affects business collaboration and growth.

Key Steps:

1. Develop a Balranald Business Association to represent business interests and create opportunities for business collaboration.
2. Instigation of a regular Business After Hours networking event.
3. Introduction of an annual Business Awards Program.
4. Establishment of a monthly growers / community market to promote local produce / goods and artists.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.1: *Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for our local business communities*

Timeline: Immediate

Responsibility: Business Community

Possible Partners: RDA Murray, BSC, DSRD, Deniliquin BEC

Possible Resources: RRGRECDF, DSRD

Success Indicators:

- Creation of strong business networking group.
- Enhanced business collaboration, capacity and performance.

Recommended Action 5: Business Training

Building the capacity of local businesses to cope with uncertain and changing future needs to be a critical element of any business development strategy of Balranald. Local businesses have identified a range of training needs.

Key Steps:

1. Audit of local training needs.
2. Implementation of a calendar of training events.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.1: *Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for our local business communities.*

Timeline: Immediate

Responsibility: Business Community

Possible Partners: BSC, Trade Training Centre, Balranald Hospital, Deniliquin BEC, Riverina TAFE, MMT

Possible Resources: RRGRECDF

Success Indicators:

- Enhanced business capacity and morale.
- Enhanced business profitability.
- Enhanced customer service standards.
- Local employment growth.

Recommended Action 6: Mining Taskforce

Key Steps:

1. Establish a Mining Liaison Committee to maximise positive community outcomes from potential mining activities
2. Linkage of activities with broader population expansion strategies
3. Instigate regular dialogue with mining companies.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 2.1: *Promote our community as a lifestyle, work and business destination*

Timeline: immediate

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: BI, Balranald School, RDA Murray

Success Indicators:

- Population growth.
- Enhanced business activity.
- Diversified employment opportunities.



Recommended Action 7: Organics Centre of Excellence

Balranald has a long involvement with the organics industry. With its growing importance in agricultural economics and consumer preference, it represents an industry sector worthy of local attention.

Key Steps:

1. Formation of local Task team.
2. Audit of current local and regional initiatives.
3. Development and implementation of a Plan to enhance its potential.
4. Establishment of local market.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.3: Increase the net number, quality and variety of employment and training opportunities for our community members.

Timeline: immediate

Responsibility: BI

Possible Partners: RDA Murray, BSC, TI

Possible Resources: RRGRE CDF, TI

Success Indicators

- Expansion of the organics industry.
- Growth in local employment.
- Enhanced producer collaboration.
- Establishment of local market.



7. Community of Euston

7.1 Overview

Euston with a population of 600 is located on the Murray River, 80km west of Balranald and 80km east of Mildura. It is approximately 500km north-west of Melbourne, 500km east of Adelaide, and 1000km west of Sydney. Euston was initially settled as Boomicool Station in 1847. Town emerged with soldier settlement and creation of Euston Irrigation Cooperative in 1948. Today it is an important gateway to the tourist attractions associated with the Murray River and the Sunraysia Region, as well as the closest entry point to Mungo National Park. It functions as a twin town to the Victorian community of Robinvale, creating an official combined population of 4,000 (unofficially population could be as large as 8,000). Its economy is driven by irrigated agriculture, the Euston Club (EC) and tourism. It is the growth area of the shire.

7.2 Community Assets and Opportunities

- **Community People Assets**

- Many passionate and proud residents – strong level of community involvement.
- Agricultural experience and skill base.
- Diverse mix of cultures, faiths and ethnicities.
- Excellent public school.
- Euston Club and its commitment to community development – contributes annually to 60 community initiatives.
- Large Italian population from the southern Italian province of Calabria.
- Active groups including: REACT (Robinvale Euston Amateur Community Theatre), Historical Society, Keep Euston Beautiful, Pre School association.
- Strong sporting base – football club, bowls club, fishing club, pony club.

- **Location**

- Location on the Murray River- major part of the town's identity.
- Convenient half way position between Sydney and Adelaide.
- Interaction of two highways – Sturt and Murray Valley Highway.
- Twin town nature with Robinvale enabling access to the services of a 4000+ size community.
- Close proximity to Mildura and its city services including airport.
- Sturt highway skirt town avoiding heavy travel in town centre.



*‘Capitalise on the outside
dollars, and spend it
internally in the town.’
(Euston Resident)*



- **Infrastructure**

- Education –public school and preschool.
- Euston Club - biggest employer in town with 60 staff (second biggest employer in the shire).
- Batsy housing development – 24 acre housing project.
- Access to the hospital facilities of Robinvale District Health Services (RDHS), winner of the Victorian Premier's 2010 Rural Health Service of the Year. RDHS Robinvale District Health Services provides a comprehensive range of acute care 20 beds, 2 dialysis chairs, 54 aged residential beds, primary health care and community based services.
- Sport and recreation infrastructure - Euston Bowls and Recreation Club, multipurpose centre involving 11 organisations, 18 hole golf course in Robinvale, bowling club, fishing club.
- Euston/Robinvale Bridge over the Murray River.
- Well maintained parks and gardens.
- Town Beautification Committee.

- **Agriculture**

- Centre of a nationally significant irrigation region for horticulture - vineyards, market gardens and citrus.
- Biggest carrot producers in southern Hemisphere.
- Almond production – second to California.
- Home to the Euston Cooperative Rural Society Ltd – very successful and efficient irrigation cooperative.

- **Tourism Assets and Potential**

- The natural aesthetic features and landscapes of the Murray River and the Euston State Forest including majestic cliffs, clear water, wetlands, expansive sand bars, majestic cliffs, red gum forests, black box woodlands and wildlife including at least 76 species of birdlife.
- Closest town to Mungo National Park.
- Euston Club and Resort - it has a membership of over 3000, 80% from Victoria. Activities include gaming (including alfresco gaming), dining and sports. (bowls, tennis and fishing).
- Cabin Park (21 cabins) being built.
- Accessibility to the Murray River for water sports and Murray Cod fishing.
- Special events – Euston Club International Triathlon, Robinvale Euston 80 Ski Race Classic, Tour of the Murray, Almond Bloom Festival
- Cycle way from Robinvale.
- Euston Weir and Lock 15 with picnic facilities.
- Lake Benanee.
- Inland port heritage
- Proximity to Mildura in terms of tourism infrastructure and tourism base.

*‘Euston Club can cater for 300 at a wedding, but we only have 40 beds in Euston and Robinvale.’
(Euston Club Employee)*



7.3 Community Challenges

- Water uncertainty.
- Exit of farming families and agricultural property consolidation – 245 Soldier settlement blocks created in 1948, now only 75 families functioning.
- Lack of youth facilities and services.
- Enhancing the functioning of Euston and Robinvale as a joint community.
- Lack of housing.
- Limited accommodation – only 40 motel beds in Euston/Robinvale.
- Limited retail options.
- Trade service gaps – engineering, tyre services.

7.4 Directions Forward and Recommended Actions

Recommended Action 1: Development of an Eco Trail

Eco tourism is defined as experiences in nature where the focus is on learning about the natural and cultural history of the region, thus increasing the conservation and protection of natural areas (Flow on business, 2009). The natural aesthetic features of the Murray river and the Euston State forest provide an excellent site for the development of an eco-trail that could be the basis for a growth in eco-tourism. The Trail would incorporate interpretation/education themes.

Key Steps:

1. Development of business plan based on Report by Flow On Business.
2. Identification and acquirement of funding.
3. Construction of trail and its interpretation.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 3.2: *Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay and experience the Outback and river environments of Western NSW.*

Timeline: medium term

Responsibility: BSC, EC

Possible Partners:

Possible Resources:

Success Indicators:

- Creation of eco trail.
- Increased tourism numbers and Euston becoming a destination.
- Enhanced community pride.

Recommended Action 2: Development of Youth Programs.

Conversations with young people clearly highlighted the need for more youth-focused activities in Euston..

Key Steps:

1. Consultation with the community, and promotion of opportunities
2. Identify new youth opportunities
3. Implement of new youth opportunities.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 1.2: *Involve, support and prepare our young people.*

Timeline: short term

Responsibility: BSC, Community

Possible Partners: EC

Possible Resources: YDSP, BFP, FRRR

Success Indicators:

- Increased range of non-sporting opportunities for young people.
- Enhanced youth participation and empowerment.
- Less unacceptable social juvenile behaviours

Recommended Action 3: Development of Playground Facilities

There is strong support from the Euston community for improvement of playground facilities, especially along the river foreshore.

Key Steps:

1. Undertake of an audit of current facilities.
2. Consultation with the Community.
3. Preparation of proposals
4. Identification of resources.
5. Implementation.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 2.3: Provide a wide range of passive and active recreation and sports events, clubs, facilities and opportunities.

Timeline: Immediate and short term

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: EC

Possible Resources: BSC, EC, CBFP, FRRR

Success Indicators:

- Enhanced opportunities for family and child activities.
- Stronger community interaction.

Recommended Action 4: Joint Community Initiative

The future of Euston and Robinvale are intricately connected. There is a need to constantly examine, monitor and develop opportunities where the two communities can function as one community.

Key Steps:

1. Facilitate and establish other joint initiatives between Euston and Robinvale
2. Form relationships between BSC and Swan Hill Council

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 5.2: *Promote key communications and infrastructure improvements.*

Timeline: immediate

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: MN, Community, EC, SHRCC

Success Indicators:

- Enhanced collaboration and community outcomes.
- Smarter use of limited resources.

Recommended Action 5: Retirement Village

Lack of retirement housing and care is a major social infrastructure gap in Euston, especially for a strong farming community that desires to see retirees remaining within the community. In addition, the strong physical and lifestyle appeal of the community would be further enhanced by available retirement facilities.

Key Steps:

1. Review of relevant initiatives in other small rural communities.
2. Liaison with other regional retirement industry stakeholders.
3. Preparation implementation of a Business Plan.

Relevant Balranald Shire 2022 Strategic Objective 2.2: *Create opportunities to assist community members who are disadvantaged.*

Timeline: medium

Responsibility: BSC

Possible Partners: EC, SHRCC

Possible Resources: RDAF

Success Indicators:

- Creation of retirement facilities.
- Retention, attraction and growth of population.
- Creation of new and diversified employment opportunities.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AC	Australian Council
AFP	Arts Funding Program (NSW Arts)
ATCP	Australian Tourism Accreditation Program
BALC	Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council
BDEMC	Balranald District Ex-Servicemen's Memorial Club
BI	Balranald Incorporated
BIG	Balranald Interagency Group
BSC	Balranald Shire Council
BTIC	Balranald Tourist Information Centre
BEAR	Business Expansion and Retention Program
CBD	Central Business District
CBFP	Community Builders Funding Program
CBPP	Community Building Partnership Program
CDGP	Community Development Grants Program
CWA	Country Women's Association
DBCDE	Australian Government Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DRARDLG	Australian Government Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
DRET	Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
DSCP	Diversity and Social Cohesion Program
DSEWPC	Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
DSRD	NSW Department of State and Regional Development
DT	NSW Department of Transport
EDC	Enterprise Development Centre
EC	Euston Bowling and Recreation Club
ESRC	Euston Sports and Recreation Club
FA	Festivals Australia
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FRRR	Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians
HSC	Hay Shire Council
HLG	Homebush Landcare Group Inc
ICAS	Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme
ICV	Indigenous Community Volunteers
IDEAS	Bank of I.D.E.A.S

IFP	Indigenous Funding Program
IHP	Indigenous Heritage Program
INSTEP	Indigenous Skills Transfer and Exchange Partnership
INT	Inland NSW Tourism
ISBF	Indigenous Small Business Fund
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
MDBA	Murray-Darling Basin Authority
MF	Myer Foundation
MFC	Mallee Family Care
MMT	Murray Mallee Training Company Pty Ltd
MN	Murray Now
NBN	National Broad Band Network
NEIS	New Enterprise Incentives Scheme
NLP	National Landscapes Program
NP	National Park
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW	State of New South Wales
OEH	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
RAMROC	Regional and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils
RDA Murray	Regional Development Australia Murray
RDAF	Regional Development Australia Fund
RDHS	Robinvale District Health Services
REACT	Robinvale Euston Amateur Community Theatre
RET	Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
RMS	NSW Roads and Maritime Services
RRGRECDF	Riverina Red Gum Regional Employment and Community Development Fund
RTPFP	NSW Regional Tourism Partnership Funding Program
RUMAD	Are You Making a Difference? Program
SHRCC	Swan Hill Rural City Council
SBCP	Strengthening Basin Communities Project
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TI	NSW Trade & Investment
TIRIS	NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
VIC	Visitor Information Centre

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Appendix (i): Summary of Business Surveys

Summary of Balranald Shire Business Surveys Conducted by Bank of I.D.E.A.S. December 2011		
<p>Note: This appendix contains data from collection of 35 surveys across the Balranald Shire in December 2011. Surveys were collected by visiting businesses in person and through businesses participating in community development events. In some questions, not all respondents provided an answer. In Questions 1, 5, 6, 10, 11 12 & 13 multiple responses were allowed, so percentages add to more than 100.</p>		
Question 1		
Describe the main activities of your business		
	Number of responses	% of total sample (41)
Agriculture/Horticulture	7	17
Tourism	1	2.4
Hospitality	8	19.5
Accommodation	6	14.6
Arts and crafts	1	2.4
Retail	4	9.7
Agricultural supplies	1	2.4
Pharmacy / Chemist	1	2.4
Fuel	2	4.8
Real estate / Livestock	1	2.4
Panel beating	1	2.4
Transport	1	2.4
Hardware supplies	1	2.4
Electricity supply	1	2.4
Healthcare	1	2.4
Club	1	2.4
Supermarket	2	4.8

Dressmaking	1	2.4
Question 2		
How long has your business been operating in our community?		
	Number of respondents	% of total sample (35)
Less than one year	0	0
2 to 5 years	3	8.5
6 to 10 years	5	14.3
Longer than 10 years	27	77.2
Question 3		
How many people does your business employ?		
	Number of respondents	% of total sample (34)
1-5	24	70.6
6-10	5	14.7
11-15	0	0
More than 15	5	14.7
Question 4		
How would you rate the outlook for your business over the next 12 months?		
	Number of respondents	% of total sample (35)
Very good	10	28.5
Good	13	37.1
Fair	7	20
Poor	1	2.9
Very poor	0	0
Don't know	4	11.5
Question 5		

What do you perceive as being the main advantages of operating a business in our community?

	Number of responses	% of total sample (165)
Local customer loyalty	18	10.9
Quality & supply of local labour	8	4.8
Positive image of the community	16	9.6
Quality of the environment	20	12.12
Low crime rates	15	9.0
Local tourism attractions	8	4.8
Local market opportunities	4	2.4
Reliable transport & freight services	16	9.6
Quality of life in this community	25	15.15
Reliable support businesses and other local services	16	9.6
Communication networks	6	3.6
Activities of the local/regional business and/or tourism associations	5	3.0
Support from local government	8	4.8
Other	0	0

Question 6

What are the main disadvantages of operating a business in our community?

	Number of responses	% of total sample (144)
Small size of the local market	10	6.9
Transport costs	26	18
Time/distance from suppliers	25	17.3
Lack of support by local government	7	4.8
Costs of rates and services	8	5.5

Too much competition	4	2.7
Limited tourism appeal	11	7.6
Land zoning/planning	3	2.0
Shortage of skilled labour	10	6.9
Quality of infrastructure	4	2.7
Availability of finance	3	2.0
Lack of local customer support	6	4.1
Shortage of local trades and expertise	9	6.25
Communication availability/costs	5	3.4
Poor services from suppliers	2	1.3
Lack of employee housing	6	4.1
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impassable roads in wet weather • Poor road maintenance 	5	3.4

Question 7

Do you find it difficult to find staff with occupational skills relevant to your business?

	Number of respondents	% of total sample (35)
Yes	17	48.5
No	14	40
N/A	4	11.5

Most common areas identified, if yes: Hospitality, health service, transport drivers, butchers, tutors

Question 8

Do you have a website or service customers online?

	Number of respondents	% of total sample (34)
Yes	15	44.1

No	19	55.9
Question 9		
Are there any products or services which you find difficult to obtain locally?		
	Number of respondents	% of total sample (31)
Yes	16	51.6
No	15	48.4
Products listed as difficult to obtain locally: trades people, kitchenware, bathroom products, linen, housing, health services incl. allied health, engineering services, catering supplies, laundry/dry cleaning, maintenance/tradesmen, fish & pork, local artworks & products, fishing bait, mobile phone coverage		
Question 10		
Are there any industries / businesses / services which you think could be successfully relocated to our community?		
	Number of responses	% of total sample (27)
Aged care/nursing home	2	7.4
Child care	1	3.7
Recycling plant	1	3.7
Light industrial	1	3.7
Hospitality services to tourism	1	3.7
Distillery	1	3.7
Abattoir	1	3.7
Community Bank	1	3.7
Dairy	1	3.7
Commercial laundry	1	3.7
Motels	1	3.7
Refrigeration mechanic	1	3.7
Painter	1	3.7

Plumber	2	7.4
Trucking depot	1	3.7
Tourism operators/attractions	3	11.1
Gym	1	3.7
Mechanic (that also services trucks and buses)	2	7.4
Carpenter	1	3.7
Engineering	3	11.1

Question 11

What is special or unique about your product or services?

	Number of responses	% of total sample (30)
Only local business offering the product	5	16.6
Customer service	10	33.3
Location / Attraction / Experience	3	10
Quality	2	6.6
Price competitive	1	3.3
Family business	1	3.3
Unique art space	1	3.3
Healthcare service	1	3.3
Organic products	2	6.6
Using local resources	2	6.6
Natural Product	2	6.6

Question 12

What do you believe is the single most important factor in ensuring a viable future for businesses in our community?

	Number of responses	% of total sample (47)
Working together / collaboration	2	4.2

Population growth / young families coming & staying	5	10.6
Local customer support	5	10.6
Local Government support	3	6.4
Tourism	4	8.5
Weather / Water availability	4	8.5
Council attitude	2	4.2
Customer service	3	6.4
Industry / new industry	2	4.2
Quality products /prices	3	6.4
Increase visitors to town	2	4.2
Healthy environment	1	2.1
Customer satisfaction	1	2.1
Gaol	1	2.1
Solar energy grid	1	2.1
Refugee centre	1	2.1
Educating local community	1	2.1
Eliminating cross over in products	1	2.1
Maintain services they already have	1	2.1
NP act in responsible way	1	2.1
Better Roads	1	2.1
Better transport systems	1	2.1
Easy access to labour	1	2.1

Question 13

Do you have any other ideas or suggestions about making our community a better place to operate and grow a business?

	Number of responses	% of total sample (31)
Better tourism practices (strategies, collaboration, training, service the market, promotion)	4	12.9
Tourism Information Centre in centre of town	1	3.2

Local government support / incubation of businesses	3	9.6
More police presence / law & order	1	3.2
Community weekly newsletter	1	3.2
Communication between organisations/business/schools	1	3.2
Working together / supporting each other	3	9.6
Council encourage new residents with cheap land packages	1	3.2
Better local strategic planning / holistic town development	1	3.2
New business	3	9.6
Assistance to individuals and clubs in applying for grants/funding	1	3.2
Improve infrastructure / streetscape / appearance of town	3	9.6
Local loyalty card	1	3.2
Discount cards for tourists	1	3.2
Welcome Mines	1	3.2
Joint activities between businesses	1	3.2
Local leadership	1	3.2
High level weir	1	3.2
Information in written form for those not able to attend meetings	1	3.2
Customer service training	1	3.2

Appendix (ii) Summary of Ideas from “My Big Idea” Postcard

Balranald

1. Community Building

1. More places and opportunities for community members to socialise (x3).
2. Hold an event where everyone brings traditional food from the country they come from and everyone shares.
3. Identify the community's strengths and assets and work on them.

4. Greater community involvement in projects.
5. Greater opportunities for community members to volunteer.
6. Create a 'Welcoming Committee' for new residents.

2. Population Retention and Expansion

1. Build more housing for the elderly to encourage a more elderly population.

3. Health and Aged Care

1. Take measures to combat childhood obesity within the community.
2. Getting our new big hospital operating to its full potential.

4. Youth Development

1. Youth centre and youth groups with games and activities (x12).
2. Alternative options / activities for children that do not play sport (x6).
3. Form a Harry Potter club.
4. Involve youth in community projects.
5. Holiday activities - circus skills program, art/music based initiatives, more movies at the theatre, hockey/lacrosse, Wii competitions at the theatre, cooking classes, mural/graffiti wall project, film-making.
6. Introduce 'Story Time' at the library.
7. Build stronger relations between Balranald Shire Council and Swan Hill Rural City Council – particularly for progression of key youth-led initiatives or youth worker resources.
8. Celebrate and promote the achievements of young people who have chosen to stay in the community after finishing school.

5. Economy, Industry, Small Business and Employment

1. More takeaway outlets (e.g. MacDonald, Subway and KFC) (x9).
2. Lolly shop (x5).
3. Regular local market day (x4).
4. Cinema (x4).
5. More variety in local eateries (x3).
6. Video shop.
7. Arcade with entertainment and more retail shops – hairdressers, technology stores, clothes shops, gaming shops, video shop, fishing & camping shop.
8. Establish a poultry farm.
9. More services.
10. Floating restaurant.
11. Annual Christmas fete.
12. Run a business awards program to celebrate and highlight good/innovative business practice.

6. Tourism Development

1. Canoes for hire on Yanga Lake (x3).
2. More tourist activities (x2).

3. Better signage (x2).
4. Locals running the tours at Yanga.
5. Bush tucker garden.
6. Improvements in town entrance signs.
7. Bus tours to Yanga National Park.
8. Daily Homestead tours.
9. Create a town map outlining businesses, services and attractions.
10. Establish eco tourism ventures.
11. Motor home friendly participation and infrastructure.
12. Increase the height of the weir to benefit community, tourism and agriculture.

7. Education and Training

1. More tertiary education opportunities (x2).
2. Incorporate the preschool into the Central School.
3. More support for local schools.
4. English centre for immigrant families.
5. Need for more up skilling of retail and service staff.
6. More opportunities and support for apprenticeships.
7. Incentives to fill the skills shortage.
8. Establishment of a local Education Trust for payment of specialist teachers' wages to expand elective range at Central School.

8. Community Infrastructure and Services

1. Clean the river (x3).
2. More funding for playgroup for rent of building, shading and toys (x2).
3. More funding for local ventures.
4. Restore pavements.
5. River foreshore improvements.
6. BBQ at kids park.
7. After school care.
8. Recycling services for households.
9. Safe and secure play area for small children near cafés.
10. More new books in the Library.
11. Increase open hours at the library.
12. Establish a local paper.
13. Better boat ramps.
14. Seal the road to Mungo National Park.
15. Establish a community / market garden.
16. Housing for the elderly.
17. Train station.
18. Bigger airport.
19. Taxi service.

20. Fix up roads.
21. Introduce a kids' area at the Balranald District Ex-Servicemen's Memorial Club.
22. Community 'solar bank' to sell electricity back to the grid.
23. Directional signage in town could be frog themed.
24. Establish a community park by the riverside in Balranald (picnic tables, shelter, bins etc...).

9. Heritage, Arts and Culture

1. Create a Giant frog (x4).
2. Using the historic photographic collection to develop and interpret local stories (x2).
3. Arts and culture centre.
4. Bring the old Gaol back to life – restore and stage monthly re-enactments with volunteers.
5. An outdoor art gallery in the interpretive and heritage park precinct.
6. More street art.
7. A large frog attached to the water tower which lights up at night.
8. Educate locals about their history and story.
9. Heritage vault – to keep an archive of photo's documents and stories.
10. International Night (either at the Theatre or the School).
11. Rubbish/recycle bins in the main street could be frog shaped.
12. Rebuild the old wharf in Balranald

10. Sport and Recreation

1. Leisure / recreation centre incorporating indoor courts; socialising areas; access to ovals, swimming pool and outside court; Skate park; Ten pin bowling; Art/craft areas; Gym; Canteen/ youth cafe (x30).
2. Skate park (x19).
3. Basketball teams (x11).
4. Indoor / heated pool (x16).
5. Water slide (x8).
6. Laser tag (x8).
7. BMX track (x5).
8. Wave pool (x6).
9. Ten pin bowling (x6).
10. Diving board at the pool (x5).
11. Water Park (x4).
12. Motor cross Track (x4).
13. 50m pool (x3).
14. Form a Junior football club (x2).
15. Shooting range (x2).
16. Fun centre.
17. Go kart track.
18. Hunting club.
19. Archery club.
20. Party barge for locals to hire out.

21. Rock climbing.
22. Upgrade and improve golf course.

11. Leadership and Governance

1. Council needs to liaise with the community on a regular basis (x3).
2. Better communication between businesses, services and the coordination of events.
3. Generate better attitudes towards Council.
4. Fly the Aboriginal flag at Council.
5. Establish a sister town.
6. Council to start an e-list and automatically send out Council agendas and news to subscribers.

Euston

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Build a swimming pool (4) | 13. Nicer park to act as a gathering place for community – including playground and fitness stations. |
| 2. Activities / Centre for the elderly (2). | 14. Ute muster. |
| 3. Supermarket. | 15. Hot Air Balloon Light Show. |
| 4. More playground equipment. | 16. Library in Euston. |
| 5. More BBQ's, tables and chairs in public spaces. | 17. Archery Club. |
| 6. Indoor / heated pool. | 18. More shops – hairdresser, chemist, café/restaurant. |
| 7. Mini golf. | 19. Soccer club. |
| 8. Youth centre. | 20. Shooting range. |
| 9. Wave pool. | 21. Slides / fun park on the river. |
| 10. Aqua coaster. | 22. More motels. |
| 11. Build a hospital. | 23. Establish a high school. |
| 12. Fix the toilets at the boat ramp and build BBQ's. | |

Appendix (iii): Key Funding Sources

1. Community Development

ANZ Charitable Services

ANZ Trustees is the sole trustee or co-trustee of approximately 400 charitable trusts, settlements and foundations.
For further details: www.anz.com/australia/charitabletrusts/Guidelines.asp#Applying

Arts NSW - Arts Funding Program (AFP)

AFP commits over \$50 million each year to support arts and cultural organisations and individual artists. .
For further details: www.arts.nsw.gov.au/index.php/category/funding-and-support

Australia Council (AC)

AC provides a wide range of grants targeting the fields of music, theatre, literature and the visual arts. In addition, there is funding for partnership development initiatives as well as specific programs for indigenous arts organisations and artists .For further details: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants

Australian Heritage Council (AHC)

The AHC offers both competitive and non-competitive grants' programs targeting Indigenous and non Indigenous heritage projects. For further details: www.environment.gov.au/heritage/programs/index.html

Caring for our Country - Community Action Grants

Aims to help community groups take action to conserve and protect their natural environment with grants from \$5,000 to \$20,000. For further details: www.nrm.gov.au/cag/index.html

Community Builders Funding Program (CBFP)

CBFP aims to help strengthen and build the capacity of communities with grants from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

For further details: www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au

Community Building Partnership Program (CBPP)

This program provides funds for the building and improvement of vital social, recreational and environmental infrastructure that will enhance the wellbeing of local communities throughout the State. The Murray Darling Electorate receives up to \$400,000 per annum. . For further details: www.communitybuildingpartnership.nsw.gov.au

Community Development Grants Program (CDGP)

CDGP provides funding assistance to not-for-profit incorporated community organisations and local government councils to promote its vision of community harmony, participation and access to services, and in recognition of all groups from different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. For further details: www.crc.nsw.gov.au/services/grants

Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS)

Administered by Transport New South Wales, this scheme provides support funding to improve the amenity of passenger transport infrastructure in rural, regional and remote communities of NSW. For further details: www.transport.nsw.gov.au/cptigs

Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP)

DSCP is a community-based initiative which aims to address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance and provides funding up to \$50,000. For further details: www.harmony.gov.au/funding/dscp-grants

Festivals Australia (FA)

FA funds regional and community festivals to present quality cultural projects. For further details: www.arts.gov.au/arts/festivals_australia

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)

FRRR is the only national foundation dedicated to stimulating the renewal of rural and remote communities. They administer 12 different funding programs .For further details: www.frrr.org.au

Ian Potter Foundation

This foundation offers a wide range of funding programs to organisations with DGR and TCC Status to assist them in developing ideas and programs that contribute to a healthy and progressive nation. :For further details: <http://foundation.ianpotter.org.au>

For further details: www.mca.org.au/financial-sources/other/5465-inger-rice-foundation-grants

Indigenous Culture Support (ICS)

ICS Program offers various types of funding to provide support for the maintenance and continued development of Indigenous culture at a community level. For further details: www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/Indigenous_Culture_Support

Indigenous Funding Program

This program aims to create partnerships between organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, working towards making a difference within the community. For further details: www.indigenous.gov.au/eSub/PublicPages/ProgramInformation

Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program (ISRP)

The ISRP is an Australian Government program that provides funding to community groups, organisations and the Australian Sports Commission to increase and encourage the active participation of Indigenous Australians in sport and physical recreation activities. For further details: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/sport-indigprograms

Macquarie Group Foundation

It provides funding in the areas of health care and research, education, the arts, welfare and the environment. For further details: www.macquarie.com.au/mgl/au/about-macquarie-group/foundation

NSW Heritage Grants

This program supports the community's identification, conservation, management and promotion of NSW heritage. For further details: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

NIB Foundation

The foundation's Community Grants Program provides funding to community organisations with DGR and TCC Status that are establishing locally-based initiatives that will make a difference to the health and wellbeing of their community. For further details: www.nibfoundation.com.au

NSW Sport and Recreation

The NSW Sport and Recreation provides government grants each year to help build and develop sporting facilities, and assist the development of athletes, coaches, officials and sports administrators in NSW. For further details: www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/grants

Myer Foundation (MF) and the Sidney Myer Fund

The mission of these foundations is to build a fair, just, creative, sustainable and caring society through initiatives that promote positive change in Australia and in relation to Australia's regional setting. For further details: www.myerfoundation.org.au/programs

Riverina Red Gum Regional Employment and Community Development Fund (RRGRECDF)

The aim of the RRGRECDF is to support initiatives that maximise economic and social development opportunities and will be of broad benefit to the community of the NSW Riverina. The program is designed to benefit residents, businesses and workers in the local government areas of Balranald, Deniliquin, Murray, Conargo, Wakool, Berrigan and Murrumbidgee. Grants from \$1,000 to \$200,000 are available for individual projects. For further details: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/2011RiverRedGum.htm>

Regional Arts NSW

Regional Arts NSW administers four arts funding programs. For further details: www.regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/grants.html

Scanlon Foundation Grants

This Foundation seeks to invest as a "Social Entrepreneur" by assisting not-for-profit organisations with DGR Status in developing innovative and creative projects, with a focus on cultural diversity and social cohesion.

For further details: <http://scanlonfoundation.org.au>

SGIO Community Grants Program

This program helps to support organisations that are committed to making the community safer, particularly in the areas of crime prevention, road safety, emergency readiness and response and the environment. For further details: www.sgio.com.au/grants

Volunteer Grants (FaHCSIA)

Volunteer Grants provides funding up to \$5,000 to help groups with volunteer support initiatives. For further details: www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/volunteers/progserv/Pages/VolunteerGrants.aspx

2. Economic Development

Aboriginal Business Development

Assistance can include advice, developing business and marketing plans, mentoring, attending trade shows, exporting and networking. For further details: www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/aboriginal/bizdevelopment/Pages/default.aspx

Aboriginal Heritage Program

This program provides funding for projects that conserve, promote and increase understanding of Aboriginal heritage in New South Wales. Funding Grants up to \$75,000 are available. For further details: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

Australia Council (AC)

AC provides a wide range of grants targeting the fields of music, theatre, literature and the visual arts.

For further details: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)

Through its Business Development and Assistance Program, IBA assists eligible Indigenous Australians to establish, acquire and grow small to medium businesses. For further details: www.iba.gov.au/business-ownership

Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme (ICAS)

ICAS offers Indigenous businesses access to commercial finance, and appropriate professional and mentoring support services. For further details: www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Employment/Programs

Indigenous Small Business Fund (ISBF)

ISBF provides funding to indigenous community-based organisations to help indigenous people learn about business, develop business skills and expand their business. Funding can be used to help identify and develop business opportunities, skills training and provision of advice.

For further details: www.workplace.gov.au

New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)

NEIS provides assistance to eligible job seekers who are interested in starting and running a small business. NEIS can provide applicants with accredited small business training, business advice and mentoring, as well as ongoing income support for up to 52 weeks. For further details: www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/JSA/EmploymentServices/Pages/NEIS.aspx

Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants Program

A program is an initiative intended to facilitate research into issues affecting Australia's regions including a *Small local government and community support initiative* – examples include funding to support the identification of local needs, strategic planning, innovative management practices, capacity building and community services. For further details: www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au/grantsprogram.aspx

Regional Development Australia Fund

Administered by DRARDLG, this fund has been allocated \$1 billion by the Australian government. Grants range in size from \$500,000 to \$15 million. For further details: <http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/programs/rdaf.aspx>

Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity (RFPIPP) Program

This program aims to boost the productivity and competitiveness of Australia's regional food and seafood industries through innovation and technology improvements. Under the program, matching fund grants between \$50,000 and \$2 million are available. For further details: www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/foodinnovation

Regional NSW Business Investment and Development Programs

A range of special services and programs to assist regional enterprises, industries and communities. For further details: www.business.nsw.gov.au/assistance-and-support/grants/regional-programs

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TQUAL Grants

TQUAL Grants aim to stimulate sustainable growth in the Australian tourism industry by supporting innovative approaches in tourism. For further details: www.ausindustry.gov.au/Tourism/TQUALGrants/Pages/TQUALGrants.aspx

Tourism NSW

Tourism NSW offers several funding programs including:

- *Regional Tourism Partnership Funding Program.*
- *Regional Flagship Events Program* For further details: http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Funding_and_Grants_p586.aspx

3. Youth Development

Better Futures Program

Better Futures is a state-wide program funded by the NSW Government. It aims to improve support and services for children and young people aged 9 to 18 years who are at risk of disengaging from community, school, family or friends. For further details: www.communities.nsw.gov.au/betterfutures

Building Community Resilience - Youth Mentoring Grants Program

Grants from \$5,000 to \$200,000 to help communities organise and run local programs and initiatives to promote a tolerant, safe and inclusive environment. For further details:

www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Nationalsecurity_CounteractingViolentExtremism_BuildingCommunityResilienceYouthMentoringGrantsProgram

Bush Children's Education Foundation (BCEF) Grants

BCEF provides financial assistance to school-aged children living in outback New South Wales. The purpose of the Foundation is to enable students who live in remote areas to attend school. Assistance is available to subsidise the boarding expenses of secondary school aged children from families with restricted financial resources. Boarding places may be at country boarding schools or community operated hostels. In 2007, the Foundation extended its support to include tertiary students. For further details: <http://www.bcef.org.au/>

Community Grants Programs

Administered by the Department of Education and Training, these Programs work with community organisations to maximise opportunities for people with specific needs through education, training and employment.

For further details: www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas

Indent Grants

INDENT has been set up to help young people (13 – 25) in NSW access drug and alcohol free all-ages entertainment. It provides workshops and training, advice, support and resources, and funding for all ages events. For further details: www.indent.net.au/grants

Youth Development Support Program (YDSP)

YDSP is designed to provide financial support to non-government, not-for-profit organisations to deliver community-based projects to develop the capacity of young people by creating practical and innovative opportunities in their community. Grants of up to \$40,000 are available. For further details: www.youth.gov.au/ydsp



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Australian Government

**Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities**