



TOWARDS 2035

Balranald Shire Council's

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2035

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Cover page drawings are from Balranald Central School students

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FOREWORD BY THE MAYOR



As the inaugural Mayor of Balranald Shire's return to elected officials I am delighted to present Balranald Shire's Community Strategic Plan – Towards 2035.

I thank each of you for investing in this process with us. In total 539 community members informed the development of our Community Strategic Plan. This means 25% of our whole community contributed to this Plan! Because of this commitment from each of you we now share a Plan that honours the needs of our whole community and creates a clear direction for the work of Council.

This plan is a testament to our commitment to the quadruple bottom line approach, ensuring economic, environmental, social, and civic priorities are balanced.

We will be a Council that plans for growth in a way that protects what we all love about our existing lifestyle whilst encouraging the growth of businesses and our housing areas in line with our communities' expectations. By prioritising sustainable development and thoughtful planning, we aim to create spaces that honour our unique character and heritage.

A central goal is to care for our communities and residents by fostering a vibrant, inclusive environment where everyone thrives. We are dedicated to balancing growth with sustainability, promoting both well-being and lifestyle enhancements for all. This plan will guide us in creating a future that respects our past while embracing innovation and progress across our entire municipality.

One of our core commitments is to care for all ages, from our youngest to our oldest community members. We understand the importance of nurturing our children, providing them with safe spaces, quality education, and opportunities for growth and development. Equally, we are devoted to supporting our senior residents, ensuring they have access to essential services, healthcare, and activities that enrich their lives and keep them connected to the community.

Together, we will build resilient communities that value every resident's contributions and ensures a high quality of life for present and future generations.

I believe that together, guided by this Plan, we can build an even brighter future for all our residents.

Cr Louie Zaffina
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

THE PLAN IN BRIEF



PILLAR 1: Our Lifestyle

- 1.1** Create and maintain beautiful, safe, welcoming and accessible community spaces that enhance healthy living, active lifestyles and connection;
- 1.2** Create events and platforms that celebrate our unique communities and entire municipality, building on pride and sense of place;
- 1.3** Improve local access to essential health and wellbeing services and programs – enabling residents to live, evolve and age well in our communities;
- 1.4** Protect those lifestyle attributes our communities value – upholding community principles to balance and guide growth and development;

- 1.1.1** Invest in place-making, streetscape and resident (prospective resident and visitor) amenity improvements
- 1.1.2** Continue to maintain and, where feasible, extend public places and spaces that support community to come together and participate in healthy, active and connected ways (including community halls, parks, playgrounds, recreative reserves, green spaces, and access to nature);
- 1.1.3** Increase physical and social infrastructure to provide accessible, meaningful and safe ways for people of all abilities to participate in and contribute to our communities;
- 1.1.4** Understand the precursors to poor community safety and respond proactively for lasting resolution and all of community wellbeing;
- 1.2.1** Work with our communities to clearly identify and understand our unique attributes and their alignment across the region;
- 1.2.2** Partner to enhance existing and develop new events and platforms that celebrate our communities, building on pride and sense of place;
- 1.3.1** Collaborate with key Council committees and external networks to comprehensively understand our strengths and challenges in service access and delivery;
- 1.3.2** Advocate across all levels to achieve local level service access and delivery which reflects the needs of all members of our communities and upholds their rights respective to their regional and urban counterparts;
- 1.3.3** Council actively pursues funding streams enabling Council to provide health and wellbeing services identified as enduring service gaps in our communities (mental health is identified as the critical initial focus);
- 1.3.4** Recognise and support the critical role of volunteer groups, events and activities in supporting community health and wellbeing including through connection, sport, art and culture;
- 1.4.1** Council understands and upholds our communities' preferences regarding balanced growth and development, protecting our high value lifestyle attributes



PILLAR 2: Our Community

- 2.1** Support our existing leaders and volunteers and grow our activism skills;
- 2.2** Nurture and support our families to thrive as the primary place of care and first educators of their children;
- 2.3** We uphold the rights of all residents including those with a disability and/or experiencing under-resourcing;
- 2.4** Understand, share and showcase local culture and heritage. Achieve meaningful, empowering Reconciliation across our municipality

- 2.1.1** Create a Volunteer Coordinator role within Council to offer practical, secretariat, and capacity building support to our volunteer groups;
- 2.1.2** Work with local schools and key organisations to develop and deliver a Volunteer Mentoring program;
- 2.1.3** Work with employment services and key organisations to engage and support un- and under-employed community members in volunteering roles;
- 2.1.4** We celebrate our community leaders, promoting their achievements at all levels. We create a culture that values and respects community leadership
- 2.2.1** Understand and advocate for the needs of all our families, so parents are connected and supported and children are safe and thriving;
- 2.2.2** Our early years and early intervention services meet the needs of our children and families through a blend of delivery models;
- 2.2.3** Across our municipality Early Childhood Education and Care services (childcare and preschool) are available at the required scale and highest levels of quality;
- 2.3.1** Research and implement a comprehensive Disability Inclusion Action Plan to meet the needs of all community members;
- 2.3.2** Advocate for and uphold the rights of all community members, with a focus on those with a disability or experiencing under-resourcing, ensuring all community members have equitable access to opportunities to participate, contribute and thrive;
- 2.4.1** A Reconciliation Action Plan is researched and developed locally, creating a central platform for healing and from which to move forwards
- 2.4.2** Council forms a First Nations Advisory Group of Council to guide decision making and work
- 2.4.3** Our cultural and heritage assets are mapped, their significance recorded and protected
- 2.4.4** Traditional owners are supported to lead and manage access to sites of cultural significance in a manner that protects the site and their ongoing connection to that site
- 2.4.5** Work with Traditional Owners and key stakeholders to enable the international significance of Mungo. Ensure the benefits of this accrue firstly to Traditional Owners, encouraging their ownership of, and employment in, these tourism assets. Support the Mungo experience as a platform for National reconciliation



PILLAR 3: Our Economy

- 3.1** Existing businesses and industries are supported to benefit from economic growth (EDS, Objective 1.1);
- 3.2** The importance of the agriculture, horticulture, pastoral, livestock and aquaculture industries is protected.
- 3.3** Emerging and prospective industries and businesses are aware of and attracted to the LGA
- 3.4** Our broad visitor economy potential is recognised, understood and enabled
- 3.5** We understand local/ regional workforce training and skills gaps and actively support remediation
- 3.6** Create the conditions for and actively support population and skills attraction

- 3.1.1** Communications frameworks are activated to increase local awareness of economic growth opportunities with potential for local benefit (BSC Business Xchange, e-lists and information sessions)
- 3.1.2** Understand the accreditation, licencing and procurement needs of emerging industries. Inform local industry and business and attract relevant trainings to support with accreditation/licencing;
- 3.1.3** Map local business and industry to support their full utilisation by larger emerging industries such as mining and renewables
- 3.2.1** Manage residential encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land
- 3.2.2** Consider the impact of emerging industries encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land to food/fibre security
- 3.2.3** Advocate to ensure the impact of the Water Buy back does not inequitably impact South West NSW. Ensure bought water is returned to the area for environmental gains
- 3.3.1** A review of long-term strategic land use planning is undertaken drawing on state level expertise and local knowledge to determine placement and enable growth in residential, recreational, commercial and industrial land. This planning is long term, strategic and sustainable and considers all stakeholders. It is visionary about healthy, safe communities
- 3.3.2** A high level LGA Prospectus is developed (with supporting promotional materials) detailing endowments and opportunities and listing the preferred investments, industries and businesses
- 3.3.3** An Economic Development Officer/Team/ Concierge role is created and funding secured (could be shared role between neighbouring LGAs) providing a single entry and advocacy point for all Economic Development enquiries
- 3.3.4** An inter LGA Economic Development Advisory Group is formed utilising Council and local knowledge and representation from key industries
- 3.3.5** Preferred investment interests, businesses, industries and services are proactively sought out and welcomed
- 3.4.1** The BSC Destination Management Plan is recognised as the key visitor economy planning document to be applied in parallel to this Strategy
- 3.4.2** Encourage visitor geographic dispersal and length of stay
- 3.4.3** Continue to facilitate a broadening suite of accommodation options to meet visitor demand and encourage overnight and extended stays
- 3.4.4** Plan and provide for adequate visitor amenity at key visitor sites, including lighting, signage, public toilets, seating and shade
- 3.5.1** Work with engine and emerging industries to clearly identify skills gaps. Focusing on the most prevalent gaps plan a skills remediation strategy which includes a plan for industry's contribution
- 3.5.2** Council works with key community groups and the broader community to advocate for increased post school / tertiary training provision locally
- 3.5.3** Continue engagement in cross border networks to advocate for a National accreditation and licencing system for key industries and other practical strategies to address workforce and skills shortages
- 3.6.1** Support initiatives that promote and/or provide incentives for population migration to the Shire and the region
- 3.6.2** Activate opportunity to the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) initiative within the RDA Murray region
- 3.6.3** Investigate local solutions to workforce gaps by exploring more flexible working arrangements, workforce sharing and role sharing models (EDS, Action 3.4.4);



PILLAR 4: Our Infrastructure

4.1 Our amenity infrastructure enables active, inclusive, enjoyable, sustainable and safe lifestyles;

4.2 Greater diversity in, and availability of, housing stock with utilities and amenity assets to support

4.3 Physical and digital connectivity enables full use of the LGA's potential – both human and natural

4.1.1 Council comprehensively reviews all Council owned infrastructure, ensuring clear planning for each infrastructure item in line (as far as is practical) with the needs and expectations of communities;
4.1.2 Continue to develop comprehensive and accessible active transport options throughout our communities including footpath networks and walking trails;
4.1.3 Water treatment, supply and pressure systems meet the needs of current and future generations;
4.1.4 Rural addressing is reviewed in line with current best practice to meet the needs of our rural communities particularly in reference to emergency and communications services;
4.2.1 Suitable land for new builds is identified and promoted including through infill of vacant land within communities and through new residential estates
4.2.2 Housing investment is encouraged through the promotion of available land, the development of clear planning information resources and sessions and a streamlined planning and development application process
4.2.3 Explore the contribution of industry to housing solutions through legacy / social licence
4.3.1 Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard road infrastructure, including vigilance in identifying, accessing and utilising available funding streams
4.3.2 Council networks with peer LGAs in their experience of large industry co-contributions to infrastructure such as roads, ensuring the support received locally reflects costs of use and maintenance
4.3.3 Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard technical connectivity infrastructure



PILLAR 5: Our Environment

5.1 Our unique local environment including our waterways, flora and fauna are protected, celebrated and promoted;

5.2 We work as a LGA to remedy past environmental damage and to prevent further and future damages

5.1.1 We work in harmony with our landscapes, waterways, flora and fauna to balance our commercial and recreational use of these systems with their preservation and enhancement;
5.1.2 Our system of rivers, lakes, wetlands and landscapes are protected including the monitoring of loss of water from the region, ecosystem and water health and the impact of industry including visual and physical impacts
5.1.3 The World Heritage listed Mungo National Park and Ramsar wetlands are understood locally and carefully promoted for sustainable access and enjoyment. Traditional owners are central to, and primary beneficiaries of, this access and enjoyment;
5.2.1 We support our communities and industries to be proactive and creative in reducing carbon emissions;
5.2.2 We support our community – through education, infrastructure and programs – to safeguard our natural environments and make meaningful and lasting changes;
5.2.3 We continually explore opportunities for circular economies, including the recycling of common waste and by-product materials and use of recycled materials;
5.2.4 We strive for residential waste recycling models which are comprehensive, user friendly and financially sustainable;



PILLAR 6: Our Council

6.1 We grow our Council workforce – skilling locals and encouraging career progression

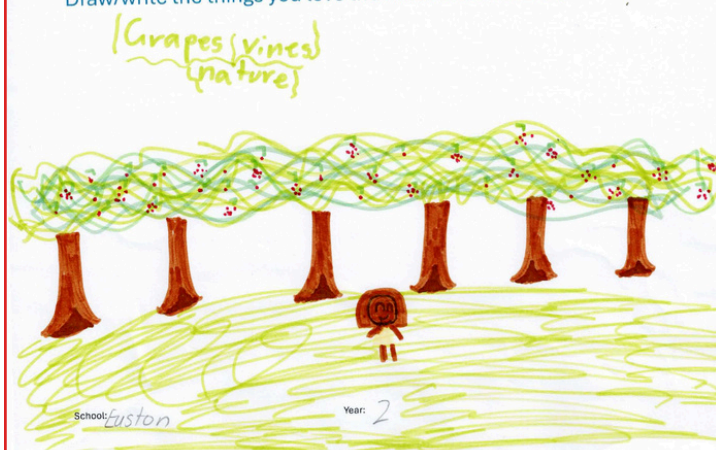
6.2 Our whole community has a voice in local governance and leadership, our elected representatives are skilled and supported;

6.3 We seize the full opportunity and potential of legacy, making strategic long- term investments

6.4 We build partnerships to achieve equity for our region and have collective impact

6.1.1 Council adopts a leadership role in promoting local government as a career path, highlighting high demand fields
6.1.2 Council strengthens its trainee and apprenticeship program by including work experience or other industry placements
Strategy 6.1.3 Council has a philosophy of continuous professional development, encouraging all staff to set and fulfil professional goals and supporting, where reasonable, the cost of trainings in this space
Strategy 6.2.1 We recognise a strong Local Government needs skilled elected representatives and so invest in our Councillors with training, experiences and support mechanisms (EDS, Action 5.1.3);
6.2.2 Council creates clear and accessible two-way communication channels and governance structures between community, Council staff and elected representatives;
6.3.1 Council and community form a governance model to enable the collection and strategic distribution/investment of social licence/legacy payments from industry (EDS, Action 5.3.1);
6.3.2 BSC collaborate with neighbouring LGAs to understand the possible scale of social licence payments and develop an aligned position to guide negotiation and expectations, recognising the synergy of their opportunities and the strength in being united (EDS, Action 5.3.2);
6.3.3 Council and community use legacy strategically and long-term so the benefits drawn from emerging industries last beyond their lifespan within the region (EDS, Action 5.3.3);
6.3.4 Council leverages diverse funding and income streams to build a financially strong and sustainable future for all our communities;
6.4.1 We actively seek out and nurture partnerships at all levels including with our neighbouring LGAs, Joint Organisations, Regional, State and National advocacy bodies, and political and governmental representatives
6.4.2 We continually listen to community voice and develop a short- and medium-term advocacy plan which identifies priority focus areas. Each priority area is supported with a Fact Sheet enabling all community representatives and Council Executive and elected leadership to speak with alignment and authority
6.4.3 Within our LGA we partner with key agencies and bodies including Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council, ICPA, NSW Farmers etc. We support their good governance recognising that when they are strong, we are strong (EDS, Action 5.2.3);

Draw/write the things you love the most about where you live:



Draw/write the things you love the most about where you live:



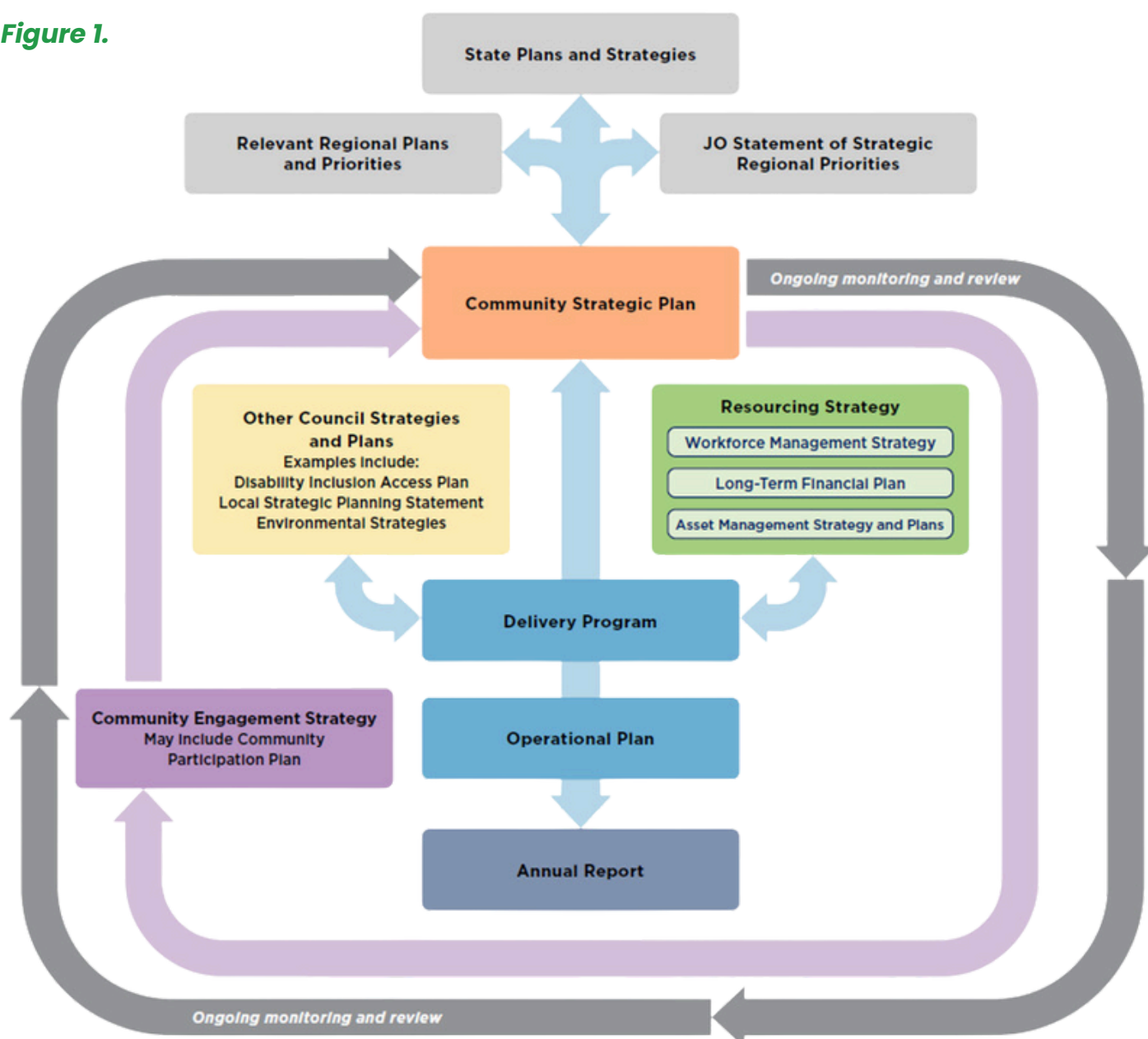
INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Guidelines were first issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG) in 2010 and later updated to reflect the legislative changes of the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016. All councils in NSW use the IP&R framework to guide their planning and reporting activities.

The **Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework** (Figure 1.) recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, a sustainable environment, a caring and engaged community, opportunities for employment, reliable infrastructure, etc. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs.

The main components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework (Figure 1.) are the Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Annual Report. Each are summarised below:

Figure 1.



Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by a council. It has a ten-year plus timeframe. All other Council plans must support achievement of the Community Strategic Plan objectives. The purpose of the Plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these goals.

The Community Strategic Plan identifies the community's future goals, and strategies to achieve those goals by posing four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in 10 years time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we've arrived?

Resourcing Strategy

Shows how council will resource its strategic priorities, identified through IP&R. The Resourcing Strategy includes three inter-related elements:

- Long-Term Financial Planning
- Workforce Management Planning
- Asset Management Planning

The Resourcing Strategy is a companion document to the Delivery Program, outlining how Council will resource the actions (addressing Council's finances, assets and workforce).

Delivery Program

The council's commitment to the community about what it will deliver during its term in office to achieve the Community Strategic Plan objectives, including the actions it will undertake to meet the CSP goals and strategies over four years.

Operational Plan

Shows the individual projects and activities a council will undertake in a specific year. It includes the council's annual budget and Statement of Revenue Policy.

Annual Report

Reports back to the community on the work undertaken by a council in a given year to deliver on the commitments of the Delivery Program via that year's Operational Plan. Councils also report on their financial and asset performance against the annual budget and longer-term plans.

Whilst the **Community Strategic Plan** is a ten year plan, it is reviewed every four (4) years following Councillor elections.

»»» THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While a council has a role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of its residents, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners – state agencies, non-government organisations, business and industry, joint organisations and community groups – may also be engaged in delivering the strategies of the Plan.

Section 402 of the Local Government Act requires:

- Each local government area to have a Community Strategic Plan that has been developed and endorsed by the Council on behalf of its community,
- The Community Strategic Plan to identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the Shire area,
- The Community Strategic Plan cover a minimum timeframe of 10 years,
- The Community Strategic Plan establish strategic objectives together with strategies to achieve those objectives,
- That Council review the Community Strategic Plan before 30 June in the year following an ordinary election of Council. In doing so they may endorse the existing plan, or develop and endorse a new Community Strategic Plan.

Further to these legislated requirements the Community Strategic Plan should:

- Be developed and delivered as a partnership between Council, state agencies, business and industry groups, community groups and individuals,
- Be adequately informed by and address a broad range of issues that are relevant to the whole community including civic leadership, and social, environmental and economic issues in an integrated manner,
- Be based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, and
- Be developed having due regard to NSW Government's State Priorities and other relevant state and regional plans. (Office of Local Government (2021) INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING GUIDELINES for Local Government in NSW.)

Council is only one part of the community. We know significant outcomes are only achieved when we work collaboratively and develop partnerships. All levels of government, stakeholders, community organisations and individuals share responsibility for achieving our shared vision for the Balranald Shire.

Advocate: Council gives a voice to the community by lobbying and advocating to ensure major priorities are known and promoted to decision-making organisations for the best possible outcomes for the Shire. Advocacy works best when we work together with community leaders and stakeholders to form a clear and united voice,

Lead: Council shows strong, transparent and visionary leadership. Council demonstrates excellence in everything we do, driving unity and mobilising and empowering others to help our community achieve our shared vision,

Partner: Council collaborates with providers and stakeholders to bring best possible outcomes for the community,

Provide: Council effectively and efficiently delivers services, facilities and programs to community at agreed service levels. This recognises that some services in this Plan, such as education and health, are provided by other government agencies but critical to achieving the community vision,

Regulate: Council has statutory responsibilities to regulate certain functions as required by state and federal legislation.

>>> OUR COUNCILORS

The Balranald Shire Council has eight elected councillors as its governing body. The Council is established in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.



Cr Louie Zaffina
MAYOR



Cr Dwaine Scott
DEPUTY MAYOR



Cr Alison Linnett



Cr Tracy O'Halloran



Cr Iain Lindsay-Field



Cr German Ugarte



Cr Phillip Pippin



Cr Leigh Byron

OUR COUNCIL'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This Plan is underpinned by the following guiding principles:



Improving Council's decision-making

Council's decision-making and actions need to be open, transparent and accountable. Improving the decision-making of Council, other levels of Government and the community is an essential driver for achieving outcomes.



A partnership approach

Partnerships with our stakeholders are critical as they help achieve a shared vision, enable more effective and efficient use of resources, and provide a means of distributing the costs involved in delivering actions.



Effects on future generations

We all have a responsibility to ensure future generations are not worse off as a result of our decision-making and actions. Council will leverage every resource available to encourage individuals, communities, organisations and Governments to do what is needed.



Social justice

Social justice ensures the rights of everyone are considered in a fair and equitable manner. While equal opportunity targets everyone in the community, social justice targets groups of people who are marginalised and disadvantaged. Social justice means a commitment to ensuring:

- 1. Equity:** There is fairness in decision-making and prioritising and allocation of resources.
- 2. Access:** All people have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.
- 3. Participation:** Everyone has the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- 4. Rights:** Equal rights and opportunities for everyone to participate in community life.





The Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL)

The QBL ensures a holistic approach is applied to all aspects of the Balranald Shire Council Community Strategic Plan (2025–2035). In this way the Plan supports social, environmental, economic and civic leadership outcomes through strategic directions and actions that do not compromise the needs and ecological sustainability of both present or future generations.

Social Outcomes: Emphasises the wellbeing of residents and ensuring everyone feels included and has equal access to services. It means creating liveable communities where people can enjoy a range of cultural and physical activities and share meaningful connections.

Environmental Outcomes: Focuses on protecting and enhancing the environment including conserving natural resources, responding to climate change and building resilience to natural disasters.

Economic Outcomes: Looks at the financial health of the community and sustainability of the local economy. It involves creating jobs, supporting businesses and ensuring efficient use of resources.

Civic Leadership Outcomes: Highlights the role of leaders in guiding and inspiring the community. It involves ethical decision-making, active participation in civic life and collaboration.



*This Plan supports **social, environmental, economic and civic leadership outcomes** through strategic directions and actions that do not compromise the needs and ecological sustainability of both present or future generations.*

Sound community planning is incumbent on a solid understanding of who our community is. To understand the community context of our Shire the following components are important:

- Community profile
- Economic profile
- Reference to federal, state and regional context, priorities, strategies and plans
- Assessment of strategic risks and challenges facing the community

Our Region

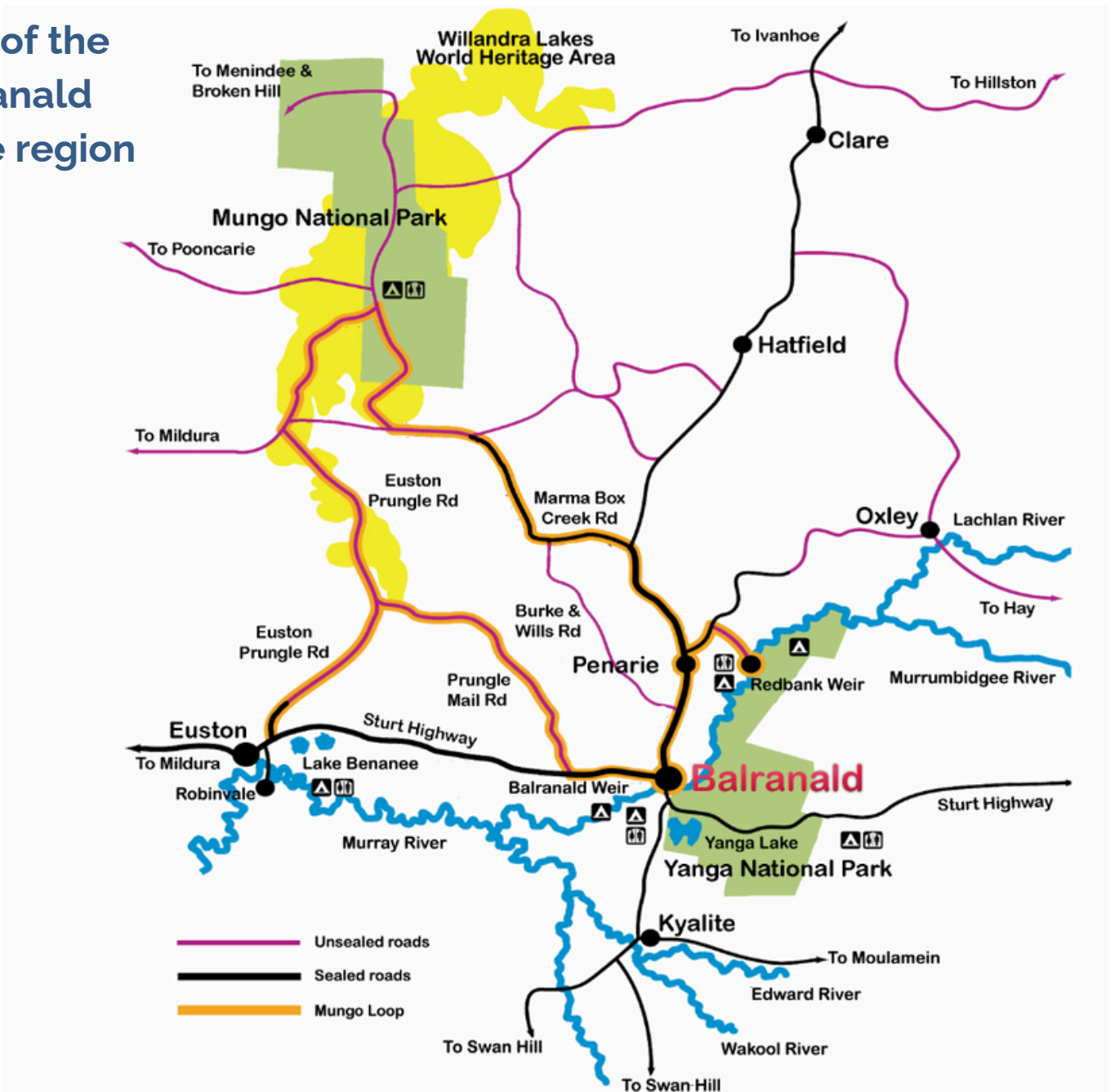
Balranald Shire Council covers an area of 21,346 square kilometres, making it the fifth largest Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW. The township of Balranald is the largest community within the Balranald LGA and houses the majority of Council's workforce. The township of Euston is 80km west of Balranald. Both Euston and Balranald are important centres for outlying villages within the LGA including Kyalite, Hatfield, Penarie, Clare and Oxley – all of which are valued gathering points for the surrounding areas.

With a current LGA population of 2,208 (based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing) it is anticipated that the population could increase by approximately 850 people by 2041 to a total of approximately 3,200 (2019 NSW Population Projections), dispersed predominately through our two main townships of Balranald and Euston. Our First Nations population forms 6.4% of our entire population and includes Traditional Owners – the Mutthi Mutthi, Ngiyampaa, and Barkindji peoples.

The Balranald LGA is 850km southwest of Sydney, 430km north northwest of Melbourne and 530km to the east of Adelaide. The Balranald LGA, in south west NSW, rests within the Murray-Darling Basin and the newly proclaimed South West Renewable Energy Zone and on significant transport routes including the Sturt Highway. The LGA is home to significant National Parks (including Yanga and Mungo), the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area and RAMSAR.



Map of the Balranald Shire region



The LGA is home to significant National Parks including Yanga National Park & Mungo National Park, the Wilandra Lakes World Heritage Area & RAMSAR



Mungo National Park



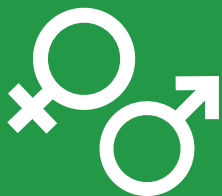
Yanga National Park

Community Profile

If Balranald Shire Council consisted of 100 people, there would be

50

Females



50

Males

20

aged 14 years & under



60

aged 15-64 years
(the working age population)

20

65 years & over

5

reporting two long term health condition

17

reporting one long term health condition



3

reporting three or more long term health condition

78

are born in Australia



77

speak English only at home

6

are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

22

are born overseas

If Balranald Shire Council consisted of 100 people, for the population aged 15 years and over, there would be

28

not in the labour force



56

56 in the labour force

3

Unemployed

25

managers

63

working full-time

11

technicians & trades



17

labourers



28

working part-time

9

Professionals

30

are working 45 hours or more per week



8

Batchelor Degree and above education

12

provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition or due to old age

14

year 9 or below education

10

would walk to work



21

do voluntary work through an organisation or group

If there were 100 houses in the Balranald Shire Council, there would be

70

family houses



28

single person houses

21

unoccupied houses

2.5

average of people in each home

6

without a registered motor vehicle

21

would have a weekly income of LESS THAN \$650 each week



13

would have a weekly income of MORE THAN \$3.000 each week



Economic Profile

Economy Facts & Stats at 2021



GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT - \$196M

Up from \$159M in 2017/2018

2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators



ANNUAL CHANGE IN GRP +16.65%

Regional NSW 1.03%

2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators



GROSS VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (2021/2022) - \$148.2M

Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics



LOCAL JOBS (2021/2022) - 960

Up from 867 in 2017/2018

2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators



ANNUAL CHANGE IN LOCAL JOBS +1.04%

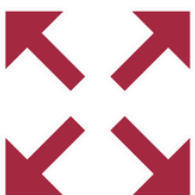
Regional NSW 1.02%

2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators



EMPLOYED RESIDENTS (2021/2022) - 1,020

2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators



LARGEST INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT (2021, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER) - AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING 33.9%

Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics

Economy Facts & Stats at 2021 (cont.)



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

62.8% worked full-time (NSW 55.2%)
27.9% worked part-time (NSW 29.7%)
3.1% (31 people) were Unemployed (NSW 4.9%)
6.0% were away from work (NSW 10.2%)



PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR FORCE

In the labour force: 56.4% (NSW 58.7%)
Not in the labour force: 27.9% (NSW 35.5%)
Not stated: 15.3% (NSW 5.9%)



TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES (2021/2022) - 319

Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics



BUSINESS ENTRIES (2021/2022) - 34 BUSINESS EXITS (2021/2022) - 28

Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics



NUMBER OF BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY (2021/2022)

Agriculture (165),
Construction (26),
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (25),
Transport, Postal and warehousing (23)
Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics



NUMBER OF BUSINESSES WITH A TURNOVER OF \$5M OR MORE (2021/2022) - 16

Number of businesses with a turnover of \$2M to less than \$5M
(2021/2022) - 21





Number of businesses with a turnover of \$200k to less than \$2M
(2021/2022) - 141

Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics

Strategic Line of Sight

| LOCAL  <p><i>Local developments, economic development, social matters</i></p> | REGIONAL  <p><i>Regional planning and infrastructure, health, education, environment, industries, tourism</i></p> | STATE  <p><i>Health, care (aged child, disability), transport, education, employment, state significant development, police</i></p> | NATIONAL  <p><i>Taxation, welfare, regional communications, trade, immigration, defence, inland rail</i></p> |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Balranald Shire Council Destination Management Plan (2025)</p> <p>Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (2024)</p> <p>Settlement Strategy (Enhancement & Growth) – Shire of Balranald (July 2023)</p> <p>Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032 (May 2022)</p> <p>Delivery Program 2022–2026 (May 2022)</p> <p>Balranald Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020)</p> | <p>Draft Far West Regional Plan 2041 (September 2022)</p> <p>Balranald/Wentworth Regional Drought Resilience Plan (2024)</p> <p>Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner Strategic Plan 2020–2025 (2023 Update)</p> <p>Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities, 2022 – 2026</p> <p>Far West Joint Organisation (FWJO), Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2019 – 2022 (August 2019)</p> <p>Regional Development Australia – Murray Strategic Plan 2022–2025 (2022)</p> <p>Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2022–2030 (2022)</p> <p>Murray Region Destination Management Plan, Murray Regional Tourism (2023)</p> <p>Far (South) West Joint Organisation Destination Management Plan (September 2022)</p> | <p>NSW State Plan (2021) Premier's Priorities NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint – Investing in the state's future (2019)</p> <p>Regional Strengths and Infrastructure Gaps Regional Analysis: New South Wales (March 2022)</p> <p>Our Vision for Regional Communities (November 2022) Future Ready Regions 2023 Update</p> <p>Agriculture Industry Action Plan Climate-Smart Agriculture Program (2023)</p> <p>NSW Housing Strategy NSW Electricity Strategy Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030. Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (2020)</p> <p>NSW Biosecurity Strategy Future Transport Strategy 2056</p> <p>NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy</p> <p>NSW Police Statement of Strategic Intent</p> <p>NSW's Critical Minerals and High-tech Metals Strategy (2021)</p> | <p>Closing the Gap National Agreement</p> <p>Australia's Strategy for Nature</p> <p>National Digital Economy Strategy</p> <p>Infrastructure Australia Strategy</p> <p>State of Australia's Regions Report (2024)</p> <p>Regional Australia Impact Statements</p> <p>Regional Development Australia Charter (2023)</p> <p>National Transformation Principles</p> <p>National Skills Agreement</p> <p>National Housing Accord</p> <p>Working Future: White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities</p> <p>The Migration Strategy (December 2023)</p> <p>Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia</p> <p>National Children's Education & Care Workforce Strategy</p> |

Strategic Line of Sight (cont.)

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <div> <div>LOCAL</div>  </div> <div> <p>Local developments, economic development, social matters</p> </div> | <div> <div>REGIONAL</div>  </div> <div> <p>Regional planning and infrastructure, health, education, environment, industries, tourism</p> </div> | <div> <div>STATE</div>  </div> <div> <p>Health, care (aged child, disability), transport, education, employment, state significant development, police</p> </div> | <div> <div>NATIONAL</div>  </div> <div> <p>Taxation, welfare, regional communications, trade, immigration, defence, inland rail</p> </div> |
| <div>See Above</div> | <div>Planning for a Shared Future, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage property, Final Report (November 2023)</div> | <div>NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 – A Roadmap for Growing the NSW Visitor Economy</div> | <div> Net Zero Plan National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030 THRIVE 2030 </div> |

UN Sustainable Development Goals ⁽¹⁾



Overarching our local, regional, state and national plans and priorities are the global standards set by the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.

World leaders came together in 2015 and made a historic promise to secure the rights and well-being of everyone on a healthy, thriving planet when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Australia is one of the 193 countries that signed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Agenda is the world’s roadmap for ending poverty, protecting the planet and tackling inequalities. The 17 SDGs, the cornerstone of the Agenda, offer the most practical and effective pathway to tackle the causes of violent conflict, human rights abuses, climate change and environmental degradation and aim to ensure that no one will be left behind. The SDGs reflect an understanding that sustainable development everywhere must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection.

Refer to the Sustainable Development Goals over page

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



(1) Please note: The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

Strategic Risks and Challenges facing the Balranald Shire Community

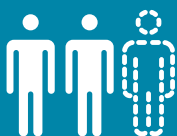
| OUR RISKS | Our risks are those factors which might jeopardise our highly valued way of life or our future way of life, our opportunities and our assets. Risks identified through the community engagement process included: |
|--|---|
|  | Climate change and adaption, increasing extremes in climate events, |
|  | State and National Governments scaling back support and servicing to rural communities, |
|  | The support to ensure land use and town planning is strategic, sustainable and visionary – providing great futures for all our residents, |
|  | Ongoing critical workforce shortages, particularly at the professional levels including health, education and local departmental and government positions, |
|  | Key positions remain unfilled within our Council resulting in lowered capacity to advocate, capitalise, plan and respond, |
|  | Large scale emerging industries divide our communities, particularly where land purchases and use destroy neighbour relations, or where these industries implement unfair and or damaging practices against individual landholders, |
| DAMAGE  | Emerging industries leave our communities with unrepaired damages to roads, environments, landscapes, amenity value and communities |

OUR CHALLENGES

Our challenges are already being faced, with planning and foresight we can grow through our challenges becoming stronger. Challenges identified through the community engagement process included:



A lack of housing supply, diversity and affordability,



Workforce shortages,



Provision of (including advocacy for the delivery of) high quality and to scale utilities – telecommunications, water and waste,



Maintaining and renewing ageing assets including roads, water infrastructure and community facilities,



An ageing population requiring diversified housing opportunities and health services to continue to live and age well locally,



Securing equitable, consistent and affordable access to services such as health, wellbeing and education across the ages,



Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability and good governance of local government,



The impact of cost-of-living pressures on all residents, but especially our under-resourced community members,



Securing an equity of benefits and opportunities from industry growth across our LGA – where the capacity to do so will contribute to responding to and alleviating many of the above challenges.

All Community Voice Snapshot

539 community members informed the development of the Balranald Shire Council 2025–2035 Community Strategic Plan – representing 25% of our whole community (based on a 2021 Census population of 2,208 people).

These voices included children, young people, families and older residents from across the geographical spread of our LGA. Our community voice also came from First Nation residents, overseas born residents, people with additional needs and visitors to our communities.

We asked our communities to share:

- What are the GREAT things about where you live (what do you VALUE)?
- What are the CHALLENGES / DOWNFALLS of where you live? and
- As a Community / Shire where do we want to 'be' in 10 years time? Your VISION
- The Visioning question for our children was asked as – If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change?



OUR VALUES

Our community told us clearly they VALUE our PEOPLE and PLACES and the LIFESTYLE they have. Our sense of COMMUNITY, TRUST, SAFETY and RESILIENCE were central themes. Our VERY YOUNG and VERY OLD community members must be cared for – our young people are our future and older community members are the keepers of our knowledge. VOLUNTEERS and COMMUNITY GROUPS form the fabric of our communities.

Our community members VALUE the environment – our NATURAL ASSETS, CULTURE and HERITAGE and COMMUNITY ASSETS such as PLACES TO GATHER and safe, functioning ROADS – must be PROTECTED and ENHANCED. Our RIVERS are our LIFE BLOOD. Our community members also value our LOCATION and CLIMATE and the protection of our enduring ENGINE INDUSTRIES such as agriculture.

Our community members VALUE LOCAL GOVERNMENT. They VALUE high functioning, high integrity leadership and the return of ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. They also VALUE local services, DELIVERED BY LOCALS – recognising their critical role in supporting our communities.



OUR CHALLENGES

Our community members understood our challenges identifying HOUSING and WORKFORCE SHORTAGES as significant alongside the cost of critical infrastructure maintenance and services such as ROADS, FOOTPATHS, BEAUTIFICATION, WASTE MANAGEMENT and COMMUNITY ASSETS for Local Government.

Communities identified INCONSISTENT and INADEQUATE SERVICE DELIVERY / SERVICE SUPPORT by State and Federal Governments as a significant challenge – noting childcare, health care, education (especially early years and adult), aged care, mental health, and youth and employment services as insufficient to varying degrees. INCONSISTENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS and POWER SUPPLIES are also a challenge.

Communities were clear in saying they felt unheard by Government – and that the revenue and royalties drawn from our LGA were not reflected in the INVESTMENT RETURNED BY STATE and FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. CROSS BORDER challenges often exacerbated this.

RESPONDING TO GROWTH in strategic, and well-considered and planned ways was also a challenge and external support was needed. Our CAPACITY TO NEGOTIATE with large scale emerging industries to ensure SUSTAINED and MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY BENEFIT was frequently raised.



OUR VISION

Our community members want GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT but NOT AT ANY COST. Our PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT and ENDURING BUSINESSES and INDUSTRIES must be PROTECTED. Our communities want ALL OUR RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM OPPORTUNITIES, for local people to gain great careers, and have access to improved services and amenities – bringing IMPROVED LIFE OUTCOMES.

As a community we want our COUNCIL to be SMART, SKILLED, SUSTAINABLE and WELL-INFORMED. As a community we want to HARNESS OUR OPPORTUNITIES, we want to be astute in ensuring EMERGING INDUSTRIES and GOVERNMENT BENEFICIARIES CONTRIBUTE in MEANINGFUL WAYS TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

Our community members want to ATTRACT SKILLED FAMILIES and INDIVIDUALS and VISITORS to our communities with great housing, services, assets and amenities. Our communities want to stay CONNECTED, WELCOMING and FRIENDLY. We want to NURTURE ALL OUR RESIDENTS through the whole of their life, offering them places and reasons to come together, grow and share and the services essential to thrive.

Our community members want HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS that are understood, shared, protected and enjoyed. We want to showcase our CULTURE and HERITAGE – both locally and to the world.

A Summary Community Voice Report is available in Appendix 1 – Community Voice – By Engagement Activity.

Community Engagement - Methodology & Response Rates

Community Engagement

In total 539 community members informed the development of the Balranald Shire Council 2025–2035 Community Strategic Plan. This means 25% of our whole community informed this Plan (based on a 2021 Census population of 2,208 people).

539

community
members
informed

2,208

population
(2021 Census)

25%

% of population
that informed
this Plan

What we asked



What are the **GREAT** things about where you live (what do you **VALUE**)?



What are the **CHALLENGES/DOWNFALLS** of where you live? and



As a Community/Shire where do we want to “be” in 10 years time?
Your VISION



The Visioning question for our children was asked as – If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change?



A customised online community survey designed to be easy to complete

How did the
community
get involved?



A series of community workshops, specialist workshops & school focus groups conducted across the Balranald shire



The customised community survey was also available in hard copy



The School Drawing Exercise ensured that our youngest community members had a voice

74**Community Members attended the Workshops****25****Community Members were connected through specialist community workshops****189****Community Surveys were completed****116****Students participated in School Focus groups****135****Students participated in the Drawing Exercise**

The goal of the Community Strategic Plan is to provide a compelling vision for the Balranald Shire Council community. It must clearly identify priorities and aspirations and address a broad range of relevant issues. This can only be achieved with meaningful community engagement – the true voice of the community must be heard in the process of researching and developing the Community Strategic Plan. This includes the voices of people not typically heard from including First Nations community members, children and young people and people with disabilities.

To ensure the breadth of the Balranald Shire community was able to inform the 2025–2035 Community Strategic Plan a range of engagement activities were used. Designed to be inclusive and accessible these activities enabled Council to gather diverse perspectives and insights. The data collected from these activities was then meticulously analysed to inform the strategic framework. Below is a summary of the community engagement activities, including details of the locations, dates, number of participants, and Council representatives involved. The following section summarises what was heard.





Community Workshops

Community workshops were set at convenient locations and times across the LGA. Each ensured full physical accessibility and were broadly advertised to encourage attendance. **In total 74 community members attended Community Workshops.**

| Location and Venue | Date | Participants | Council Representatives & Councillors |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Balranald, Theatre Royal | 12th Nov 2024 | 25 | 3/2 |
| Clare, Clare School | 13th Nov 2024 | 7 | 3/4 |
| Penarie, Homebush Hotel | 13th Nov 2024 | 4 | 3/4 |
| Euston, Euston Club | 19th Nov 2024 | 17 | 2/4 |
| Balranald, Theatre Royal | 20th Nov 2024 | 16 | 2/4 |
| Kyalite, Kyalite Hotel | 21st Nov, 2024 | 5 | 3/3 |
| TOTAL | 6 Events | 74 | 4/8 |



Specialist Community Workshops

The Specialist Community Workshops recognised that whilst all efforts were made to ensure Community Workshops were inclusive and accessible some community members may have still experienced barriers to participation. As such Specialist Community Workshops were tailored to address the specific needs and interests of the participants, fostering a collaborative environment for sharing knowledge and experiences. **In total 25 community members were connected with through Specialist Community Workshops**

| Community & Location | Date | Participants | Council Representatives & Councillors |
|---|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Balranald, MacKillop Community Services Workshop (disability clients), onsite at MCS Activities space | 21st Nov 2024 | 7 (4 clients and 3 staff) | 0 |
| Balranald, Maari Ma Community Pamper Day (First Nations community), onsite at Pamper Day venue | 21st Nov 2024 | 50+ attendees (direct contact with 18 people) | 1 |
| TOTAL | 2 Events | 25 | 1 |



Community Surveys

A customised online Community Survey was designed and launched on the 12th November 2024. The Survey remained open for one month, closing on the 13th December 2024. The survey was written in simple English and designed to be easy to complete on a mobile phone, lap or desktop. Circulation strategies included:

- Posters with QR codes displayed in prominent locations across the Council communities (including in service waiting rooms, public notice boards, hospitality venues, Post Offices etc.),
- Letter box drop of survey flyer with QR code (27/11/2024),
- Council and Service NSW waiting areas,
- Handed out at community events including the Community and Specialist Community Workshops,
- Inclusion in school and community newsletters,
- Through school homerooms encouraging participation from Secondary School students, and
- Across social media platforms – including both Council and community moderated medias.

In total **189 Community Surveys were completed**, including three (3) hard copy surveys for which data was manually entered. According to the 2021 Census of Population and Housing there are 1,770 people aged 15 years and over living in the Balranald LGA. Based on this the **survey yielded an 11% response rate.**



School Focus Groups

School Focus Groups were held to capture the voices of younger community members. These focus groups were scheduled across all schools within the LGA to ensure a broad representation of student perspectives. The sessions were designed to be interactive and engaging, encouraging students to share their thoughts openly. Data gathered from these sessions provided valuable insights into the needs and priorities of the younger demographic within the community. In total **116 students participated School Focus Groups.**

| Community & Location | Date | Participants | Cohort |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Clare, Clare School | 13th Nov 2024 | 6 | All Students |
| Euston, Euston Primary School | 19th Nov 2024 | 44 | Years 3-6 |
| Balranald, Balranald Central School | 19th Nov 2024 | 25 | Years 1-2 (Cnr Linnett) |
| Balranald, Balranald Central School | 20th Nov 2024 | 28 | Years 5-6 |
| Balranald, St Joseph's Parish School | 20th Nov, 2024 | 13 | Years 5-6 |
| TOTAL | 5 Events | 116 | |

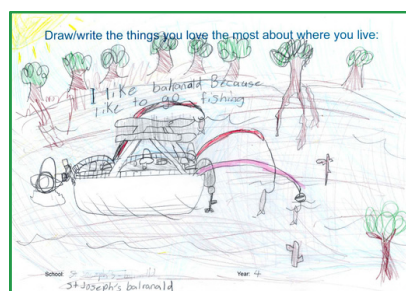
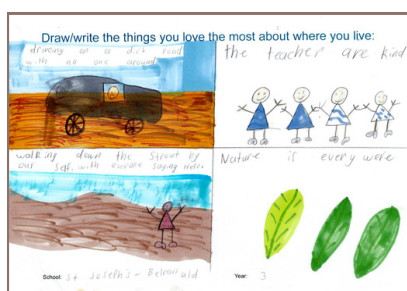


School Drawing Exercise

Like the School Focus Groups, the School Drawing Exercise was designed to ensure our youngest community members had a voice in sharing with us what they love about where they live. All Kindergarten to Grade 6 students across our four primary schools were invited to participate. Some of the student drawings are shown throughout this report. Content was analysed into themes and is presented in the following section. In total **135 students participated in the drawing exercise.**

| Community & Location | Date Collected | Number of Drawings | Cohort |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|
| Clare, Clare School | 13th Nov 2024 | 4 | K-6 |
| Euston, Euston Primary School* | 4th Dec 2024 | 20 | |
| Balranald, Balranald Central School | 20th Nov 2024 | 72 | |
| Balranald, St Joseph's Parish School | 20th Nov, 2024 | 39 | k-6 |
| TOTAL | 5 Events | 135 | |

*Reply paid envelope left to facilitate easy return



A few drawings from St Joseph's Parish School



Early Community Engagement

Engagement occurring specifically for the Community Strategic Plan was further extended through the review of engagement that had occurred over the past 12 months across the Balranald Shire area. This included engagement for the development of the Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy and BSC Destination Management Plan. Both engagement efforts heard from community members, businesses, industry and government representatives – including local, state and federal levels.

Balranald Shire Economic Strategy

Community, Business and Industry engagement to inform the Balranald Shire Council's Economic Development Strategy occurred between January – April 2024 and relied on multiple engagement strategies. Combined (not including participation in key events, item four below) engagement to inform that **Balranald Shire Council's Economic Development Strategy heard the voices of 210 community, business and industry representatives.**



Business & Industry engagement involved four key strategies:

1. An online Business and Industry survey (34 respondents),
2. Phone based interviews with key business and industry leaders across the LGA and those with overarching relevance (nine participants),
3. Two focus groups with key Balranald Shire Council Advisory Committees – Growing Business Industry and Tourism (GBITAC) and Euston Progressive Advisory Committee (EPAC) (totalling 20 participants), and
4. Participation in key community events such as the Euston Economic Development Forum (March 2023), Balranald Business Dinner (Balranald, October 2023), Swan Hill Rural City Council's Housing Summit (November 2023), Tri-State Workforce Forum (Euston, December 2023), and RDA Murray's Buronga Business Breakfast and Murray-Darling Interstate Regional Development Stakeholder Consultation (both Buronga, April 2024).



Community engagement involved two key strategies:

1. An online and hard copy community survey (134 responses), and
2. Phone based interviews with key community and Council leadership including Traditional Owners (8) and overarching government representatives (5) (totalling 13 interviews).

Two questions from the Balranald Shire's Economic Development Strategy (2024) online survey were especially relevant to the Community Strategic Plan, so much so that they were asked again throughout the Community Strategic Plan community consultation to further build community voice and Council's deep understanding of our community's needs. These questions were:

- **What do you value most about where you live? A multiple response question which asked respondents to rate the options according to their top three values from a list of possible options, and**
- **What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? An open response question which was analysed for response themes and presented according to key themes.**

Because of their significance the results for these two questions from the Economic Development Strategy (2024) online survey are shown alongside the Community Strategic Plan online survey for the same questions.

Balranald Shire Destination Management Plan

Community, Business and Industry engagement to inform Balranald Shire Council's Destination Management Plan 2025 – 2030 occurred between August – October 2024. Consultation workshops focused on key stakeholder groups with the Balranald Shire which included business owners, industry, art and cultural committees, Traditional Owners, Euston Progressive Advisory Committee, the Growing, Business, Industry & Tourism Advisory Committee and regional tourism agencies. Combined there were **60 voices that informed Council's Destination Management Plan.**

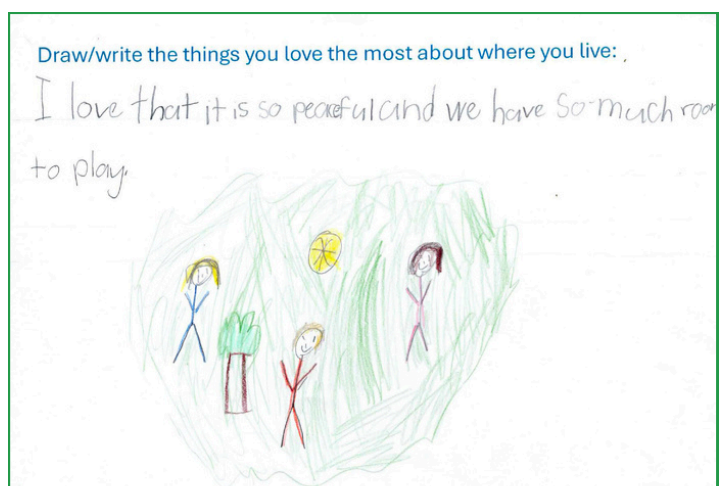
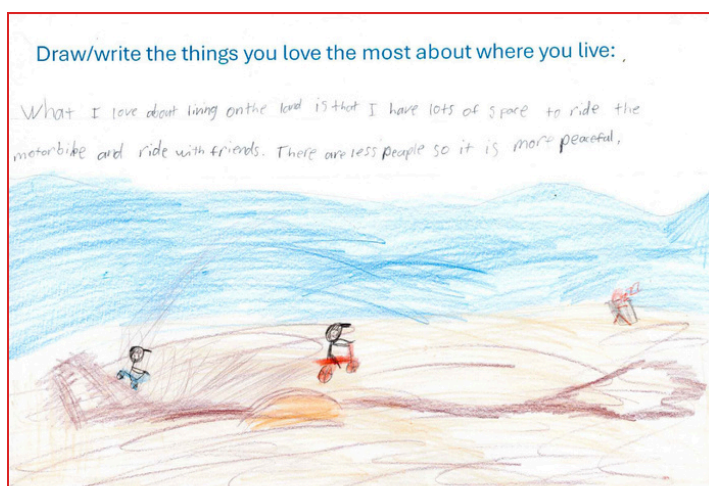
Information was also sourced from two regional Destination Management Plans and other regional tourism databases and research data.



Participants in the Destination Management Planning workshops were asked to provide **input and ideas** on the following:

- "What is your vision for tourism in Balranald Shire in 5 years time, what would it look like?"
- "What new tourism related infrastructure would you like to see developed?"
- "What current tourism related assets and attractions would you like to see enhanced?"
- "Provide ideas for events that promote the uniqueness of our shire and will help attract visitors"
- "Provide ideas for the development of immersive/engaging/packaged experiences to attract visitors to our shire."
- "Provide ideas and suggestions on how we can build tourism capacity within the shire"
- "How can local businesses work together with the support of Council to drive traffic/enquiries to local businesses?"

Taken together these multiple plans, tools and strategies ensured the capture of comprehensive community voice to inform and develop the BSC 2025–2035 Community Strategic Plan.



Two of the drawings from Clare Primary School



OUR COMMUNITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Vision & Pillars

TOWARDS 2035 - Community Strategic Plan outlines what we need to do to realise our Vision:

In Balranald Shire we grow and develop our lifestyle, our services, our businesses, our infrastructure, our natural environment and our Council to support a thriving, resilient and engaged community.

This Plan focuses on **Six Pillars – Our Lifestyle; Our Community; Our Economy; Our Infrastructure; Our Environment; and Our Council** – in setting the direction for and delivering our Vision. These Pillars are the main, high-level intentions that underpin our day-to-day activities.

Our Pillars are unchanged from our previous Community Strategic Plan because the voice of our community showed they continue to underpin what we need to do together to create and shape the future of the Balranald Shire.

How to read the Community Strategic Plan

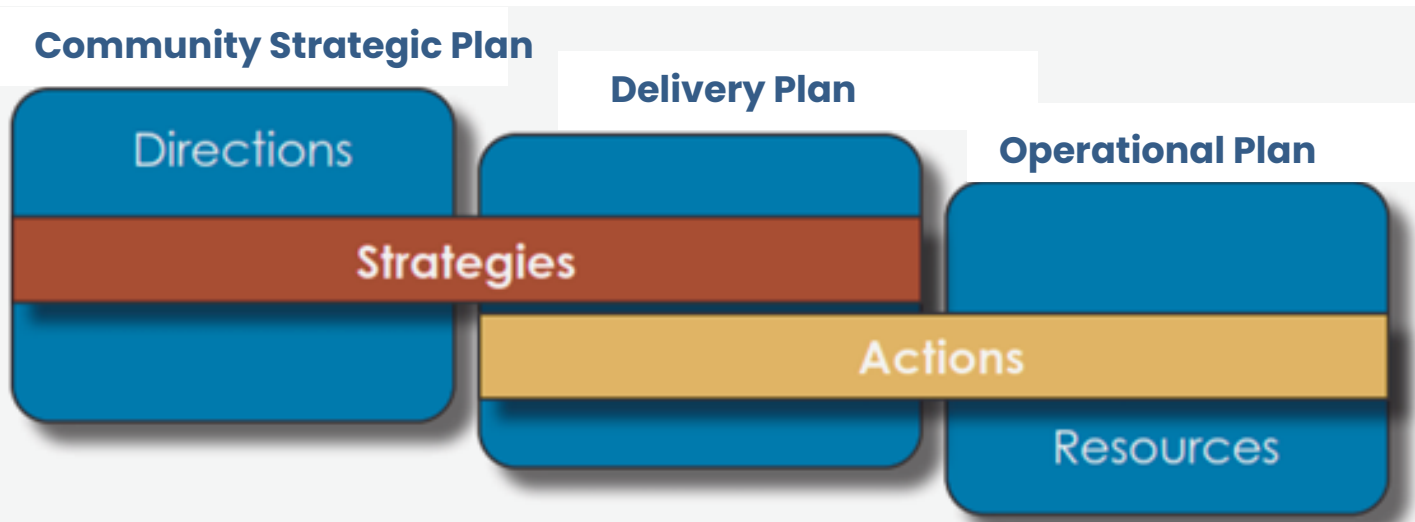
The achievement of our community's Vision is directed by our Six Pillars – Our Lifestyle; Our Community; Our Economy; Our Infrastructure; Our Environment; and Our Council – each Pillar has several Objectives and each Objective holds a number of Strategies.

Objectives: objectives are broad directional statements describing the community's aspirations for their future. Some Objectives have been updated or amended since the previous Community Strategic Plan to reflect evolving community needs and hopes.

Strategies: each Objective has supporting Strategies to achieve the Objective that guide the focus areas for specific Operational Actions.

The **Delivery Program** adds further detail to the Community Strategic Plan's Strategies by adding Operational Actions, Internal Responsibility, External Partners and Links, Targets and Measures and an outline of Current Efforts (in terms of expenditure and projects) and Budget. The image (Figure 2.) on the next page shows the interrelationships between the three levels of planning – the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Figure 2.



Interrelationships between the 3 levels of planning


To support easy reading each Pillar has an **icon** and a **colour code** (shown below). Objectives and Strategies related to that Pillar are shown in the same colour code

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>PILLAR 1 Our Lifestyle</p> | <p>PILLAR 2 Our Community</p> | <p>PILLAR 3 Our Economy</p> |
| <p>PILLAR 4 Our Infrastructure</p> | <p>PILLAR 5 Our Environment</p> | <p>PILLAR 6 Our Council</p> |

TOWARDS 2035 - Our Objectives and Strategies

The achievement of our community's Vision is directed by **Six Pillars – Our Lifestyle; Our Community; Our Economy; Our Infrastructure; Our Environment; and Our Council** – each Pillar has several Objectives and each Objective holds a number of Strategies.

These three levels – Pillar, Objective, Strategy – are shown below. The Delivery Program refines these further offering Actions, Timeframes, Responsible Parties and so on.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>PILLAR 1 Our Lifestyle</p>  | <p>This Pillar recognises the importance of encouraging and enabling those qualities our residents value as a 'way of life' – all of which contribute to making our municipality a desirable place to live, work and play – a place of choice.</p> |
|---|--|

Our residents value healthy and connected lifestyles with a strong sense of identity, place and pride. They value peaceful, clean and (increasingly) affordable lifestyles and the key physical attributes – including location, weather and the natural environment – which facilitate these lifestyles. This can be upheld and enhanced by protecting and improving highly valued assets, experiences, conditions and community beliefs; and by enabling active community participation through safe, welcoming and accessible facilities and inclusive services that cater to all residents. The beauty and cleanliness of communities was central to lifestyle satisfaction.

The community survey for the Community Strategic Plan asked participants What do you value most about where you live? From 11 options the third through to the seventh most selected options reflected the Pillar of Our Lifestyle. This included: Healthy environment (37.7%), Access to education (preschool and school) (33.8%), Affordability / cost of living (33.1%), Access to health and wellbeing services (including Mental Health) (32.5%), and Recreational / sporting opportunities (31.8%).

Question 9 of the community survey asked participants How would you rate the level of these services across the Balranald Shire? specific to seventeen discrete areas. Significantly, Mental health care was THE MOST POORLY RATED SERVICE both across the entire Balranald Shire area and also at the individual community levels (i.e. for Balranald, Euston and Rural Surrounds).

Question 10 of the community survey asked What do you think is the main challenge facing your community? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The most mentioned category was for Consistent, quality health care across the ages (including physical and mental health care, early intervention, allied health and chronic health care) yielding 32 individual mentions. Within the same question Community cleanliness / appearance / attractions, including first impressions for travellers yielded 12 mentions, and Lack of Childcare and After School Care and Cost of Living a further nine mentions each.

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The most mentioned category was for Inclusive, safe and affordable events, activities and spaces for our communities to come together (especially for families, children and young people) yielding 26 mentions. The second most mentioned category was for Health, wellbeing and safety services meet the needs of the communities) with 22 mentions. The fourth most mentioned category was Beautify and maintain our communities (19 mentions), with two of these mentions specific to improved shade and (at least) four mentions identified as specific to Euston.

Finally, **Question 12** asked respondents What is one thing you would like to see happen / achieved in your community within the next ten years? Responses were themed to categories, with the most AND second most mentioned categories relevant to the Our Lifestyle Pillar – A connected and active community with social, recreational and exercise infrastructure and opportunities for ALL ages, especially for families, children and young people (32 mentions) and High-standard and consistent delivery of health and wellbeing services to meet the breadth of our communities' needs (23 mentions). Also prevalent was Well-planned and maintained beautification of communities (17 mentions) and Childcare (and preschool) availability to a scale and quality that meets the community's needs (6 mentions).

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also shared their voices. Lifestyle (including location and weather) was frequently noted as a GREAT thing about where you live. Similarly, a frequently noted CHALLENGE was around the loss of services, loss of funding, and inconsistency of services especially related to health, mental health and childcare. Community members were also concerned about access to sustained and to scale services to enable community members to age well locally and to enable children and youth to be active and engaged locally. Care and support across the generations was a central theme.

When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our communities have high levels of 'Liveability' – we are welcoming and connected communities with strong ethics and values, a thriving and culturally diverse population and intergenerational support and connection. There is widespread access to child, family and whole-of-community spaces, places and precincts (such as pools, parks, libraries and centres / hub that bring multiple assets together), and sporting and recreational areas to encourage active and connected lifestyles. There are services to meet the needs of our community across the life span from the early years to ageing – including childcare, preschool, youth supports, education, health care across the ages and aged care and support.



PILLAR 1: OUR LIFESTYLE

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|---|---|
| Objective 1.1 Create and maintain beautiful, safe, welcoming and accessible community spaces that enhance healthy living, active lifestyles and connection | Strategy 1.1.1 Invest in place-making, streetscape and resident (prospective resident and visitor) amenity improvements (EDS, Action 3.4.2); |
| | Strategy 1.1.2 Continue to maintain and, where feasible, extend public places and spaces that support community to come together and participate in healthy, active and connected ways (including community halls, parks, playgrounds, recreative reserves, green spaces, and access to nature); |
| | Strategy 1.1.3 Increase physical and social infrastructure to provide accessible, meaningful and safe ways for people of all abilities to participate in and contribute to our communities; |
| | Strategy 1.1.4 Understand the precursors to poor community safety and respond proactively for lasting resolution and all of community wellbeing; |
| Objective 1.2 Create events and platforms that celebrate our unique communities and entire municipality, building on pride and sense of place | Strategy 1.2.1 Work with our communities to clearly identify and understand our unique attributes and their alignment across the region; |
| | Strategy 1.2.2 Partner to enhance existing and develop new events and platforms that celebrate our communities, building on pride and sense of place; |
| Objective 1.3 Improve local access to essential health and wellbeing services and programs – enabling residents to live, evolve and age well in our communities | Strategy 1.3.1 Collaborate with key Council committees and external networks to comprehensively understand our strengths and challenges in service access and delivery; |
| | Strategy 1.3.2 Advocate across all levels to achieve local level service access and delivery which reflects the needs of all members of our communities and upholds their rights respective to their regional and urban counterparts; |
| | Strategy 1.3.3 Council actively pursues funding streams enabling Council to provide health and wellbeing services identified as enduring service gaps in our communities (mental health is identified as the critical initial focus); |
| | Strategy 1.3.4 Recognise and support the critical role of volunteer groups, events and activities in supporting community health and wellbeing including through connection, sport, art and culture; |
| Objective 1.4 Protect those lifestyle attributes our communities value – upholding community principles to balance and guide growth and development | Strategy 1.4.1 Council understands and upholds our communities' preferences regarding balanced growth and development, protecting our high value lifestyle attributes; |

PILLAR 2 Our Community



This Pillar reflects the importance of sustaining and nurturing our communities as resilient, resourceful, safe and inclusive. We are both communities of place and communities of interest. This means we gather BOTH because of where we live AND who we are. We are diverse, creative and vibrant. We are leaders, volunteers, families and friends. We are proud of, and want to celebrate, our deep and diverse culture and heritage.

Our community wants to feel safe and supported, to live in a municipality that is relaxed, where we have opportunities to get to know our neighbours, where people are happy and friendly and where the needs of all residents, from the young to the old, and those with disabilities are treated with equity and fairness. We want to stand beside our First Nations community members, prioritising Reconciliation and a strong future for all. We uphold and protect the rights of ALL community members.

The community survey for the Community Strategic Plan asked participants What do you value most about where you live? From 11 options the two most selected options reflected the Pillar of Our Community – Small community atmosphere (quiet, safe, friendly) (64.2%), and Family and friends (61.6% of respondents).

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The third most mentioned categories were for Thriving, resilient populations, communities and volunteers; Existing and emerging industries are committed to our community's wellbeing and A safe and inclusive community and environment for all residents, free of crime / violence / degradation both yielded 20 mentions and A compassionate, safe welcoming and inclusive community (six mentions) and Systems to support community voice sharing and our volunteers (five mentions).

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also clearly shared their voices. Community members, the people, safety; and our history including First nations and early settlers; and sporting and volunteer groups were frequently noted as GREAT things about where you live. Similarly, a frequently noted CHALLENGE was around volunteer numbers and volunteer burnout, and the decline of some community groups and, for some, concerns about community safety, inclusion and well-being.

When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our volunteers are protected and supported, with consideration given to a Volunteer Coordinator role; and Our communities are welcoming, cared for, accessible and attractive to both locals and visitors. This includes footpaths, entrances and signage / information boards.



PILLAR 2: OUR COMMUNITY

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|--|---|
| Objective 2.1 Support our existing leaders and volunteers and grow our activism skills | Strategy 2.1.1 Create a Volunteer Coordinator role within Council to offer practical, secretariat, and capacity building support to our volunteer groups; Strategy 2.1.2 Work with local schools and key organisations to develop and deliver a Volunteer Mentoring program; Strategy 2.1.3 Work with employment services and key organisations to engage and support un- and under-employed community members in volunteering roles; Strategy 2.1.4 We celebrate our community leaders, promoting their achievements at all levels. We create a culture that values and respects community leadership (EDS, Action 5.1.4); |
| Objective 2.2 Nurture and support our families to thrive as the primary place of care and first educators of their children | Strategy 2.2.1 Understand and advocate for the needs of all our families, so parents are connected and supported and children are safe and thriving; Strategy 2.2.2 Our early years and early intervention services meet the needs of our children and families through a blend of delivery models; Strategy 2.2.3 Across our municipality Childhood Education and Care services (childcare, outside school hours care, preschool and school) are available at the required scale and highest levels of quality; |
| Objective 2.3 We uphold the rights of all residents including those with a disability and/or experiencing under-resourcing | Strategy 2.3.1 Research and implement a comprehensive Disability Inclusion Action Plan to meet the needs of all community members; Strategy 2.3.2 Advocate for and uphold the rights of all community members, with a focus on those with a disability or experiencing under-resourcing, ensuring all community members have equitable access to opportunities to participate, contribute and thrive; |
| Objective 2.4 Understand, share and showcase local culture and heritage. Achieve meaningful, empowering Reconciliation across our municipality | Strategy 2.4.1 A Reconciliation Action Plan is researched and developed locally, creating a central platform for healing and from which to move forwards (EDS, Action 5.1.1); Strategy 2.4.2 Council forms a First Nations Advisory Group of Council to guide decision making and work (EDS, Action 5.1.2); Strategy 2.4.3 Our cultural and heritage assets are mapped, their significance recorded and protected (EDS, Action 4.1.2); Strategy 2.4.4 Traditional owners are supported to lead and manage access to sites of cultural significance in a manner that protects the site and their ongoing connection to that site (EDS, Action 4.1.3); Strategy 2.4.5 Work with Traditional Owners and key stakeholders to enable the international significance of Mungo. Ensure the benefits of this accrue firstly to Traditional Owners, encouraging their ownership of, and employment in, these tourism assets. Support the Mungo experience as a platform for National reconciliation (EDS, Action 4.2.2) |

PILLAR 3 Our Economy



This Pillar focuses on providing our community members with a range of positive opportunities for working, studying, owning, and investing. It includes thoughtfully diversifying our economy by targeting emerging and complimentary industries alongside protecting and strengthening our engine industries. The visitor economy is recognised as central – with our communities noting that many amenities that make communities a great place to live also make it a great place to visit.

Our community members told us they want a prosperous, resilient and diverse local economy that provides a range of jobs and opportunities for people of all ages – especially our young people – and a vibrant retail and hospitality sector. We want to attract innovative and progressive businesses that will ensure our communities continue to thrive and prosper. We recognise the challenge of workforce shortages and will focus on both growing our own workforce and attracting workforce to our communities to settle. We must champion local businesses, innovation, and technology and manage growth and development in line with the lifestyle priorities of our residents.

The community survey for the Community Strategic Plan asked participants What do you value most about where you live? From 11 options the eighth to 11th most selected options reflected the Pillar of Our Economy. This included: Thriving local businesses / industries (26.5%), Job opportunities (26.5%), Retail services (including eateries) (22.5%), and Access to education (post school) for young people and adults (15.9%).

Question 9 of the community survey asked participants How would you rate the level of these services across the Balranald Shire? specific to seventeen discrete areas. Significantly, Education – post school (young people, adults): was THE SECOND MOST POORLY RATED SERVICE across the Balranald Shire area. Across the entire LGA and at individual community levels (i.e. for Balranald, Euston and Rural Surrounds) Employment support services and Economic Development and Business supports / services consistently scored a weighted average of below 3 (where a score of 5 reflects a consistent rating of Very Good).

Question 10 of the community survey asked What do you think is the main challenge facing your community? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The third most mentioned category was for Employment / career development opportunities, especially for young people yielding 17 individual mentions. Within the same question Lack / loss / viability of local businesses yielded a further eight mentions, Workforce shortages a further six mentions and Access to high quality education services – post school for young people and adults five mentions. Combined these demonstrate the significance of economic growth and sustainability for our communities.

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The equal third most mentioned category was for A thriving tourism sector yielding 20 mentions. Other response categories also indicated the significance of the Pillar of Our Economy to our communities including: Education and employment opportunities and services to support people in improving their life chances (11 mentions), High quality and accessible education across the ages (eight mentions), Employment growth and Thriving businesses and retail sector (seven mentions each).

Finally, **Question 12 asked respondents** What is one thing you would like to see happen / achieved in your community within the next ten years? Responses were themed to categories, with categories relevant to the Our Economy Pillar including A thriving and more comprehensive retail sector and Tourism – improved advertising, signage and assets to attract and retain visitors (11 mentions each), and As a community and Council we make wise decisions about the opportunities seize and how we grow and support our existing communities and industries / businesses (six mentions).

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also clearly shared their voices. Local businesses and retailers; local industries (especially agriculture, diversity or agriculture, quality of produce); and the opportunities provided by emerging industries were frequently noted as a GREAT thing about where you live. Similarly, frequently noted CHALLENGES were around Workforce shortages – across all skill sets, but especially professionals; Opportunities for locals to upskill and benefit from workforce shortages, lack of adult education opportunities locally; and Community division from emerging industries, especially renewable energy.

When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our workforce is growing – both from locals and through in-migration – to meet employers' and communities' needs. The education and up-skilling of locals was central to this – from the early years into adulthood; Our local businesses / retailers are thriving and new, complimentary businesses / retailers are attracted and maintained – we are renowned as an LGA that is 'easy to do business' in and with; The impact and benefit of emerging industries is well monitored and balanced, this includes: the establishment of a Community Foundation is for attracting, holding and distributing funding from industry and a guaranteed commitment to support local businesses and employee locals; Visitors are well catered for and informed. Overnight and multiple night stays are increased, our natural beauty, history and culture is promoted, showcased and understood; and Our agricultural industries are protected.



PILLAR 3: OUR ECONOMY

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|--|--|
| Objective 3.1 Existing businesses and industries are supported to benefit from economic growth (EDS, Objective 1.1) | Strategy 3.1.1 Communications frameworks are activated to increase local awareness of economic growth opportunities with potential for local benefit (BSC Business Xchange, e-lists and information sessions) (EDS, Action 1.1.1); |
| | Strategy 3.1.2 Understand the accreditation, licencing and procurement needs of emerging industries. Inform local industry and business and attract relevant trainings to support with accreditation/licencing (EDS, Action 1.1.2); |
| | Strategy 3.1.3 Map local business and industry to support their full utilisation by larger emerging industries such as mining and renewables (EDS, Action 1.1.3); |
| Objective 3.2 The importance of the agriculture, horticulture, pastoral, livestock and aquaculture industries are protected (EDS, Objective 1.2) | Strategy 3.2.1 Manage residential encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land (EDS, Action 1.2.1); |
| | Strategy 3.2.2 Consider the impact of emerging industries encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land to food/fibre security (EDS, Action 1.2.2); |
| | Strategy 3.2.3 Advocate to ensure the impact of the Water Buy back does not inequitably impact South West NSW. Ensure bought water is returned to the area for environmental gains (EDS, Action 1.2.3); |
| Objective 3.3 Emerging and prospective industries and businesses are aware of and attracted to the LGA (EDS, Objective 1.3) | Strategy 3.3.1 A review of long-term strategic land use planning is undertaken drawing on state level expertise and local knowledge to determine placement and enable growth in residential, recreational, commercial and industrial land. This planning is long term, strategic and sustainable and considers all stakeholders. It is visionary about healthy, safe communities (EDS, Action 1.3.1); |
| | Strategy 3.3.2 A high level LGA Prospectus is developed (with supporting promotional materials) detailing endowments and opportunities and listing the preferred investments, industries and businesses (EDS, Action 1.3.2); |
| | Strategy 3.3.3 An Economic Development Officer/Team/ Concierge role is created and funding secured (could be shared role between neighbouring LGAs) providing a single entry and advocacy point for all Economic Development enquiries (EDS, Action 1.3.3) |
| | Strategy 3.3.4 An inter LGA Economic Development Advisory Group is formed utilising Council and local knowledge and representation from key industries (EDS, Action 1.3.4); |
| | Strategy 3.3.5 Preferred investment interests, businesses, industries and services are proactively sought out and welcomed (EDS, Action 1.3.5); |

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|---|--|
| <p>Objective 3.4</p> <p>Our broad visitor economy potential is recognised, understood and enabled (EDS, Objective 1.4)</p> | <p>Strategy 3.4.1 The BSC Destination Management Plan is recognised as the key visitor economy planning document to be applied in parallel to this Strategy (EDS, Action 1.4.1);</p> <p>Strategy 3.4.2 Encourage visitor geographic dispersal and length of stay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering on signage recommendations from BSC Settlement Strategy for gateway, directional, interpretive and way finding signage • Developing self-drive and walking tour experiences that move visitors around the LGA (EDS, Action 1.4.2); <p>Strategy 3.4.3 Continue to facilitate a broadening suite of accommodation options to meet visitor demand and encourage overnight and extended stays (EDS, Action 4.4.3);</p> <p>Strategy 3.4.4 Plan and provide for adequate visitor amenity at key visitor sites, including lighting, signage, public toilets, seating and shade (EDS, Action 4.4.4);</p> |
| <p>Objective 3.5</p> <p>We understand local/ regional workforce training and skills gaps and actively support remediation (EDS, Objective 3.1)</p> | <p>Strategy 3.5.1 Work with engine and emerging industries to clearly identify skills gaps. Focusing on the most prevalent gaps plan a skills remediation strategy which includes a plan for industry's contribution (EDS, Action 3.1.1);</p> <p>Strategy 3.5.2 Council works with key community groups and the broader community to advocate for increased post school / tertiary training provision locally (EDS, Action 3.1.2);</p> <p>Strategy 3.5.3 Continue engagement in cross border networks to advocate for a National accreditation and licencing system for key industries and other practical strategies to address workforce and skills shortages (EDS, Action 3.1.3);</p> |
| <p>Objective 3.6</p> <p>Create the conditions for and actively support population and skills attraction (EDS, Objective 3.4)</p> | <p>Strategy 3.6.1 Support initiatives that promote and/or provide incentives for population migration to the Shire and the region (EDS, Action 3.4.1)</p> <p>Strategy 3.6.2 Activate opportunity to the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) initiative within the RDA Murray region (EDS, Action 3.4.3)</p> <p>Strategy 3.6.3 Investigate local solutions to workforce gaps by exploring more flexible working arrangements, workforce sharing and role sharing models (EDS, Action 3.4.4);</p> |

PILLAR 4 **Our Infrastructure**



This Pillar directs the timely, sustainable and well-planned development and maintenance of fit for purpose community infrastructure – including roads, footpaths, utilities (water, waste and power), telecommunications and technologies, and public buildings. This Pillar also guides and enables private infrastructure investments across our communities, particularly in housing and economic infrastructure.

Informed and highly skilled community planning is paramount to this and wherever local knowledge is not available it should be outsourced. Excellent community planning ensures our community members can move about safely, come together easily and live in ways that build positive lifestyles whilst protecting the environment and growing the economy. Quality planning ensures we are a well-designed region that includes a variety of housing types, densities, locations and price points with the services, utilities and spaces to compliment.

The community survey for the Community Strategic Plan asked participants How would you rate the overall quality of infrastructure across Balranald Shire? specific to seven discrete areas (Road networks, Water and sewer supply, Waste disposal, Footpaths, Parks and playgrounds, Sport and recreation facilities, and Shared public spaces). Respondents were asked to select the response most accurate for them along the scale from Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good or Very Good. Weighted average results (where the higher reflects a more positive rating) demonstrate community assessments.

Of significance across the entire LGA the most positively rated infrastructure item was Sport and recreation facilities and the least positively rated were the Road networks. For the Balranald community the most positively rated infrastructure item was Sport and recreation facilities and the least positively rated were Footpaths. Across the Euston community the most positively rated infrastructure item was Waste disposal and the least positively rated were Shared public spaces. Amongst all infrastructure items the Euston community had the highest number with a weighted average of LESS THAN three. Across the Rural Surrounds communities the most positively rated infrastructure item was Shared public spaces and the least positively rated were Road networks.

The value of public spaces for our communities is, for the most, part positively reflected in assessments of accompanying infrastructure – with the exception of Euston. This highlights Euston as a priority for investments in and improvements to Shared public spaces. Investment in Road networks continues to be an infrastructure priority right across the LGA.

Question 9 of the community survey asked participants How would you rate the level of these services across the Balranald Shire? specific to seventeen discrete areas. Affordable housing was the most poorly rated service (second to Mental Health Care) for the entire LGA. Public / Community Transport, Affordable housing and Telecommunications also all rated poorly at both the LGA level and within communities with a weighted average of below 3 (where a score of 5 reflects a consistent rating of Very Good). The expectation from our communities for quality and accessible Affordable housing and Telecommunications when set against these poor ratings shows a specific performance gap.

Question 10 of the community survey asked What do you think is the main challenge facing your community? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The second most mentioned category was for Housing supply and affordability yielding 20 individual mentions. Within the same question Road conditions yielded a further six mentions.

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. Several response categories were relevant to the Pillar of Our Infrastructure – indicating its importance to our communities. A safe, well-maintained road network yielded 13 discrete mentions, Community infrastructure (buildings, footpaths, services including town water) is well maintained and meets community's needs (11 mentions), Equity of spread of community development and infrastructure (8 mentions), and Comprehensive and consistent / reliable telecommunications (5 mentions).

Finally, **Question 12 asked respondents** What is one thing you would like to see happen / achieved in your community within the next ten years? Responses were themed to categories, with the fourth most mentioned category relevant to the Our Infrastructure Pillar – Safe, well-maintained roads and improved transport safety (including truck bypasses and parking bays) (17 mentions), More housing to meet the diverse needs of the community and required workforce, new housing estates opened up (12 mentions) and An extended network of footpaths, safe and well-maintained (6 mentions).

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also shared their voices. Community and Council assets and infrastructure was frequently noted as a GREAT thing about where you live. Within the Pillar of Our Infrastructure there were multiple frequently noted CHALLENGES including: Housing shortages; Achieving well-considered and sustainable town planning across all our communities; Road maintenance; The cost of ongoing beautification, town and community maintenance, effective and comprehensive signage; Reliability of power supplies, especially for rural communities; Reliability of telecommunications, especially when travelling; Improving waste management and recycling services; and the implementation of a Logical and sustainable community / rural addressing model.

When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our local roads are well maintained and provide safe passage, we advocate for State and Federal highways that are fit for purpose and that both encourage economic benefits whilst protecting the safety of pedestrians; and there is improved reliability and universal access to utilities such as power, telecommunications and water.



PILLAR 4: OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIES

Objective 4.1

Our amenity infrastructure enables active, inclusive, enjoyable, sustainable and safe lifestyles

Strategy 4.1.1 Council comprehensively reviews all Council owned infrastructure, ensuring clear planning for each infrastructure item in line (as far as is practical) with the needs and expectations of communities;

Strategy 4.1.2 Continue to develop comprehensive and accessible active transport options throughout our communities including footpath networks and walking trails;

Strategy 4.1.3 Water treatment, supply and pressure systems meet the needs of current and future generations;

Strategy 4.1.4 Rural addressing is reviewed in line with current best practice to meet the needs of our rural communities particularly in reference to emergency and communications services;

Objective 4.2

Greater diversity in, and availability of, housing stock with utilities and amenity assets to support (EDS, Objective 2.1)

Strategy 4.2.1 A considered and sustainable approach to housing solutions is developed including through new housing and re-purposed existing housing. Suitable land for new builds is identified and promoted including through infill of vacant land within communities and through new residential estates (EDS, Action 2.1.1);

Strategy 4.2.2 Housing investment is encouraged through the promotion of available land, the development of clear planning information resources and sessions and a streamlined planning and development application process (EDS, Action 2.1.2);

Strategy 4.2.3 Explore the contribution of industry to housing solutions through legacy / social licence (EDS, Action 2.1.6);

Objective 4.3

Physical and digital connectively enables full use of the LGA's potential – both human and natural (EDS, Objective 2.2)

Strategy 4.3.1 Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard road infrastructure, including vigilance in identifying, accessing and utilising available funding streams (EDS, Action 2.2.1);

Strategy 4.3.2 Council networks with peer LGAs in their experience of large industry co-contributions to infrastructure such as roads, ensuring the support received locally reflects costs of use and maintenance (EDS, Action 2.2.2);

Strategy 4.3.3 Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard technical connectivity infrastructure (EDS, Action 2.2.3);

PILLAR 5
Our Environment



This Pillar ensures that the unique natural aspects of our community are preserved while recognising the need for growth and development. We want our built environment to meet our needs but not at the expense of our natural environment or the people who live and work here.

The community was consistent in its desire to be more sustainable by reducing waste and protecting our natural resources. Our community members understood the significance of renewable energy infrastructure (and mineral sands mining) in contributing to national commitments but were also clear in their desire to minimise negative environmental impacts.

Ultimately, our community members sought to support a healthy natural environment that is resilient to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards and finds a balance between growth and development and preserving what people love so much about living in the Balranald Shire. Especially important was the health of our rivers, creeks and lakes and the protection of our cultural artefacts.

The community survey for the Community Strategic Plan asked participants What do you value most about where you live? From 11 options the third most selected option reflected the Pillar of Our Environment noting a Healthy environment (37.7% respondents).

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. Healthy rivers that are protected and enjoyed received 6 mentions.

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also shared their voices. The natural environment was frequently noted as a GREAT thing about where you live. When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our rivers are healthy and are utilised for economic and recreational benefits in a sustainable way.



PILLAR 5: OUR ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES

Objective 5.1

Our unique local environment including our waterways, flora and fauna are protected, celebrated and promoted

Objective 5.2

We work as a LGA to remedy past environmental damage and to prevent further and future damages

STRATEGIES

Strategy 5.1.1 We work in harmony with our landscapes, waterways, flora and fauna to balance our commercial and recreational use of these systems with their preservation and enhancement;

Strategy 5.1.2 Our system of rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater and landscapes are protected including the monitoring of loss of water from the region, ecosystem and water health and the impact of industry including visual and physical impacts (EDS Action 4.1.1);

Strategy 5.1.3 The World Heritage listed Mungo National Park and Ramsar wetlands are understood locally and carefully promoted for sustainable access and enjoyment. Traditional owners are central to, and primary beneficiaries of, this access and enjoyment;

Strategy 5.2.1 We support our communities and industries to be proactive and creative in responding to a changing climate and reducing carbon emissions;

Strategy 5.2.2 We support our community – through education, infrastructure and programs – to safeguard our natural environments and make meaningful and lasting changes;

Strategy 5.2.3 We continually explore opportunities for circular economies, including the recycling of common waste and by-product materials and use of recycled materials;

Strategy 5.2.4 We strive for residential waste recycling models which are comprehensive, user friendly and financially sustainable

What I like about Balranald is the river because it is fun to play in
Draw/write the things you love the most about where you live: .



One of the drawings from Balranald Central School

PILLAR 6 Our Council



This Pillar upholds the community's expectations of good governance, engaged and ethical leadership, a skilled and effective workforce, and operational transparency and accountability.

Our community members told us they want to have confidence and trust in their elected representatives and a genuine partnership with Council where their voices are heard, opinions respected and Council consistently acts in the best interests of the entire municipality. Our community wants resources to be used efficiently and responsibly within a Council that acts locally but leverages effectively and collaboratively with other levels of government, private sector organisations and community groups to drive economic and social prosperity.

Question 10 of the community survey asked What do you think is the main challenge facing your community? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The fifth most mentioned category was for Local government professionalism, consistency, understanding of communities yielding 11 individual mentions.

Question 11 of the community survey asked What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? This was an open response question with responses themed to categories. The second most mentioned category was for Strong local government leadership with effective management, skilled workforce and ongoing community engagement and input in decision making (including maintaining Council's Advisory Committees) yielding 22 mentions.

Finally, **Question 12 asked respondents** What is one thing you would like to see happen / achieved in your community within the next ten years? Responses were themed to categories, with the third most mentioned category relevant to the Our Council Pillar - Local Government is strong, high functioning and representative, it enables well planned community growth and business / industry attraction. It facilitates benefits from emerging industries. Our communities are united (18 mentions).

Through six community workshops and two specialist community workshops our communities also shared their voices. Newly elected Councillors were noted as a GREAT thing about where you live. Within the Pillar of Our Council the following CHALLENGE was noted: Ensuring consistent, effective and timely communications from Council.

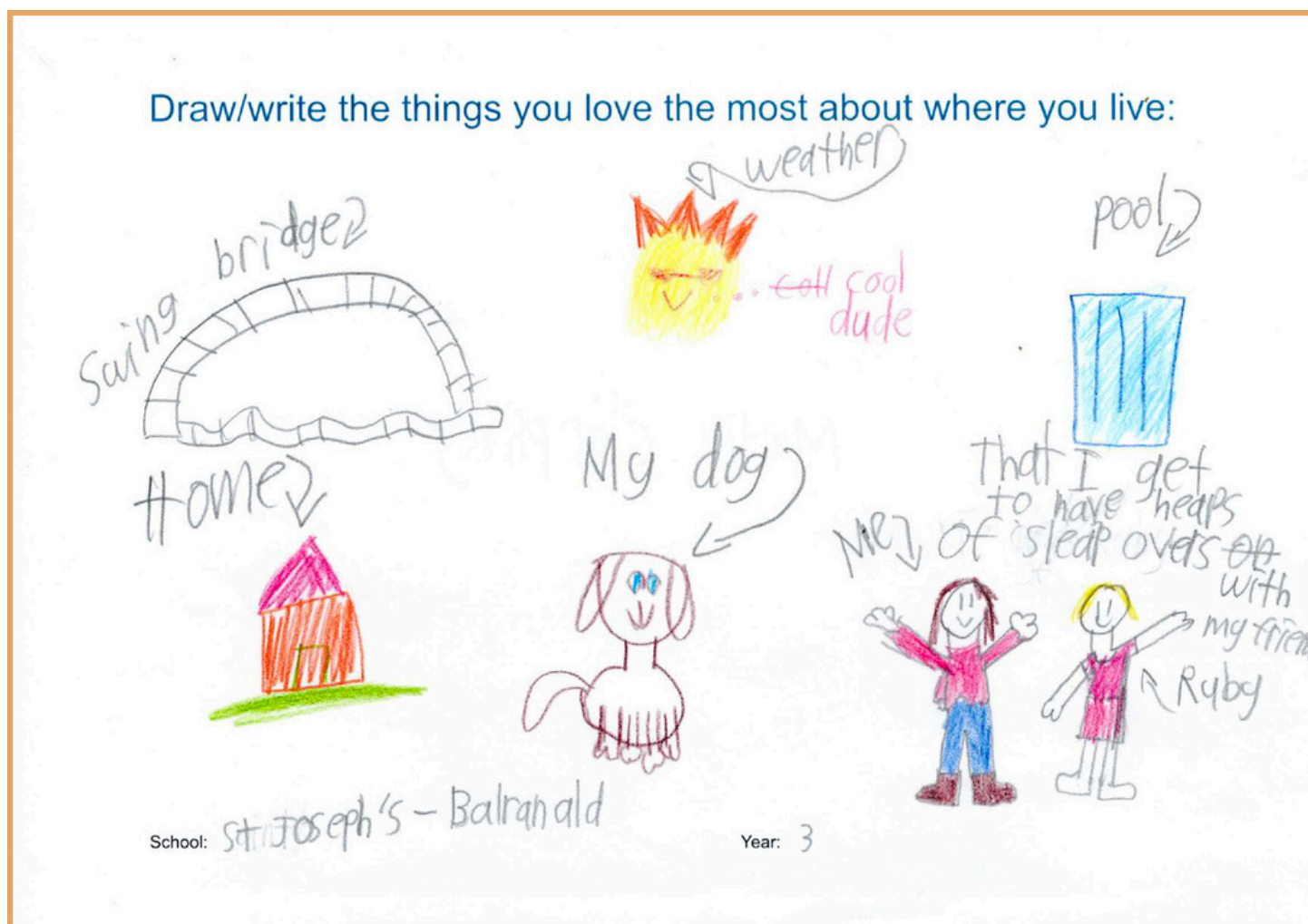
When asked about their VISION participants noted: Our Council is strategic, skilled and sustainable, they communicate and listen, and are equitable, transparent and honest; Our Council and community advocates in informed and powerful ways to ensure our needs are met; and Our communities are growing in a way that is valued / prioritised by locals. Growth is well planned and enabled through Local Government mechanisms including land rezoning to support housing and industrial estate developments, a Housing Strategy is developed to inform decisions and a prospectus for investors.



PILLAR 6: OUR COUNCIL

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|---|--|
| Objective 6.1 We grow our Council workforce – skilling locals and encouraging career progression (EDS, Objective 5.4) | Strategy 6.1.1 Council adopts a leadership role in promoting local government as a career path, highlighting high demand fields (EDS, Action 5.4.1); |
| | Strategy 6.1.2 Council strengthens its trainee and apprenticeship program by including work experience or other industry placements (EDS, Action 5.4.2); |
| | Strategy 6.1.3 Council has a philosophy of continuous professional development, encouraging all staff to set and fulfil professional goals and supporting, where reasonable, the cost of trainings in this space (EDS, Action 5.4.3); |
| | Strategy 6.1.3 Council has a philosophy of continuous professional development, encouraging all staff to set and fulfil professional goals and supporting, where reasonable, the cost of trainings in this space (EDS, Action 5.4.3); |
| Objective 6.2 Our whole community has a voice in local governance and leadership, our elected representatives are skilled and supported | Strategy 6.2.1 We recognise a strong Local Government needs skilled elected representatives and so invest in our Councillors with training, experiences and support mechanisms (EDS, Action 5.1.3); |
| | Strategy 6.2.2 Council creates clear and accessible two-way communication channels and governance structures between community, Council staff and elected representatives; |
| Objective 6.3 We seize the full opportunity and potential of legacy, making strategic long- term investments (EDS, Objective 5.3) | Strategy 6.3.1 Council and community form a governance model to enable the collection and strategic distribution/investment of social licence/legacy payments from industry (EDS, Action 5.3.1); |
| | Strategy 6.3.2 BSC collaborate with neighbouring LGAs to understand the possible scale of social licence payments and develop an aligned position to guide negotiation and expectations, recognising the synergy of their opportunities and the strength in being united (EDS, Action 5.3.2); |
| | Strategy 6.3.3 Council and community use legacy strategically and long-term so the benefits drawn from emerging industries last beyond their lifespan within the region (EDS, Action 5.3.3); |
| | Strategy 6.3.4 Council leverages diverse funding and income streams to build a financially strong and sustainable future for all our communities; |

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES |
|---|--|
| <p>Objective 6.4</p> <p>We build partnerships to achieve equity for our region and have collective impact (EDS, Objective 5.2)</p> | <p>Strategy 6.4.1 We actively seek out and nurture partnerships at all levels including with our neighbouring LGAs, Joint Organisations, Regional, State and National advocacy bodies, and political and governmental representatives (EDS, Action 5.2.1);</p> |
| | <p>Strategy 6.4.2 We continually listen to community voice and develop a short- and medium-term advocacy plan which identifies priority focus areas. Each priority area is supported with a Fact Sheet enabling all community representatives and Council Executive and elected leadership to speak with alignment and authority (EDS, Action 5.2.2);</p> |
| | <p>Strategy 6.4.3 Within our LGA we partner with key agencies and bodies including Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council, ICPA, NSW Farmers etc. We support their good governance recognising that when they are strong, we are strong (EDS, Action 5.2.3);</p> |



One of the drawings from St Joseph's Parish School

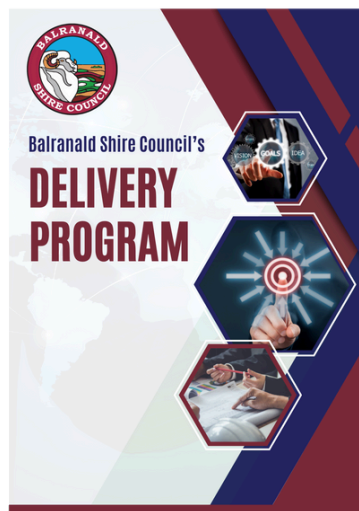


HOW OUR IP&R DOCUMENTS WORK TOGETHER



2035 Community Strategic Plan

States the community's vision, main priorities and aspirations



Delivery Program

Outlines the principle activities that Council will undertake over the next 4 years to address the vision and objectives of the CSP



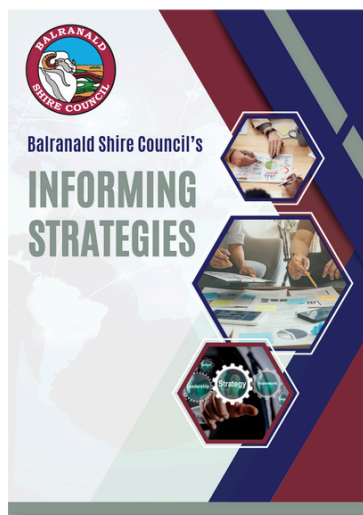
Operational Plan

Identifies the projects, programs and actions that Council will undertake during the financial year to address the goals outlined in the Delivery Program



Resourcing Strategy

Demonstrates how the Delivery Program and Operational Plan will be resourced from an asset, financial and workforce perspective

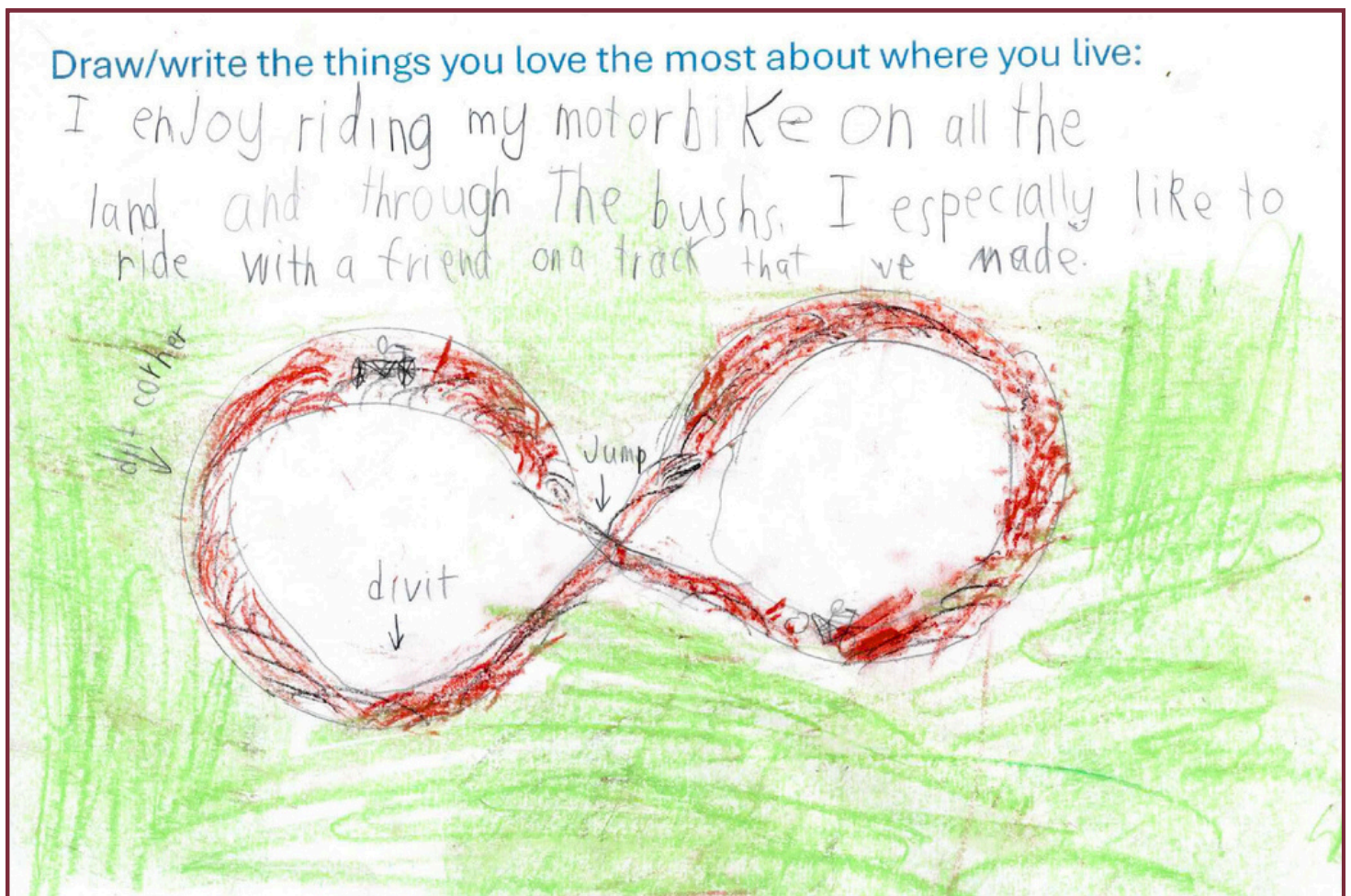


Informing Strategies

Guides the priorities and actions in the delivery program

APPENDIX 1:

All of Community Voice – By Engagement Activity



One of the drawings from Clare Primary School

The following pages expand on the **SNAPSHOT** offered above



Community Workshops

In total 74 community members attended six Community Workshops held across the breadth of the Balranald Shire area between 12th – 21st November 2024. Participants in the Workshops were asked:

- What are the **GREAT** things about where you live?
- What are the **CHALLENGES** / **DOWNFALLS** of where you live?
- As a Community / Shire where do we want to 'be' in 10 years time? (what does a great place to live, work and play look / feel like)

Importantly, once all ideas were captured for the final question (where do we want to 'be' in 10 years time), participants were given the opportunity to 'vote' using an allocation of five 'sticky dots'. This enabled Workshop participants to prioritise their most important 'visions' for their communities and as an LGA.

Responses, by community, are provided in the full Balranald Shire Council Community Strategic Plan Community Consultation Summary. Below is a brief summary of collated themes.

In response to **What are the GREAT things about where you live?** participants consistently noted:

- Community members, the people, safety
- Lifestyle
- Location (on highways, rivers etc)
- Weather
- The natural environment, rivers, parks – great destinations
- Our history including First nations and early settlers
- Local businesses and retailers
- Local industries, especially agriculture, diversity or agriculture, quality of produce
- Newly elected Councillors
- Community and Council assets and infrastructure
- Sporting and volunteer groups
- Our schools, and some existing locally led health services and supports
- The opportunities provided by emerging industries

Everyone talks, it is like a big hug

In response to **What are the CHALLENGES about where you live?** participants consistently noted:

- Housing shortages – at all levels from transient workforce to long-term professionals
- Achieving well-considered and sustainable town planning across all our communities
- Workforce shortages – across all skill sets, but especially professionals
- Opportunities for locals to upskill and benefit from workforce shortages, lack of adult education opportunities locally
- Road maintenance for local roads, truck stops and highway safety through communities
- Volunteer numbers and volunteer burnout, decline of some community groups
- Loss of services, loss of funding, inconsistency of services, especially health and mental health related
- Sustained and to scale services to enable community members to age well locally
- Sustained and to scale services to enable children and youth to be active and engaged locally
- Childcare shortages
- Cost of living pressures, combined with isolation / distance
- Community safety, inclusion, well-being
- Cost of ongoing beautification, town and community maintenance, effective and comprehensive signage
- Ensuring consistent, effective and timely communications from Council
- Extreme weather events
- Reliability of power supplies, especially for rural communities
- Reliability of telecommunications, especially when travelling
- Improving waste management and recycling services
- Community division from emerging industries, especially renewable energy
- Funding / grant shortages, difficult current political climate to attract support, amplified by cross-border issues
- Loss of local knowledge as older community members pass away
- Logical and sustainable community / rural addressing model

In response to **As a Community / Shire where do we want to 'be' in 10 years time?** (what does a great place to live, work and play look / feel like) responses receiving votes consistently across all communities included:

- Our Council is strategic, skilled and sustainable. We communicate and listen, and are equitable, transparent and honest
- Our communities are growing in a way that is valued / prioritised by locals. Growth is well planned and enabled through Local Government mechanisms including land rezoning to support housing and industrial estate developments, a Housing Strategy to inform decisions and a prospectus for investors
- Services met the needs of our community across the life span from the early years to ageing – including childcare, preschool, youth supports, education and health care across the ages and aged care and support

- Our communities have high levels of 'Liveability' – we are welcoming and connected communities with strong ethics and values, a thriving and culturally diverse population and intergenerational support and connection. There is widespread access to child, family and whole-of-community spaces, places and precincts (including pools, parks, libraries and centres / hub that bring multiple assets together), including sporting and recreational areas to encourage active and connected lifestyles
- Our local roads are well maintained and provide safe passage, we advocate for State and Federal highways that are fit for purpose and that both encourage economic benefits whilst protecting the safety of pedestrians
- Our rivers are healthy and are utilised for economic and recreational benefits in a sustainable way
- Our communities are welcoming, cared for, accessible and attractive to both locals and visitors. This includes footpaths, entrances and signage / information boards
- Our workforce is growing – both from locals and through in-migration – to meet employers' and communities' needs. The education and up-skilling of locals is central to this – from the early years into adulthood
- Our local businesses / retailers are thriving and new, complimentary businesses / retailers are attracted and maintained – we are renowned as an LGA that is 'easy to do business' in and with
- The impact and benefit of emerging industries is well monitored and balanced, this includes: the establishment of a Community Foundation is for attracting, holding and distributing funding from industry; a guaranteed commitment to support local businesses and employee locals (including by offering increased roster flexibility); and revised processes to support existing FIFO staff to both volunteer locally and participate in sporting teams
- Visitors are well catered for and informed. Overnight and multiple night stays are increased, our natural beauty, history and culture is promoted, showcased and understood
- Improved reliability and universal access to utilities such as power, telecommunications and water
- Our Council and community advocates in informed and powerful ways to ensure our needs are met
- Our volunteers are protected and supported, with consideration given to a Volunteer Coordinator role
- Our agricultural industries are protected

That we are thought of first, not last – by the government



Specialist Community Workshops

In total 25 community members attended two Specialist Community Workshops – one tailored to hear from people with additional support / access needs and a second tailored to hear from our First Nations community.

The Workshop for people with additional support / access needs captured the following information:

In response to **What are the GREAT things about where you live?** participants noted: the safe, accepting and friendly community, our friends, opportunities to work and volunteer, social spaces and events (library, bingo), access to services (Hospital Gym), retail outlets and income streams (recycling bottles and cans).

In response to **What are the CHALLENGES about where you live?** participants noted: lack of required medical / wellbeing supports locally (means NDIS payments to clients gets absorbed by travel expenses resulting in less of the required servicing), finding suitable support / office spaces (adequate, accessible), lack of things to do (especially for young people), longer opening hours for local pool, lack of lighting and footpaths (for example there is no lighting outside Mandala Place units), stray animals and snakes.

Not having access to these [medical, well-being] services locally has really impacted the NDIS budget of our participants because they need to be paying for travel and time for all health care visits – often Mildura or Swan Hill. Because of this some plans are actually running out

In response to **In 10 Years time we will (have, look like, feel like) – Our Vision?** participants noted: more things to do and events, continued funding to key community spaces such as the Balranald Library, improved road safety including pedestrian crossings and a truck bypass around Balranald, improved accessibility (through better footpaths, lighting and guttering), more community housing (need at least 2 more units at Mandala place, there is room enough for three), continued opportunities for meaningful work and volunteering (recycling shop / shelter, at the Shire, in local businesses), bottle/can collection point in Balranald.

I don't like it when trucks park in the main street can't see past them to look for other cars and cross the road

The second tailored workshop to hear from our First Nations community focussed on sharing hard copies and links for the online survey to all attendees.



Community Surveys

In total 189 Community Surveys were completed. The diversity of the Balranald Shire area was represented – including geographically, culturally and across the ages.

Analysis of the survey revealed the following baseline demographic information of respondents:

- 179 respondents (94.7%) lived within the Balranald Shire Council area,
- Ten respondents (5.3%) noted 'In another LGA but I work in the Balranald Shire' (2.1%) and 'In another LGA but I visit the Balranald Shire' (3.2%),
- Of the Balranald Council residents, just over half noted living in Balranald (55.0%), followed by Euston (28.6%), Clare (4.8%), Hatfield (3.7%), Oxley (1.6%) and Kyalite (1.1%),
- The majority of respondents were aged 25–34 years and 55–64 years (18.5% each), followed by 17 years or less (15.3%), 45–54 years (13.8%), 35–44 years (12.7%) and 65–74 years (11.1%),
- 25.8% (48) respondents identified as Male, and 74.2% (138 respondents) as Female. No respondents (0.0%) identified as Other,
- 93.6% of respondents (175) identified as neither Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander, 4.8% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and a further 0.5% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – totalling 5.3% of all respondents. These proportions indicate less Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander residents participated in the survey than indicated in our 2021 ABS Census data which indicates 6.4% of our population identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. However, the Census proportion includes Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander children aged 14 years and under who were not respondents to the survey. Considering this the response rate to the survey from Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander residents is proportionate to the population,
- 96.3% of respondents indicated they were born in Australia and 3.7% of respondents indicated they were born overseas. These proportions indicate considerably less overseas born residents participated in the survey than indicated in our 2021 ABS Census data which indicates 22.2% of our population was born overseas.

A summary of what our community told us through the Community Survey is shown on the following pages. For a full presentation of the survey results please refer to the Balranald Shire Council Community Strategic Plan Community Consultation Summary (available on request from Balranald Shire Council).

Question 6 asked What do you value most about where you live? In total 151 respondents answered this question. From most to least selected the responses were as follows:

- Small community atmosphere (quiet, safe, friendly) – (64.2%),
- Family and friends – (61.6%),
- Healthy environment – (37.7%),
- Access to education (preschool and school) – (33.8%),
- Affordability / cost of living – (33.1%),
- Access to health and wellbeing services (including Mental Health) – (32.5%),

- Recreational / sporting opportunities – (31.8%),
- Thriving local businesses / industries – (26.5%),
- Job opportunities – (26.5%),
- Retail services (including eateries) – (22.5%),
- Access to education (post school) for young people and adults – (15.9%), and
- Other (please specify) – (7.3%).

This question was also asked through the online survey for the BSC Economic Development Strategy (with some slightly refined wording) – with similar proportional values reported – for example ‘Small community atmosphere’, ‘Healthy environment’ and ‘Family’ continue to be significant priorities. This consistency should remain central to guiding Council’s decision-making.

- Small community atmosphere (quiet, safe, friendly) – (77.9%),
- Healthy environment – (46.8%),
- Family ties – (42.9%),
- Access to health and education services – (32.5%),
- Thriving local businesses / industries – (28.6%),
- Recreational opportunities – (24.7%),
- Job opportunities – (24.7%),
- Affordability / cost of living – (23.4%),
- Retail services (including eateries) – (16.9%), and
- Other (please specify) – (3.9%).

Question 7 asked How would you rate the quality of life in your community?

Respondents were asked to select the response most accurate for them along the scale from Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good or Very Good. Across all respondents 16.2% indicated Very Good, 47.3% indicated Good and 32.4% selected Average. In total 1.4% of respondents indicated Very Poor and 2.7% selected Poor.

Across this measure for all respondents a **weighted average of 3.74** was achieved (where the greater the weighted average, towards a maximum score of 5, the more positive the quality-of-life rating was). By community this weighted average looked slightly different – for all Euston based respondents a **weighted average of 3.50 was achieved**. Based on this rating Euston indicated the POOREST quality of life rating. For Balranald respondents a **weighted average of 3.81** was achieved and for Clare, Hatfield, Kyalite and Oxley based respondents a weighted **average of 4.00** was achieved. Based on this rating Clare, Hatfield, Kyalite and Oxley based respondents indicated the **BEST quality of life rating**.

Question 8 asked How would you rate the overall quality of infrastructure across Balranald Shire?

Specific to seven discrete areas respondents were asked to select the response most accurate for them along the scale from Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good or Very Good, from these weighted averages were assigned (where the greater the weighted average, towards a maximum score of 5, the more positive the quality-of-life rating was)

- Road networks: weighted average 2.85
- Water and sewer supply: weighted average 3.24

- Road networks: weighted average 2.85
- Water and sewer supply: weighted average 3.24
- Waste disposal: weighted average 3.19
- Footpaths: weighted average 2.90
- Parks and playgrounds: weighted average 3.08
- Sport and recreation facilities: weighted average 3.38

Across the entire LGA the most positively rated infrastructure item was Sport and recreation facilities and the least positively rated were the Road networks. In the full Community Voice Report these ratings are also analysed and presented by community.

Similarly, **question 9 asked How would you rate the level of these services across the Balranald Shire?** Specific to seventeen discrete areas respondents were asked to select the response most accurate for them along the scale from Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good or Very Good, from these weighted averages were assigned:

- Childcare: 2.82
- Education – preschool: 3.21
- Education – school: 3.61
- Education – post school (young people, adults): 2.42
- Health care: 2.46
- Mental health care: 2.08
- Aged care: 3.02
- Community events and celebrations: 3.21
- Public Safety services (such as Policing): 2.61
- Emergency services: 3.39
- Employment support services: 2.55
- Economic Development and Business supports / services: 2.78
- Tourism: 3.26
- Telecommunications (phone and internet): 2.88
- Energy: 3.21
- Public / Community Transport: 2.34
- Affordable housing: 2.44

Across the entire LGA the most positively rated Services were Education – school and Emergency services and the least positively rated Services were Mental health care, Education – post school (young people, adults) and Affordable housing. In the full Community Voice Report these ratings are also analysed and presented by community.

Significantly, **Mental health care was the most poorly rated service** both across the Balranald Shire area and also within the data analysed at individual community level

In **Question 10 respondents were asked What do you think is the main challenge facing your community?** This was an open response question and prompts were intentionally not provided to ensure respondents were unbiased in their answers. Responses were coded to themes and these themes, from most to least mentioned, are shown below.

Consistent, quality health care across the ages (including physical and mental health care, early intervention, allied health and chronic health care) (32 mentions)

"Lack of government services such as health care. NSW Health is a farce – their focus has been on saving money NOT people. Their refusal to fund a VMO after Slava left was abhorrent. The revenue being gathered from our communities through mining alone means state government gets richer off us and gives little in return. A life in Balranald (or Euston or Kyalite or Clare) is worth no less than a life in Bondi... our State government needs reminding of that

Housing supply and affordability (20 mentions)

Affordable housing, land to build

Employment / career development opportunities, especially for young people (17 mentions)

Lack of opportunities to keep our kids and families in town once they've finished school

Community cleanliness / appearance / attractions, including first impressions for travellers (12 mentions)

Our town doesn't look very inviting to travellers.

Vandalism destroys the reputation of the town

Local government professionalism, consistency, understanding of communities (11 mentions)

Churn of senior positions at BSC during Administration has been a problem

No communication with the community

Cost of living (sometimes mentioned alongside housing affordability) (9 mentions)

Increased cost of living, rates, houses, food etc

Affordable / accessible entertainment and activities for everyone especially families, children and young people (9 mentions)

Lack of things to do other than eat and drinking alcohol, need exercise equipment, a gym etc

Isolation including distance to key services and supports (10 mentions)

Also, distance. It's a town that relies on bigger towns for services. That's not right

Euston deserves to have services provided in town for the locals

Lack of Childcare and After School Care (9 mentions)

The lack of meaningful response at the federal level (exacerbated by Victorian government early years policy changes) regarding the lack of childcare workforce means our children and families are suffering. How can children be school ready without preschool, how can there be gender equity without childcare

Lack / loss / viability of local businesses (8 mentions)

Loss of small businesses like Bodinnars and others that don't grow or improve, contribute to a negative feel of decline of our town

Workforce shortages (6 mentions)

Employment retention and affordability, staff shortages. Needs far outweigh resources available

Road conditions (6 mentions)

The road's being ruined by mining trucks making roads unsafe and our stock constantly being hit

Access to high quality education services – post school for young people and adults (5 mentions)

The distance between Balranald and the closest future education facility

Balancing industry growth (mining and renewables) with positive outcomes for our communities (4 mentions)

Losing numbers from our footy team – ask mines to free up workforce who want to play. Make them part of the community in real ways

Large industries using our resources and not giving back in a meaningful way

Access to high quality education services – early years and school age (4 mentions)

Ageing / declining population (4 mentions)

Sustained maintenance / improvement of facilities (3 mentions)

Public transport (3 mentions)

Telecommunications (3 mentions)

Environmental health / River health (3 mentions)

Equitable focus on Euston (2 mentions)

Town water quality concerns (2 mentions)

Community safety (2 mentions)

Lack / loss of volunteers (2 mentions)

In **Question 11** of the online survey respondents were asked **What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)?** This was an open response question (no prompts provided). Responses were coded to themes and these themes, from most to least mentioned, are shown below.

Inclusive, safe and affordable events, activities and spaces for our communities to come together (especially for families, children and young people) (26 mentions)

Youth services, activities to create inclusion and coming together for the community. Free services and access to sports and activities for the kids. Families are struggling with the cost of living therefore children are not being able to do as many things because of cost. The cost of rates at the moment is insane and unmanageable for families

Strong local government leadership with effective management, skilled workforce and ongoing community engagement and input in decision making (including maintaining Council's Advisory Committees) (22 mentions)

Better communication of our council's role and future employment opportunities for a skill-based workforce, offering apprenticeships and certificated employees earning above award wages, allowing us to become self-sufficient, money saving and accountable to the rate payer

An understanding Shire Council that listens to the community

Health, wellbeing and safety services meet the needs of the communities (22 mentions)

*A community where everyone feels safe and happy.
Where the needs of all are adequately met from
birth onwards*

*Range of age groups. Good health services. Great
facilities for ageing population.
Well-resourced schools, mental health services
somewhere for everyone*

Thriving, resilient populations, communities and volunteers. Existing and emerging industries are committed to our community's wellbeing (20 mentions)

*Community focus, good place to be with
access to resources*

New housing estates for families.

A safe and inclusive community and environment for all residents, free of crime / violence / degradation (20 mentions)

*A safe, friendly, active, lifestyle where all
ages thrive, our rivers and
environment are improved, and all peoples
are equal*

*A vibrant community that is connected,
inclusive, constructive and admired by
outsiders*

A thriving tourism sector (20 mentions)

*A thriving riverside community known for its
sustainable agriculture, vibrant culture, and
strong connection to the
Murray River, where residents and visitors
enjoy a high quality of life, economic
opportunity, and environmental harmony*

*Continue to promote and help local
tourism to prosper*

Beautify and maintain our communities (19 mentions), with two of these mentions specific to improved shade and (at least) four mentions specific to Euston

Need to be updated, empty shops, vacant old houses, need colour murals with some sort of theme like the colourful cows around Shepparton

A safe, well-maintained road network (13 mentions)

Improved roads would be the first thing to work on. This would help with tourists and the local community

Community infrastructure (buildings, footpaths, services including town water) is well maintained and meets community's needs (11 mentions)

"Footpaths along all streets, especially to updated sporting ground!"

Education and employment opportunities and services to support people in improving their life chances (11 mentions)

That everyone across our ENTIRE LGA thrives - they a safe, well and meaningfully engaged in education, work and volunteering. We are inclusive, caring, courageous and wise. We use the current industry boom to secure a great long-term future for everyone

Equity of spread of community development and infrastructure (8 mentions)

Euston is synonymous with Balranald when talking about the shire

I would like to see a community hub established in Euston. This could be like a community hub where people and families could access services they need. It would also have space to accommodate services visiting Euston on outreach. I would love to see the park and playground equipment revitalized, for families to visit and use

Thriving businesses and retail sector (7 mentions)

More shops! And the ones at the royal, cleaned up

Better restaurant, eatery, café options

Comprehensive and consistent / reliable telecommunications (5 mentions)

Better telecommunications to enable more efficient business practices and safety during an emergency

This question – **What is your VISION for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)?** – was also asked through the online survey for the Economic Development Strategy (2024). Again, responses were coded to themes and these themes, from most to least mentioned, are shown below:

- Improved infrastructure and community amenities (roads, community assets such as parks, opportunities for recreation etc) (20 responses)
- Nurturing our small community ‘feel’ – friendly (family friendly), inclusive, caring, welcoming (17)
- Sustainable economic growth that protects natural and built resources (e.g. rivers, natural environments, roads, buildings) (13)
- Improved employment opportunities for locals – everyone who wants to work can, everyone has the chance to further upskill to improve their employment potential (11)
- Improved services (physical and mental health, education, childcare etc) (10)
- Self-governance, the return of elected representatives to Council, the centrality of community voice (10)
- Locally grown leaders and professionals who are empowered and invested in their communities (10)
- Increased – in scale and sustainability – local business and industry (7)
- Improved presentation and enjoyment of natural resources and assets (river, Mungo etc., for both locals and tourists) (7)
- Increased housing stock (improved quality, increased range / type, new residential areas to enable growth, a range of price points to increased broad affordability) (6)
- Young people are safe, nurtured and chose to stay local (6)
- To be out of administration (5)
- Population growth (4)
- Conscious invitation and monitoring of preferred, diverse and productive industries that invest locally and contribute to a meaningful long-term future (4)
- Development / growth that is well-planned and considers all impacts and opportunities into the long term (4)
- Clean and beautiful communities that are ‘cared’ for and well-maintained (4)
- Growth that is equitable across communities and individual community members – benefits for all (2)
- Avoid over-development (1)

Finally, **Question 12** of the Community Strategic Plan online survey asked respondents **What is one thing you would like to see happen / achieved in your community within the next ten years?** This was an open response question and responses were coded to themes and these themes, from most to least mentioned, are shown below.

A connected and active community with social, recreational and exercise infrastructure and opportunities for ALL ages, especially for families, children and young people (32 mentions)

More things for kids to do

A youth centre – services relating to mental health, fun activities, community events

High-standard and consistent delivery of health and wellbeing services to meet the breadth of our communities' needs (23 mentions)

*For all services to deliver into our community at the scale they are funded too.
For mental health services to meet the diverse needs of our communities*

Improved access to health and wellbeing services/ outreach to Euston. good mental health facilities, ones that can actually help people

Proper health system. This is important as before people move here, they want to ensure they have a secure health system

Local Government is strong, high functioning and representative, it enables well planned community growth and business / industry attraction. It facilitates benefits from emerging industries. Our communities are united (18 mentions)

Joint shire office in Euston

Establish a community foundation to administer contributions from developers for the benefit of the whole community

As a community and Council we make wise decisions about the opportunities seize and how we grow and support our existing communities and industries / businesses (6 mentions)

Be guarded on the fact that the present industries will not be here for ever

*That Agriculture stays healthy and vibrant amongst other industries.
That a fair proportion of the water buy back is returned to our communities*

Safe, well-maintained roads and improved transport safety (including truck bypasses and parking bays) (17 mentions)

Improved roads would be the first thing to work on. This would help with tourists and the local community

Moving the major trucking route away from the central business area via a bypass. There is no compromise when it comes to local community safety. NOW is the ideal time to plan a bypass while there is capacity to negotiate the through route. Planning for long vehicle parking is also essential

Well-planned and maintained beautification of communities (17 mentions)

I would love to see both of the entries to the town to be redone as that's the first thing people see when they arrive

A vital and vibrant Main Street in both our key towns

More housing to meet the diverse needs of the community and required workforce, new housing estates opened up (12 mentions)

More housing, the attraction of young workforce including families

A thriving and more comprehensive retail sector (11 mentions)

Revival of local businesses

More places for people to eat

Tourism – improved advertising, signage and assets to attract and retain visitors (11 mentions)

More tourism support and opportunities in rural areas

Advertising and street knowledge for visitors of what the town has to offer, at the moment it's not advertised much, should be as simple as a board in main Street with info not online to search

High quality and accessible education across the ages (8 mentions)

That education for all students is available at a high standard

Employment growth (7 mentions)

An increase in population which will flow on to more jobs and opportunities for local businesses and contractors.

More job opportunities, for younger people especially

Healthy rivers that are protected and enjoyed (6 mentions)

Fix the health of the river and ensure that the water quality improves. The blue green algae blooms and the low water levels aren't just bad for the fish and tourism it's also unsustainable for local use in the long term. If that could be dealt with then that would be very good

An extended network of footpaths, safe and well-maintained (6 mentions)

A compassionate, safe welcoming and inclusive community (6 mentions)

“

That we work with our First Nations communities to achieve honest and full reconciliation and a great future together

”

“

A friendly welcoming community like it used to be, without the racism, vandalism etc

”

Childcare (and preschool) availability to a scale and quality that meets the community's needs (6 mentions)

Systems to support community voice sharing and our volunteers (5 mentions)

“

Sustainability framework for southern cross, art gallery, men's shed, daycare, playgroup, and race clubs.

”

Comprehensive and consistent telecommunication infrastructure (3 mentions)

Improved opportunities to recycle (especially cans and bottles) (3 mentions)

Balranald Football seniors win a grand final (2 mentions)

Increased availability of public transport (2 mentions)



Two of the drawings from Balranald Central School



School Focus Groups

In total 116 primary school students participated in five separate School Focus Groups. Four focus groups were led by the researcher where students were asked:

- What do you love most about where you live?
- What is hard about where you live?
- If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change?

A fifth focus group was led by Councilor Linnett in her capacity as classroom teacher with her Balranald Central School Year 1-2 class:

- What do we love about Balranald NOW (2024)? and
- What do we want in Balranald in 10 years (2034)?

Balranald Central School Yr 1-2 (25 students) In response to What do we love about Balranald NOW (2024) students noted: **recreational and sporting spaces and activities** (pool, swing bridge, new BP, Pony Club), **retail shops** and accommodation businesses, **community events, friends, family** and the ability to move around their **community safely**.

In response to What do we want in Balranald in 10 years (2034) students noted: **more activities for children** (splash park, jumping pillow etc), a **cleaner community** and **increased retail outlets** (especially food related).

Balranald Central School Yr 5-6 (28 students) In response to What do you love most about where you live? students noted: the **people and community, nature and outdoors** (especially rivers and lakes), **recreational and sporting activities and venues, shared community spaces** (Library, Art Gallery etc), **retail outlets** especially eateries, and **local farms**.

In response to What is hard about where you live? students noted: **isolation and distance**, a **lack of things to do**, the need for **more retail outlets** and specifically eateries, **improved medical services**, the need for more **housing and climatic extremes** including floods and droughts.

In response to If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change? students noted: **lower cost of living** / decrease inflation, **improve community and school safety**, more **support to schools**, better **medical services**, more **community events and activities**, **reopen railway and improve roads / road safety**, **for all children to have pets and stop smoking / vaping**.

Keep Australian produce here in Australia so all families have fresh food to eat

Systems to support community voice sharing and our volunteers (5 mentions)

Clare Public School Yr K-6 (6 students) In response to What do you love most about where you live? students noted: **space and freedom, peaceful, pets, living on a farm, working with parents.**

In response to What is hard about where you live? students noted: **distance** to town and difficulty **accessing the services** needed, being aware of **dangers.**

In response to If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change? students noted: increase **funding for schools** and **support to students** everywhere, improve infrastructure like **roads and airstrips**, improve access to services, **lower cost of living** / decrease inflation / increase the value of the Australian dollar, **control pest animals, improve water supply**, and **end wars.**

*Drop the price of living and inflation,
make the things you really need -
medicine, hospital, urgent care -
cheaper*

*Look after the environment, stop
deforestation*

*No bombs, no wars, no more testing of
bombs. But Australia still needs a
defense system though because other
countries have wars*

Euston Public School Yr K-6 (44 students) In response to What do you love most about where you live? students noted: the **river, natural environment and fishing, family, kind community and small town** (not too busy, not too loud, not too many cars, safe for riding bikes etc), **space / land size, school, community events and festivals** (Salami Festival, Christmas movie on the oval) and **great places to eat** (Hotel, Euston Club, Robinvale Golf Club) and **world quality fruit is grown here.**

In response to If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change? students noted: **more things for children and young people to do**, improved **parks and playgrounds**, more **venues to eat and gather** / retail shops, improved **public facilities**; environmental initiatives – opportunities to recycle, compost and more rubbish bins, **improvements to Euston Public School**, improved **hospital in Robinvale / a hospital in Euston**, ambulance for Euston, fix **highway and back roads** (sealed, potholes etc), and personal trainer and dedicated **spaces for exercise.**

This park is where our community has almost all its birthday parties – it needs to be better than it is

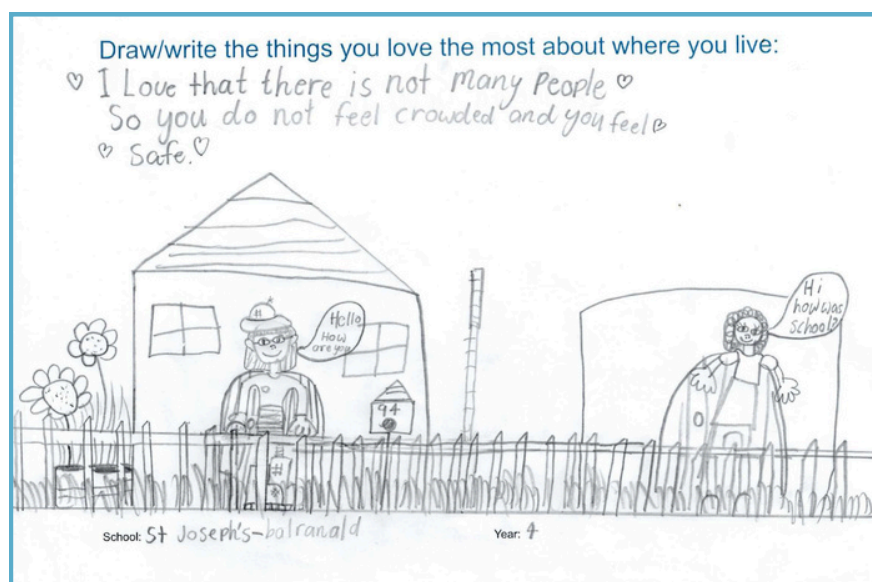
St Joseph's Parish School Yr 5-6 (students) In response to What do you love most about where you live? students noted: the **people**, our **families**, it's safe (better than the city), **shops and businesses** (including farming), **library, pool and sporting facilities**.

"Better than the city, less cars and less people, less rules, it feels free-er

In response to What is hard about where you live? students noted: **traffic** in the main street (especially trucks, we need a bypass), the **lack and loss of retail businesses**, the **impact of new industries** (it feels less safe with the workers walking around), **vandalism** (oil spilled at Skate Park), **more things to do** (a gym, basketball competition), **river health**, and **extreme heat**.

In response to If you were Prime Minister for the week what would you do or change? students noted: **decrease the cost of living** and **reduce inflation**, improve **community safety**, improve **equity**, ensure a **quality school experience** (more funding to schools, options to learn online), **build residential, commercial and industrial buildings**, improve roads, create **employment opportunities**, improve **international outcomes** (risk communities have earthquake beds and tsunami pods, increase overseas trade and border defence).

One of the drawings from St Joseph's Parish School





School Drawing Exercise

The drawing exercise asking **Draw/write the things you love the most about where you live** was shared with the four primary schools across the LGA including Balranald Central School, Clare Public School, Euston Public School and St Joseph's Parish School. Students from years Kindergarten to 6 were invited to participate. In total 135 drawings were returned and analysed for themes. The images throughout the Community Strategic Plan are a selection of our student's drawings. All images were also scanned and preserved for future reference / use.

Each drawings' theme(s) and the number of discreet mentions is noted below:

- Things to do / opportunities for play (parks, pools, skate park, swing bridge, bike tracks) (70)
- Space / Outdoors / Nature (flora and fauna) / River / Lakes (59 mentions)
- Shops and businesses (34)
- Sports and Sporting areas (including netball/football, tennis courts etc) (26)
- Friendly community (20)
- Family / Home (20)
- School (16)
- Adventure / freedom / independence (13)
- Safe community, no crowds, no bad people, very little traffic (12)
- Friends (10)
- Pony Club (8)
- Farms (7)
- Pets (6)
- Peaceful (3)
- Events (3)
- Library (3)
- Weather (2)
- Discovery Café area (2)
- Balranald Shire Council (2)
- Diversity (1)

*"In 10 years I want big houses for
people to live in"
student, BCS*