



SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Figure 1: Mural on Theatre Royal at Balranald in Market Street.

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IMPORTANT NOTE: This DRAFT Settlement Strategy has been prepared with the aim of encouraging discussion around required upgrades & growth opportunities that can create long-term sustainable growth for each settlement and the Shire as a whole.

A range of ideas have been collated & presented that do NOT necessarily reflect the position of Council and may NOT have the funding support for all to be achieved. The aim is to prioritise the community and council ideas so that the available funding is best directed.

1. Settlement Strategy

This Settlement Strategy ('Strategy') seeks to review the two (2) key settlements in the Shire of Balranald - the Town of Balranald & the Village of Euston - to briefly consider their growth potential & opportunities for urban enhancements. This seeks to build upon the findings of Habitat Planning (2006) *Balranald Shire – Strategic Framework Plan* ('2006 Strategy') & other more recent studies.

Balranald & Euston have the more significant growth pressures & demands for urban amenity in the Shire (though other villages may also be experiencing development pressures). The other settlements are of a smaller size & will be addressed through other plans & strategies.

This Settlement Strategy acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Shire of Balranald & their continuing connection to their Country & communities. We pay respect to them, their cultures, & to elders past, present & emerging.

Figure 2: Map of NSW showing location of Balranald Shire.



2. Broad Objectives

Some broad objectives for sustainable growth & settlement enhancement that influence this Strategy (but may not involve specific works) are to:

- Continue to leverage the unique position & identity of Balranald Shire at the edge of river floodplains & outback ecologies (like Mildura);
- Build on each settlement's strengths in presentation, attractions, & amenity for residents & visitors;
- Facilitate targeted grant funding opportunities supported by strategic plans & costings & community/stakeholder engagement;

- Continue to upgrade the www.visitbalranald.com.au website with improved social media integration & targeted campaigns in line with key themes;
- Engage & work with local community groups to leverage new opportunities & resources & promote a greater sense of ownership & maintenance of facilities & attractions;
- Engage & work with local Aboriginal groups to protect, recognise & celebrate the area's indigenous culture & heritage, understanding of the local ecology, & enhance cultural education, engagement & management opportunities;
- Continue to leverage the region's agricultural strengths with value-add & processing, new technology & possibly local training/education;
- Leverage key infrastructure including road & airport connections & protect these from sensitive uses / with suitable buffers;
- Leverage & grow key health & education facilities with supporting medical, aged care, child care, & recreational facilities to promote a diverse community & reduce the impact of an ageing population;
- Work with adjacent Councils to determine key freight & visitor routes & provide supporting signage, information & 24-hour facilities in line with an updated Economic and/or Tourism & Marketing Strategy;
- Continue to monitor & adjust to new mining & extractive industry opportunities with potential for some local industrial growth, a ring-road at Balranald for improved safety & truck servicing facilities;
- Build on recreational & lifestyle opportunities to maintain a healthy population & attract needed professions & skills;
- Review environmental opportunities in & around the town (particularly the Commons & river-front) to protect, restore, & enhance flora, fauna & ecological linkages & enable appropriate visitation;
- Continue to review water security options as well as environmental flows of key watercourses & implement water re-use strategies;
- Avoid, minimise or mitigate risks & impacts from natural hazards, particularly for new developments & investments (and to protect key freight routes);
- Ensure appropriate capture of contributions for state significant & high-impact development proposals in the Shire & adjacent LGAs & leverage temporary & permanent employment growth opportunities through dedicated facilities such as the temporary workers facility. Establish Community Trust Fund(s) to benefit the community in perpetuity;
- Protect & leverage the town's attraction as a caring community with strong community spirit & low-crime levels.

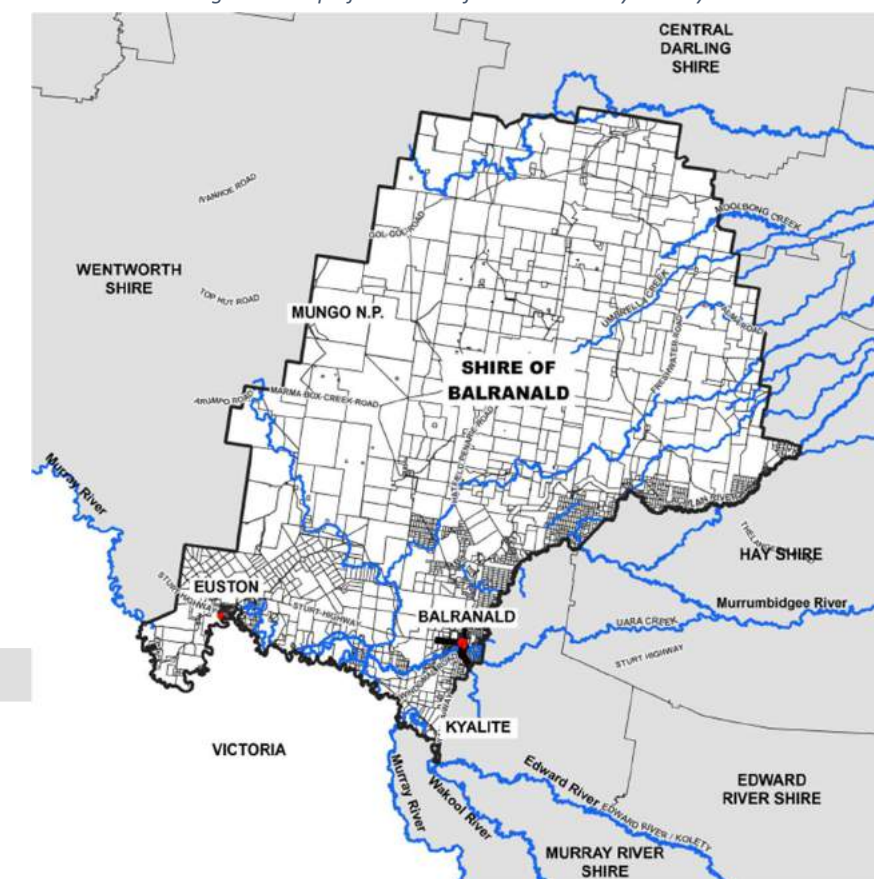
Please see Council's *Community Strategy Plan 2027* for more details.

3. Shire of Balranald

The Shire has an area of ~21,699km², a population (in 2016) of 2,287 people, a median age of 41, & a median weekly personal income of \$624. The largest areas of employment are agriculture (grape growing, sheep/cattle farming, grain growing), health care & local government.

Note: This data will be updated in mid-2022 by the 2021 Census.

Figure 3: Map of the Shire of Balranald & key river systems.



4. Settlement Overviews

4.1. Location & Road Distances

The Town of Balranald is located in the south-eastern corner of the Shire along the Murrumbidgee River. Driving distances are approximately:

- 35km (20-25 mins) to Kyalite (via Yanga Way);
- 50km (30-35 mins) to Tooleybuc/VIC border (via Yanga Way);
- 78km (45-50 mins) to Euston (via Sturt Hwy);
- 92km (1 hour) to Swan Hill (VIC) (via Yanga Way/Stony Crossing Rd) (nearest major retail/service centre);
- 130km (1 hour 20 mins) to Hay (via Sturt Hwy);
- 160km (1 hour 50 mins) to Mildura (VIC) (via Sturt Hwy);
- 275km (2 hour 45 mins) to Griffith (via Sturt Hwy & Warrawidgee);
- 396km (4 hour) to Wagga Wagga (via Sturt Hwy);
- 430km (4 hour 40 mins) to Melbourne (via Swan Hill);
- 530km (5 hour 50 mins) to Adelaide (SA) via Tooleybuc/Tailem Bend).

The Village of Euston is located in the south-western corner of the Shire on the Murray River, opposite the Town of Robinvale (VIC). Driving distances are approximately:

- 6km (5-7 mins) to Robinvale (via Sturt Hwy/ Murray Valley Hwy B400);
- 78km (45-50 mins) to Balranald (via Sturt Hwy);
- 80km (50-55 mins) to Mildura (via Sturt Hwy) (nearest major centre);
- 138km (1hr 30 mins) to Swan Hill (VIC) (via Murray Valley Hwy);
- 470km (5 hours) to Adelaide (SA) (via Sturt Hwy);
- 470km (5 hours) to Melbourne (VIC) (via Robinvale Seal Lake Rd).

4.2. History & Context

A comprehensive history, ecology & economics of Balranald & Euston is not part of the scope of these works though this is covered in part in the 2006 Strategy. It is important to recognise the distinct location near the junction of the five (5) largest inland NSW river systems that would have supported a long & vibrant history of Aboriginal peoples, the diversity of ecological & climatic regions across the Shire, the importance of the floodplains to ecology & agriculture, the development of a mix of intensive & extensive agriculture, the use of the rivers as a key transport route, & now the growth of mineral sands & renewable energy.

It is important that Council build on an accurate collation of each settlement's history & context when deciding on works as part of the Settlement Strategy (including signage, public art, heritage & landscape / master planning / street upgrades). See Section 8.3 – Heritage & Culture below for more details.

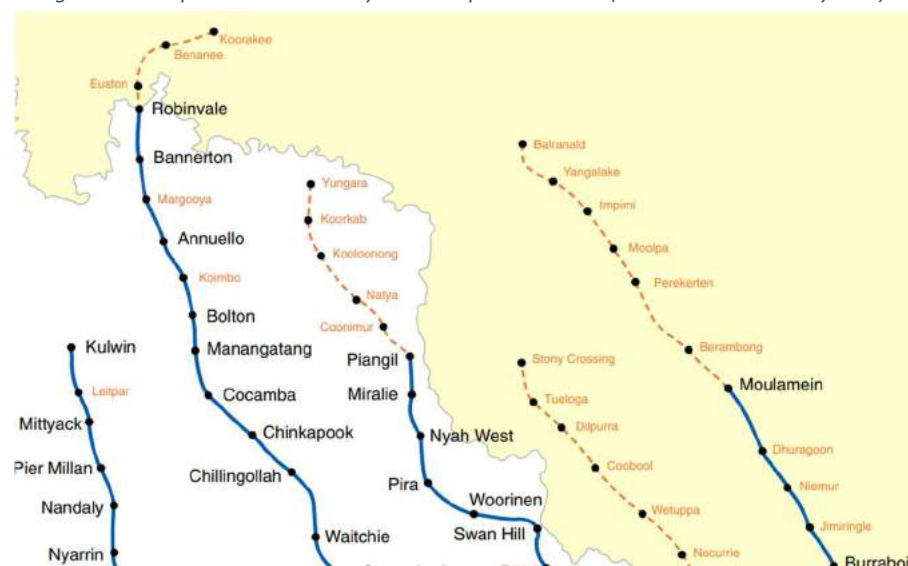
4.3. Transport - Rail, Road & River

Balranald is located on the Murrumbidgee River, just upstream from its connection to the Murray River to the south-west. The river & its floodplain extend back across the Hay Plain. Euston is located directly on the Murray River. The settlements originally relied heavily on the rivers for transport but over time this has been replaced by road transport.

As with many towns in proximity to the Murray River, Balranald & Euston were historically connected more with Victoria than Sydney. Their associated railway lines were run in-part by the Victorian rail authorities (see Figure showing rail lines below).

Balranald has a disused rail siding to the south-east of town that used to connect down to Moulamein/ Barnes/Echuca. Euston had a connection over the Murray River to Robinvale & then south-east to Bendigo. Neither line is currently active or likely to be reused in the foreseeable future.

Figure 4: Excerpt Victorian Railway Lines Map March 1999 (www.victorianrailways.net).



Roads have now become the major transport links. Both Balranald & Euston are located on Sturt Highway (A20) that connects the Hume Highway east of Wagga Wagga with Mildura (VIC) & Adelaide (SA). It is a

vital heavy freight/agricultural route. It passes through the main street of Balranald & to the edge of the village centre of Euston.

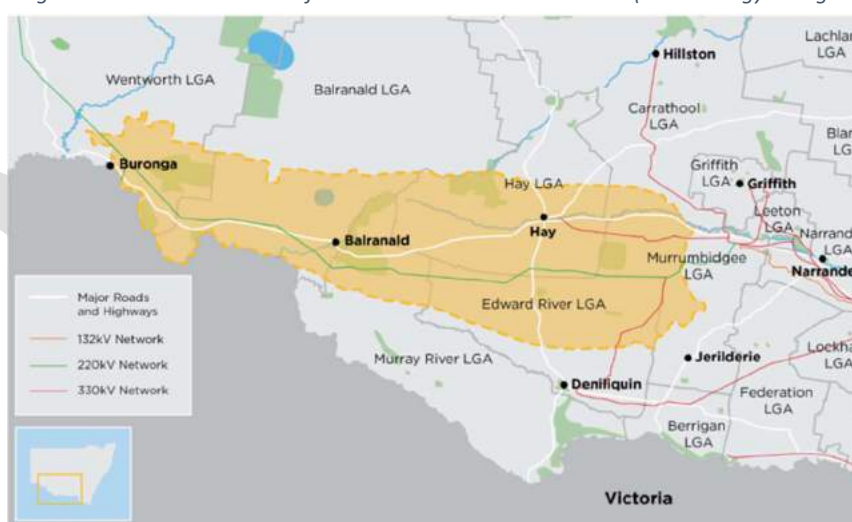
Euston has the added benefit of also connecting to the Murray Valley Highway (B400) through Robinvale to Swan Hill, Kerang, Echuca, Rutherglen, across to NSW/Mt Kosciusko.

For Balranald, Yanga Way to the South is becoming increasingly important for transport, particularly as it is a slightly faster route to Adelaide via Tooleybuc/Ouyen & a growing renewable energy catchment.

Ivanhoe Rd to the North of Balranald provides an important connection to the north of the Shire & to Mungo National Park.

4.4. Electricity & Renewable Energy Zone

Figure 5: South-West REZ Draft Declaration Indicative Location (www.energy.nsw.gov.au).



As part of the NSW Government's Electricity Strategy, five (5) Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) were recently identified including one in the South West of NSW overlapping parts of the Balranald Shire (Figure above).

Figure 6: Location map of EnergyConnect high-voltage electricity lines NSW/SA/Vic (Fact Sheets Sept 2021).



The South-West REZ draft declaration is on exhibition in early 2022. The South-West REZ will have capacity for up to 2.5 GW of electricity (an increase of 1.2GW). The South-West REZ is based in part on the construction of a new electricity interconnector between Wagga Wagga in NSW & Robertstown in SA with a smaller connection to Victoria called 'EnergyConnect'.

This aims to increase reliability/security of the grid between states – but also to provide additional capacity for renewable energy generation (wind & solar) to connect to the grid (see below). It will also upgrade the 330kV transmission line to 500kV between Wagga Wagga & Dinawan.

Balranald Shire has two of the largest solar farm projects in the southern hemisphere currently under construction including:

- Sunraysia: 255 MW, \$350 million construction;
- Limondale: 349 MW, \$650 million construction.

Windlab Burrawong Wind Farm with up to 107 turbines is also in the early stages of approval with a recent Environmental Impact Statement. It is expected to require up to 150 Full Time Employees (each needing 1 bedroom accommodation) with 12-24 month construction period (earliest start 2024) plus ancillary/support/executive accommodation.

In addition, there are a number of large renewable projects in neighbouring LGAs that may have flow-on impacts/benefits for Balranald Shire (e.g., Keri Keri Acciona Project (Murray River Shire/80km west of Hay) 1GW wind with 176 turbines adjacent to Sturt Highway/ 400MW Solar & battery energy storage – up to \$2.3B/ commencing est. 2024).

All of the above projects are expected to result in significant increases in employment with Balranald potentially providing a Temporary Workers Camp for several of these projects. This camp has an extension on its current approval.

The Rental Market paper suggests that 350 workers will be housed in the worker accommodation village & a further 150 will be required for the Windfarm Development again in the 3-5 year timeframe. Up to 500 casual workers would require accommodation for the next decade.

4.5. Mineral Potential

The Figure below from the Common Ground website notes that there are a number of titles for mineral exploration for mineral sands (zircon & titanium dioxide minerals in the form of rutile, ilmenite & leucoxene) north of Balranald connecting via the Ivanhoe Road.

Some key investors include the Iluka Resources Ltd (Balranald Project & Nepean deposits), Tronox Mining Aust. Ltd (Atlas-Campaspe) & Murray Basin Titanium Pty Ltd. Multiple projects are currently being investigated & construction has commenced.

Whilst most minerals may be trucked to Ivanhoe to access rail – much of the construction equipment, support & possibly employment may come from Balranald & the surrounding areas. This may place pressure on Ivanhoe Rd & may result in the need for improved truck routes bypassing local streets in Balranald (see discussion below). The Draft IWCM (March 2020) suggests that:

Iluka Ltd has agreed to base approximately 150 workers in Balranald (using the existing worker accommodation village) during the extraction test phase of its project, which would increase once full production commences. Tronox Ltd is located further afield & will house most of its workforce on site, although as many as 50 people are expected to live in the town & commute to the project.

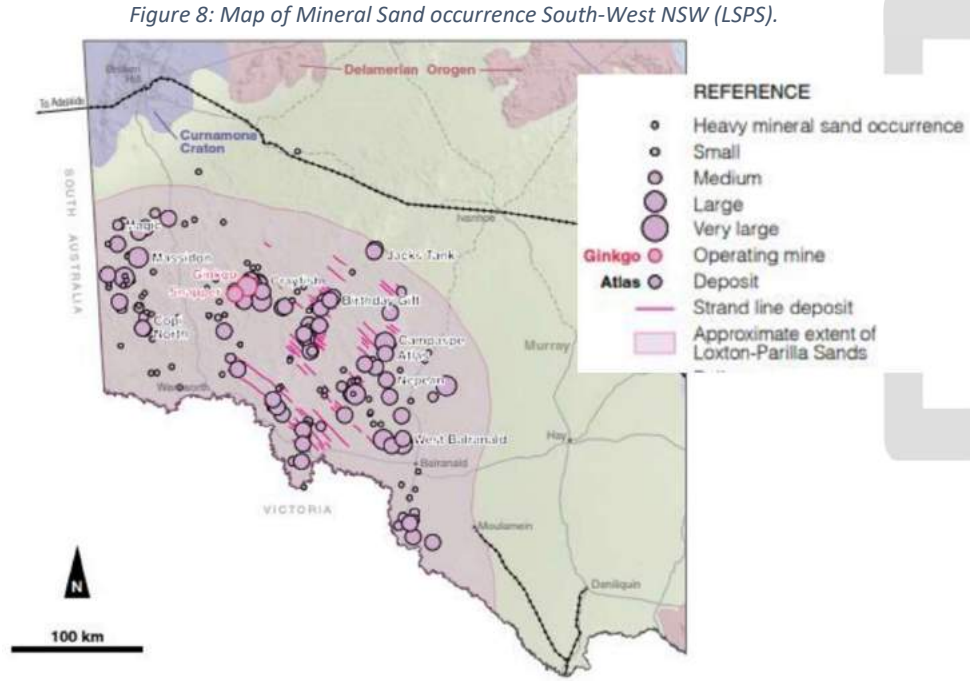
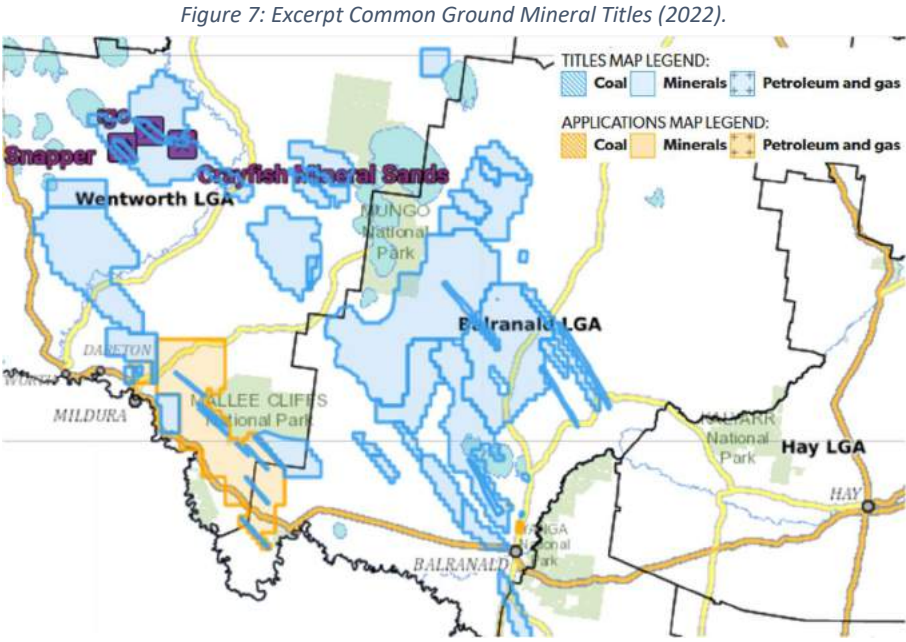


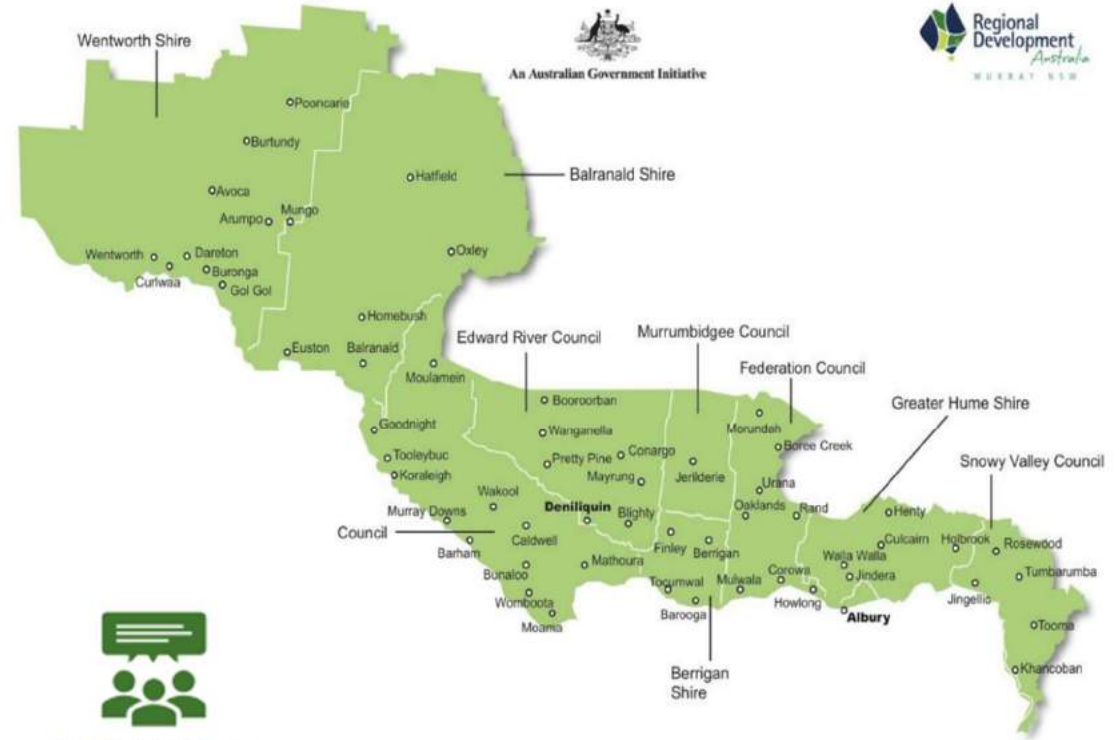
Figure 9: Summary of Key Regional Statistics for the Murray Region (including Balranald Shire) (RDA)

OUR REGION

Key regional statistics



*Ranking: 1 is best, 10 is poor.
Ref: Regional Australia Institute and ABS Census 2016, Accessed June 2019



4.6. Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be one of the main economic drivers for the Shire. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural & Resource Economics & Sciences (ABARES) website provides data at the regional scale for the MURRAY region as shown in the figures below. As this is an urban study, we have not spent time on detailed analysis of agricultural data – other than to summarise its significance to the Shire & the region (see the ABARES figures below) in terms of employment & economic growth.

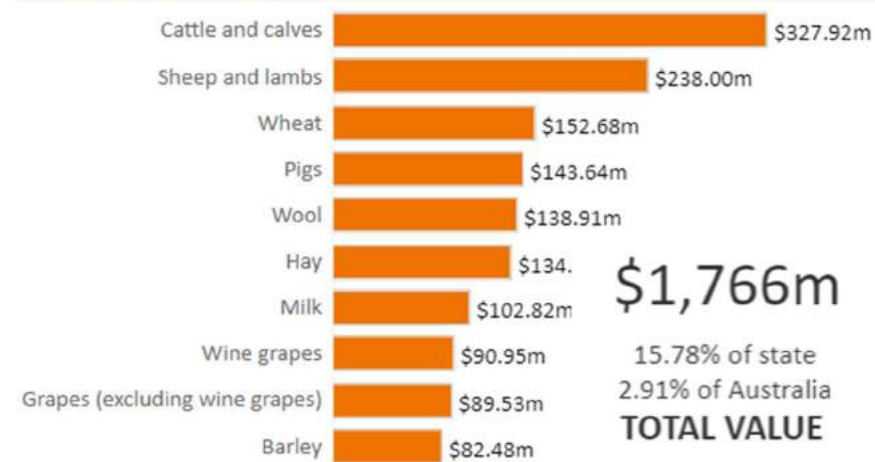
Figure 10: Agricultural figures for Murray Region SA4 (ABARES Website 2022)

This dashboard shows the latest data for agriculture, forestry and fisheries by SA4 and Greater Capital Cities regions

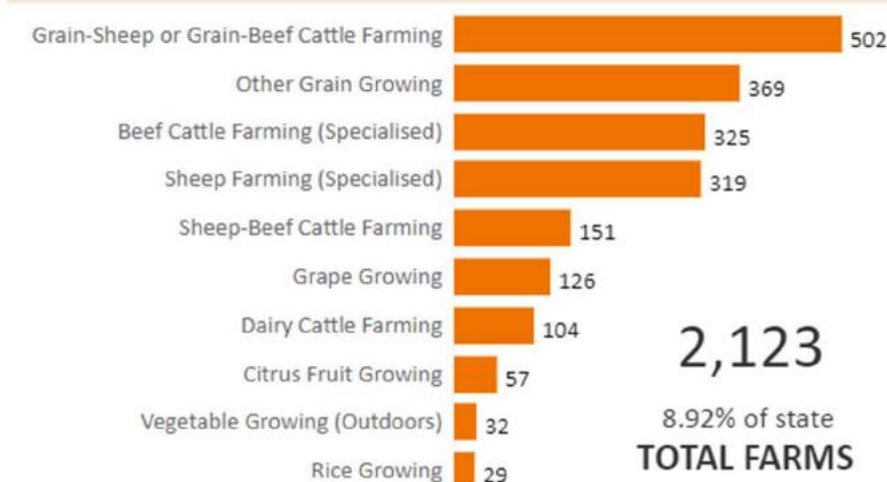
Published: Mar 17, 2022 Updated: Apr 8, 2022

Agriculture sector

Top commodities by value



Number and type of farms



Employment in agriculture

Cropping	821
Livestock	3,025
Horticulture	559
Other agriculture	811
Total employed in agriculture	5,216

Employment profile

Health Care and Social Assistance	9,234
Retail Trade	6,271
Construction	5,995
Other Services	4,424
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	4,319
Education and Training	4,213
Manufacturing	4,150
Public Administration and Safety	4,002
Accommodation and Food Services	3,616
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	3,392
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,508
Wholesale Trade	1,866
Financial and Insurance Services	1,290
Administrative and Support Services	1,060
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	990
Information Media and Telecommunications	649
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	557
Mining	317
Arts and Recreation Services	120

Land use

Land use		Total area of region: 9,779,488 ha
Agriculture	Grazing native vegetation	50.03%
	Modified pastures	13.94%
	Cropping	16.48%
	Horticulture	0.23%
Not agriculture	Nature conservation and minimal use	11.20%
	Production native forests	0.28%
	Plantation forests (commercial and other)	0.36%
	Intensive uses	0.66%
	Water	6.82%

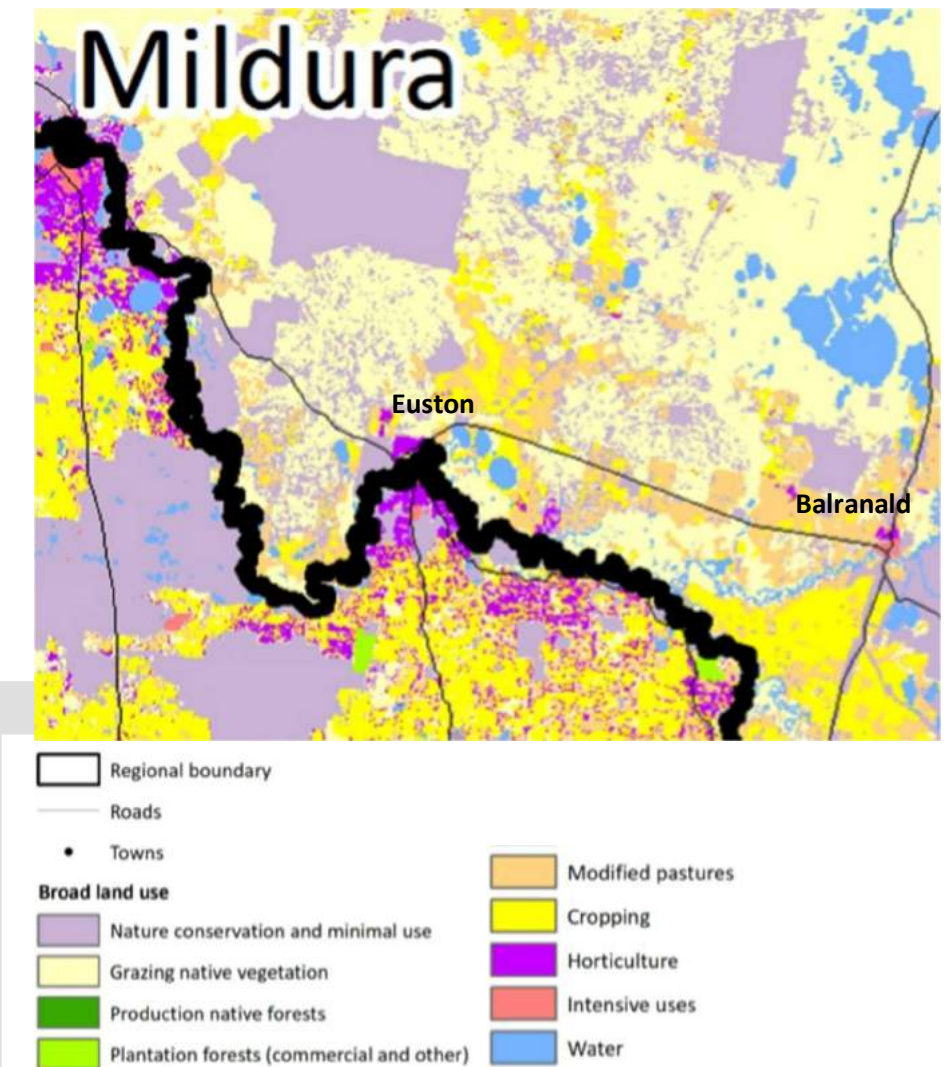
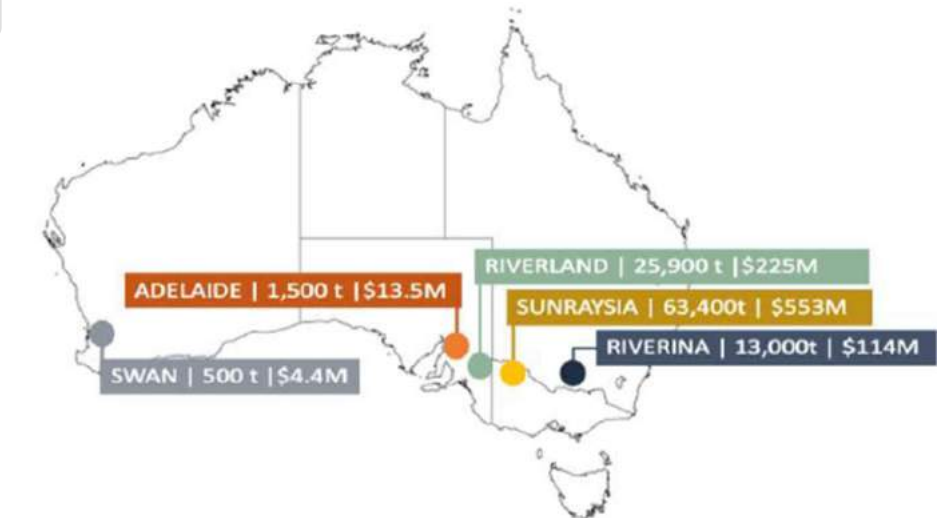


Figure 11: Almond production in Australia 2019/2020 (RMCG 2021).



Almond growing is a significant growth area in the Sunraysia area & Balranald Shire (RMCG 2021). Text in italics is taken from population projections in the Draft IWCM (March 2020).

The last census occurred before the current wide-scale conversion of former pastoral & cropping land to intensive agriculture (primarily almonds & pistachios, with some viticulture). This has generated an estimated 300 temporary jobs which are expected to remain for several years into the future as more land in the southern parts of the Shire is transitioned to higher value production.

Of greater long-term significance is that the main orchard operator (Australian Farming Services) is planning to create about 200 permanent operational jobs within the next 3 years, primarily white- & grey-collar roles, of which Balranald is hoping to secure at least half as permanent residents. Assuming an average household size of 4 would add 400 permanent residents long-term on top of an unknown number of short-term casuals.

Almond growing is becoming increasingly consolidated with larger farms. 8000ha of almonds have been planted in the Balranald district with over 6000ha nearing production in the next 1-2 years. The Almond Production paper references the Australian statistics of 53000Ha producing 9560 jobs at 0.18jobs /Ha. Utilising the same production rates would result in 476 direct jobs in the Balranald District. The ratio of direct jobs to indirect jobs (Ancillary services) varies considerably but could be anywhere between 46% to 67%. This is expected to result in significant job growth, particularly during harvest time (Feb-April).

In addition, the almond industry is facing a looming shortage of processing capacity in the Murray Valley region with several new plants required to be built within the next 3-5 years.

4.7. Other Projects/ Ancillary Growth

The Draft IWCM (March 2020) suggests several flow-on-effects from the projects listed above, including, but not limited to:

Applying a very modest multiplier of 1.25:1 we could expect another 100 permanent jobs to be created to service the 400 permanent jobs described above. Some casual/temporary jobs would also be created to service the equivalent temporary workforce.

Longer term, the completion of the Wool Track arterial road from western Queensland to western Victoria (via Bourke, Cobar & Balranald) will generate increased north-south transport & logistics demands which will intersect with existing east-west heavy vehicle corridors (Sturt & Mallee Highways) at Balranald. Council sees Balranald as ideally placed to be the major transportation hub of southwest NSW in the 10-20 year timeframe, providing permanent jobs to replace some of the shorter-term jobs referred to above.

Note: In 2019 the TfNSW review suggested the existing Tooleybuc Bridge will be upgraded (not replaced). Work on the bridge commenced in June 2022 (<https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/tooleybuc-bridge>).

4.8. Summary of Challenges/Threats

However, there are also a number of threats to economic & population growth in the Shire that include, but are not limited to:

- Climate change & impacts on agriculture & sustainability;
- Water security for agriculture & potable water supplies;
- High dependence on agriculture which can be cyclical;
- Value capture by other LGAs, including larger settlements such as Swan Hill & Mildura that may have higher level services/infrastructure to attract industrial/business/retail growth;
- Long travel distances & limitations to existing infrastructure including transport & communication;
- An ageing population;
- Lack of access to higher education & training (Vic TAFE Swan Hill 95km; Mildura 150km; NSW TAFE Deniliquin 205km; Wagga Wagga 400km) that may partly result in loss of young/educated workers;
- Lack of skilled (local) labour makes it difficult to capture new employment opportunities & exacerbates use of temporary workforces (FIFO/DIDO) for major projects;
- Lack of available & suitable housing (both to buy & rental) is exacerbating the difficulties faced with attracting skilled workers to fill local positions & for major projects;

5. Sustainable Development

The aim is always to maximise local employment & economic opportunities to support & grow the community. With pressures on regional towns & villages, there needs to be clear strategies to support local business, keep local shops open, maintain strong main street character & landscape/amenity, & promote tourism.

Support for these businesses should form part of a broader **Tourism & Economic Study** (the local **Destination Management Plan** is currently being prepared).

Whilst this Settlement Strategy is primarily about areas for urban growth, street upgrades & urban design enhancements – the ratepayers' money needs to be spent wisely to create desirable environments for people to live, work & play & leverage greater economic activity. Investments should always be supported by a good business case, sustainable long-term use, ease-of-maintenance, & strong support & ownership from the community.

6. Population & Demographics

Note the scope of this Strategy does not include a full demographic review & the 2021 Census figures are expected out in the next few months. This also builds on the review in the 2006 Strategy.

6.1. Local Government Area Historic Population

The Graphs opposite show, like many regional Local Government Areas (LGAs), the LGA population has varied slightly over the last 40 years with increases up until the mid-1990s & then slow decline. There was some stabilisation at the last census with an LGA population of ~2,287 people.

6.2. Balranald Snapshot & Historic Population

At the 2016 Census, Balranald (Urban Centres/Localities UCL115004) had a population of 1,159 people (static since 2011) with 615 private dwellings, a median age of 46 with 21.3% over the age of 65 years, & 13.3% were Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islanders. Council disputes the population figure & suggests they have a stable transient population not counted plus recent growth.

Like the Shire population, the measured population of Balranald has varied over time but declined slightly in the last 16-20 years & recently stabilised. It still retains a core population that is large enough to support local services with a catchment for a wider area of the Shire.

Note: The UCL Area (see Census website) only includes part of the Zone RU5 area & misses some of the population around the perimeter & along Malcolm St so the actual population may be slightly higher.

6.3. Euston Snapshot & Historic Population

At the 2016 Census, Euston (Urban Centres/Localities UCL121039) had a population of 510 people (up from 440 in 2011) with 214 private dwellings, a median age of 36 with only 12% over the age of 65 years, with a mix of mostly European ancestry & 7.2% were Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islanders.

Note: It is important to note that the Euston UCL catchment area only includes the Zone RU5 Village area, yet there are a significant number of dwellings in the adjacent

Euston has exhibited fairly consistent population growth over the last 20 years with a positive trendline. Changes in climate & resulting agricultural production are more likely to affect smaller populations where agriculture is the dominant employment.

6.4. Population Growth & Projections

The significant number of key growth drivers & major projects that have commenced or are planned for the sub-region are expected to have major flow-on growth effects for the Shire.

The 2019 Population Projections by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) opposite (that occurred prior to many of these projects been announced or evaluated) suggest that the LGA is projected to increase its population at an average annual growth rate of 1.2% over 2016-2041.

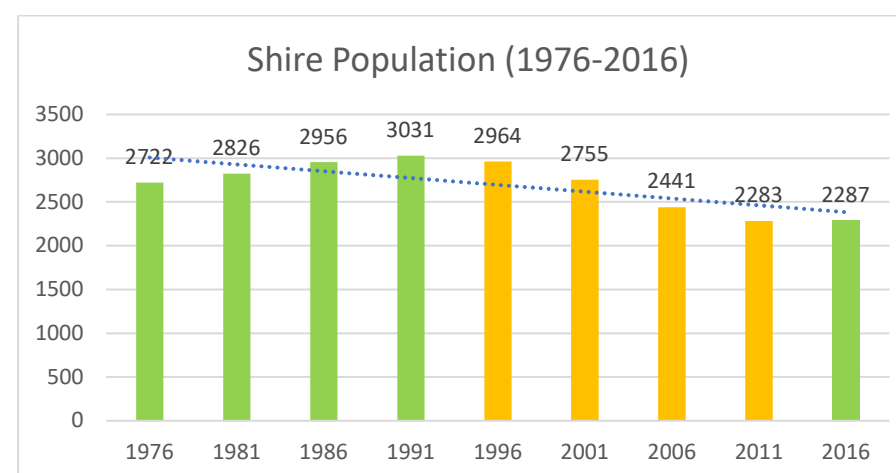


Figure 12: Graph of Balranald Shire Population 1976-2016 (Census data).

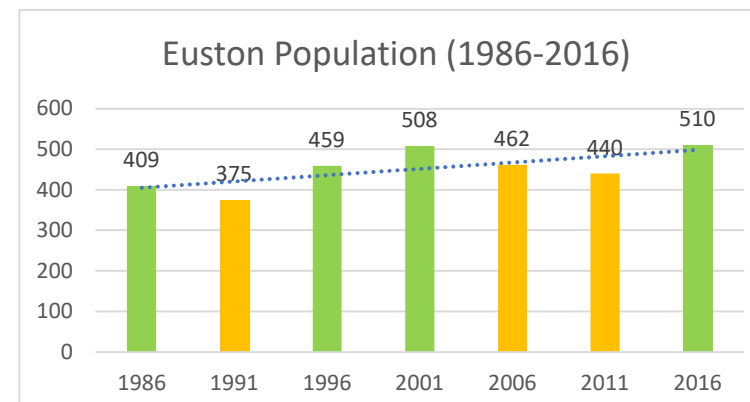
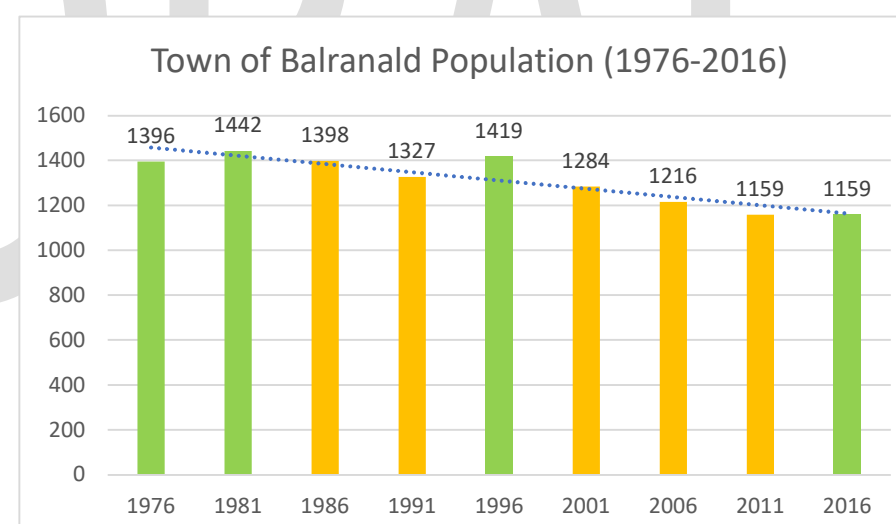


Figure 13: Age difference table between Balranald Shire & NSW (LSPS).

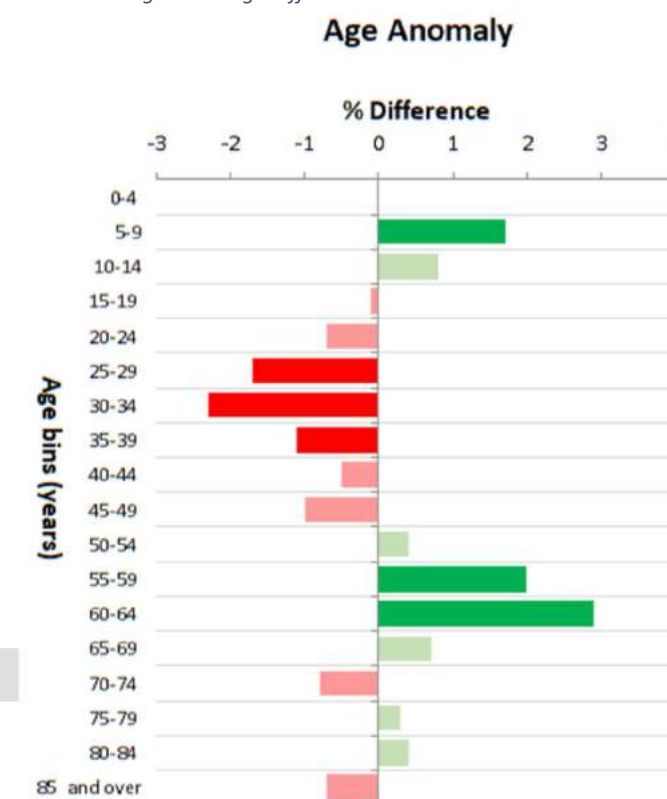


Figure 4: Age difference table
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Figure 14: Census Population Balranald 1976-2016 (& UCL catchment 2016).



Figure 15: Census Population Euston (1986-2016 (& UCL catchment 2011).



Figure 16: NSW Government (2019) Population Projection for Balranald Shire 2016-2041.

	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2031	2031-2036	2036-2041	2016-2041 (25 Years)
Population Change	100	100	200	200	250	850
Av. Annual Growth Rate	0.80%	0.80%	1.50%	1.40%	1.60%	1.20%
Births	200	200	200	200	250	1050
Deaths	100	100	100	150	150	600
Natural Change	100	100	100	50	100	450
Net Migration	0	0	100	100	100	300

Council has recently updated its own population projection for the Town of Balranald based on the employment requirements & flow on affects that are currently informing the Draft IWCM (March 2020) (text in italics below & table opposite). It suggests a permanent additional population of 600 people & 430-880 temporary population (total of 1130-1480 additional people above the 2019 projections at peak population).

Assuming that most of the mineral sand jobs & half the ancillary services jobs are held by single person households & the rest by a 4-person household, the underlying permanent population growth would be in the range 1200-1500 on top of which there could realistically be a demand for up to 1000 temporary residents at peak times.

The temporary residents would be required primarily between November to April with some overlap during construction & planting phases for the full 12 months, say 200 for 12 months & 800 during the summer /Autumn seasons, for the next 10 to 15 years.

6.5. Dwellings & Housing Types

See Figures opposite for details.

Dwelling Growth: Both Balranald & Euston have had a steady growth in private dwellings over the last 40 years. Dwelling growth is somewhat correlated to population growth but is also likely to be generated by decreasing household sizes.

An anomaly for Balranald is the reduction in 2011 but this may have been due to the census area changing. An anomaly for Euston is the slight reduction since 2001 but this may have been due to the census area changing or more dwellings in the adjacent rural residential area (not counted).

The core issue is the projected under-supply when the total demand for dwelling increases substantially over the next 5-10 years for a number of local & state-significant projects.

Unoccupied Dwellings: There has been some increase in unoccupied dwellings over the last 40 years in Balranald & Euston. There is some potential for take-up of these unoccupied dwellings for population growth assuming there are no other reasons these dwellings are unoccupied.

Figure 17: NSW Government (2019) Population Projections for Balranald Shire 2016-2041.

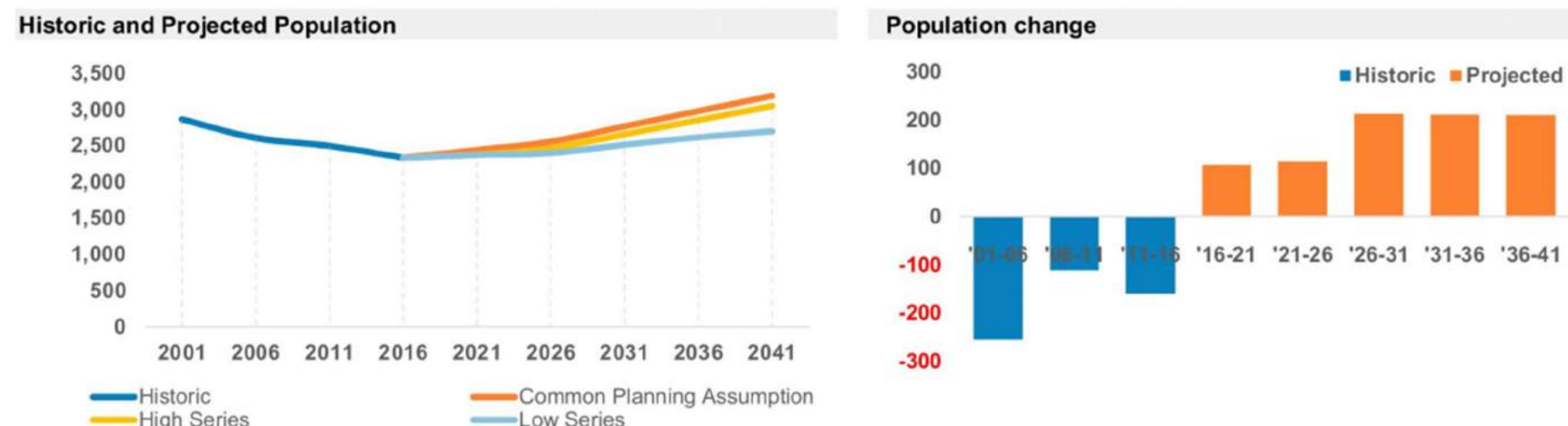


Figure 18: Council's (2022) Population Projection for the Town of Balranald 2021-2051 (Draft IWCM).

Population group	Population present	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051
Permanent population (DPE 2019)	All year	1,141	1,224	1,365	1,503	1,639	1,774	1,903
Almond full time management population	All year	0	230	230	230	230	230	230
Renewable energy management population	All year	0	70	70	70	70	70	70
Mineral sands management population	All year	0	70	70	70	70	70	70
Ancillary population as result of above	All year	0	230	230	230	230	230	230
Total Permanent population		1,141	1,824	1,965	2,103	2,239	2,374	2,503
Almond Itinerant workers summer peak	Jan – Apr [1]	0	200	200	200	200	200	200
Future almond processing population	Jan – Apr	0	0	230	230	230	230	230
Renewable energy construction workers	All year	0	350	350	350	350	350	0
Mineral sands workforce	All year	0	100	100	100	100	0	0
Total Temporary population		0	650	880	880	880	780	430
Peak Population		1,141	2,474	2,845	2,983	3,119	3,154	2,933

Housing Types: Like many regional towns, in 2016 the dwelling stock is dominated by a large proportion (nearly 90%) as detached separate dwelling houses.

Household Types: Families & group households (larger household sizes) only make up around 60-66% & the rate of single or lone person households has continued to increase from ~28% to 34.5% (2001-2016).

As a result, the supplied dwelling types (mostly large single dwellings) may not always match the changing household sizes & dwelling needs. For example, with an ageing population there may be demand for smaller dwellings with smaller yards for lower maintenance. Larger dwellings may have a higher cost & impact on the affordability for people to get into the market or suitably downsize. This may be slightly less of an issue for Euston’s slightly younger population.

However, *Council should further investigate ways to encourage development of a mix of housing types, & develop the business case for smaller dwellings on smaller lots in locations with good access to services & facilities.*

Supported Seniors Living: There are also opportunities to avoid loss of older citizens to larger centres by provision of appropriately serviced housing. Council owns & operates the Bidgee Haven Retirement Hostel (15 beds/low care/based on need) & Balranald Manor Units.

Council currently has a grant to add some limited units. However, it should update its business case to ensure the sustainability of its current model or look at alternate models to it is not a liability on Council funds.

If the market can respond with some smaller, easier-to-maintain housing types in appropriate locations it may encourage older citizens (or those with smaller household sizes) to free up larger/ higher- maintenance properties for smaller families. In-home support is also critical to enable people to age-in-place in high quality retirement living.

Rental Market: At the 2016 Census, the percentage of occupied private dwellings rented was 32.7% in Euston & 33.5% in Balranald. This can be compared to the NSW rental rate of 31.8% so it is slightly higher than average & a significant portion of the total housing stock.

We do not have the scope or data to ascertain rental availability or affordability in Balranald & Euston. However, the *Housing Report (Rental Housing Needs)* by Jennifer Bax Alvarado – Golden Rivers Real Estate) suggests there are very few rental houses available & insufficient to cater for projected local demand.

In addition to the major projects there may be a lack of housing for support services including NSW Police, NSW Ambulance Service; attracting another doctor, Maari Ma Aboriginal Health Services, Aboriginal Public Housing & Crisis Accommodation.

However, it is likely that similar pressures across regional NSW are occurring whereby there is a lack of suitable rental housing to meet demand. In addition to the reasons for new housing stock not been provided, there may be a variety of factors including, but not limited to: lack of supply during peak demands (peak employment projects);

increasing rents becoming unaffordable for local employees; lack of suitable rentals for families & single/lone households, etc.).

This would be best investigated as part of a comprehensive **Housing Strategy** for the Shire, but in the meantime this Strategy can facilitate some short-term solutions.

Figure 19: Balranald growth in private dwellings (occupied/unoccupied) 1976-2016 (Census).

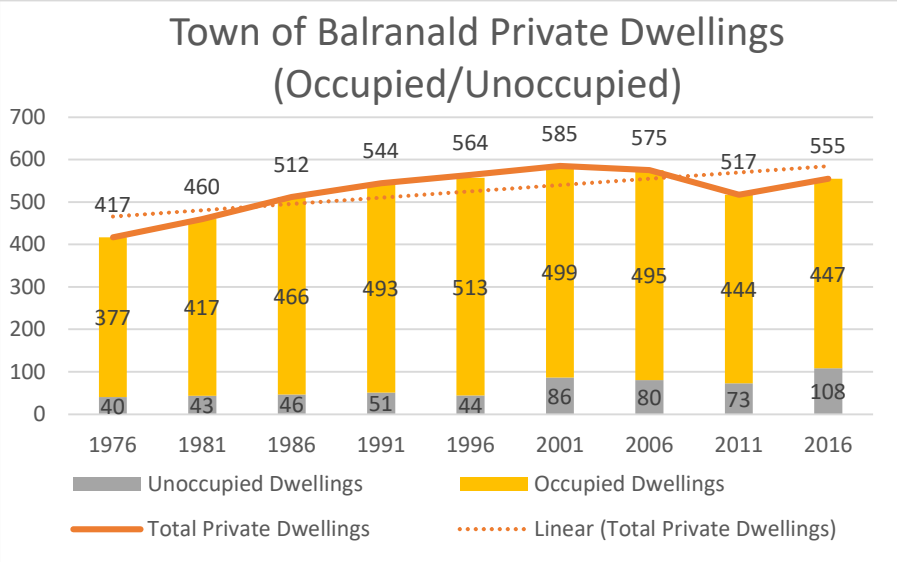


Figure 20: Balranald Household Size/Type (2001-2016 Census).

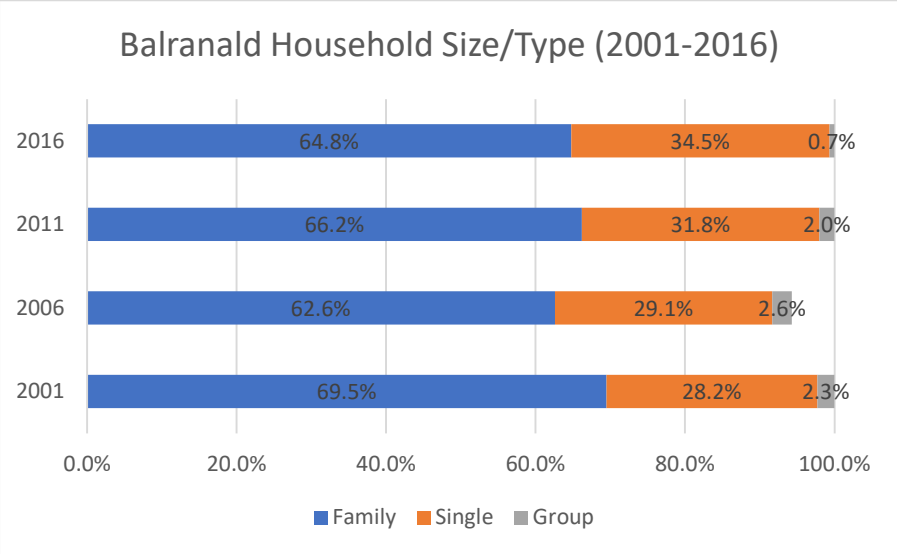


Figure 21: Balranald & Euston Dwelling Types/Structure (2016 Census).

	BALRANALD		EUSTON	
	No.	%	No.	%
Separate House	402	89.9%	148	88.6%
Semi-Detached, Row or Terrace House	13	2.9%	7	4.2%
Flat or Apartment	25	5.6%	5	3.0%
Other Dwelling	7	1.6%	7	4.2%
Occupied Priv. Dwell.	447		167	

Figure 22: Euston growth in private dwellings (occupied/unoccupied) 1986-2016 (Census).

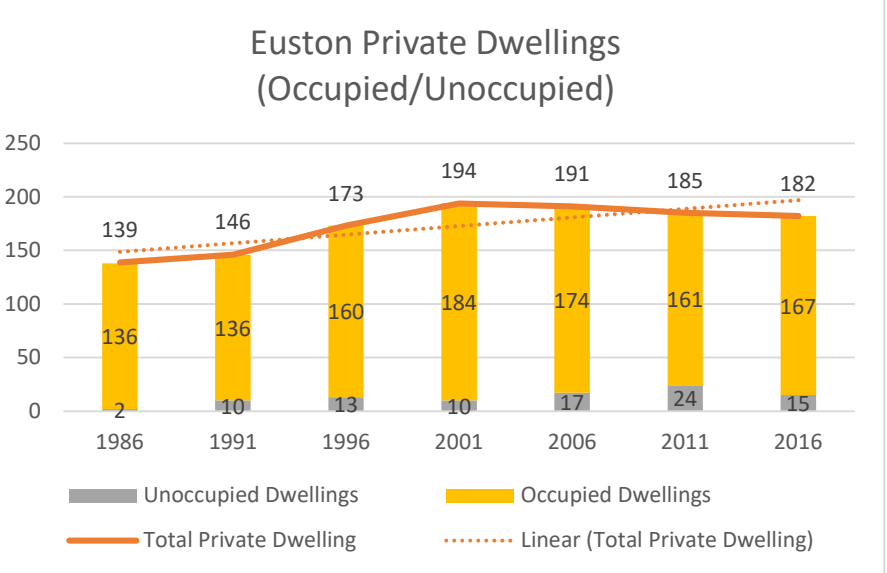


Figure 23: Euston Household Size/Type (2001-2016 Census).

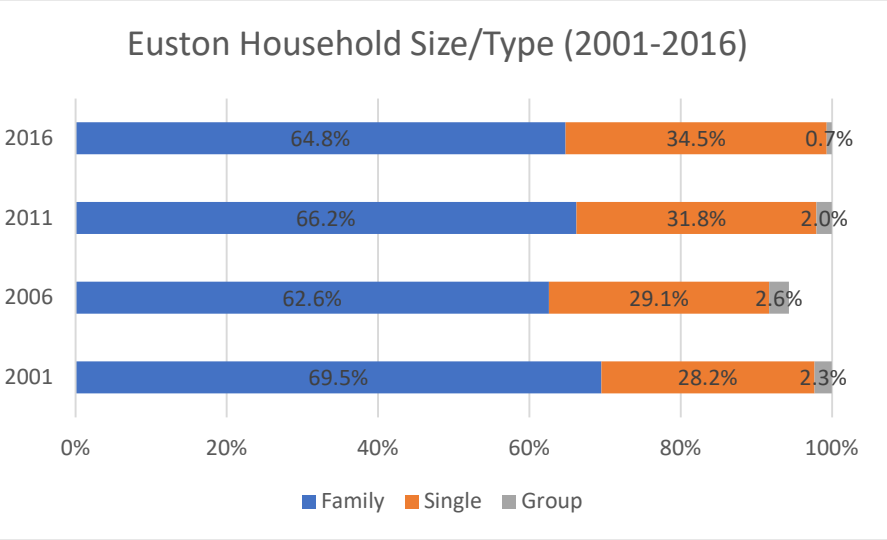


Figure 24: Balranald & Euston Numbers of Bedrooms per Dwelling (2016 Census).

	BALRANALD		EUSTON	
	No.	%	No.	%
No dedicated bedroom	3	0.7%	0	0.0%
1 Bedroom	29	6.5%	4	2.6%
2 Bedroom	77	17.3%	25	16.0%
3 Bedroom	202	45.3%	98	62.8%
4 or more Bedrooms	119	26.7%	25	16.0%
Not stated	16	3.6%	4	2.6%
Total	446		156	
Av. No. of Bedrooms per Dwelling	3		2.9	
Av. People per Household	2.3		2.7	

7. Utilities

Council is in the process of preparing an Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy (including Options Assessment April 2021) with NSW Public Works & the information in this Strategy seeks to briefly summarise some key findings – noting that the outcomes in that report may change as it is finalised. This Strategy needs to align with the servicing opportunities & challenges in the IWCM & these works should have high priority as part of any funding to enable the projected growth.

7.1. Water - Balranald

Council operates potable & non-potable water supply schemes at Balranald. Raw water is extracted from the Murrumbidgee River for both schemes. Water is supplied to most of the Zone RU5 area as well as Malcolm St to the south-east of town & Endeavour Drive to the west.

Balranald has a Water Treatment Plant (WTP) located adjacent to the river & just east of the Sturt Highway bridge with access off Court St near the hospital. It was built in 1988 with a design capacity of 1.1 ML/day. The water towers are located in Greenham Park near the swimming pool.

The IWCM notes that based on projected growth rates the Balranald WTP peak day demand may exceed the headworks capacity in the short term (1-5 years) for the filtered water supply system & the current raw water peak day demand already exceeds supply. There is also security of supply issues & the existing assets do not have the capacity to meet the 30-year (2049) demands (both DPIE & Council projections).

The aim is to achieve a short-term capacity of 1.7ML/day for the DPIE growth projection & allow it to be modified for future capacity of 2.0 ML/day to meet Council's projection.

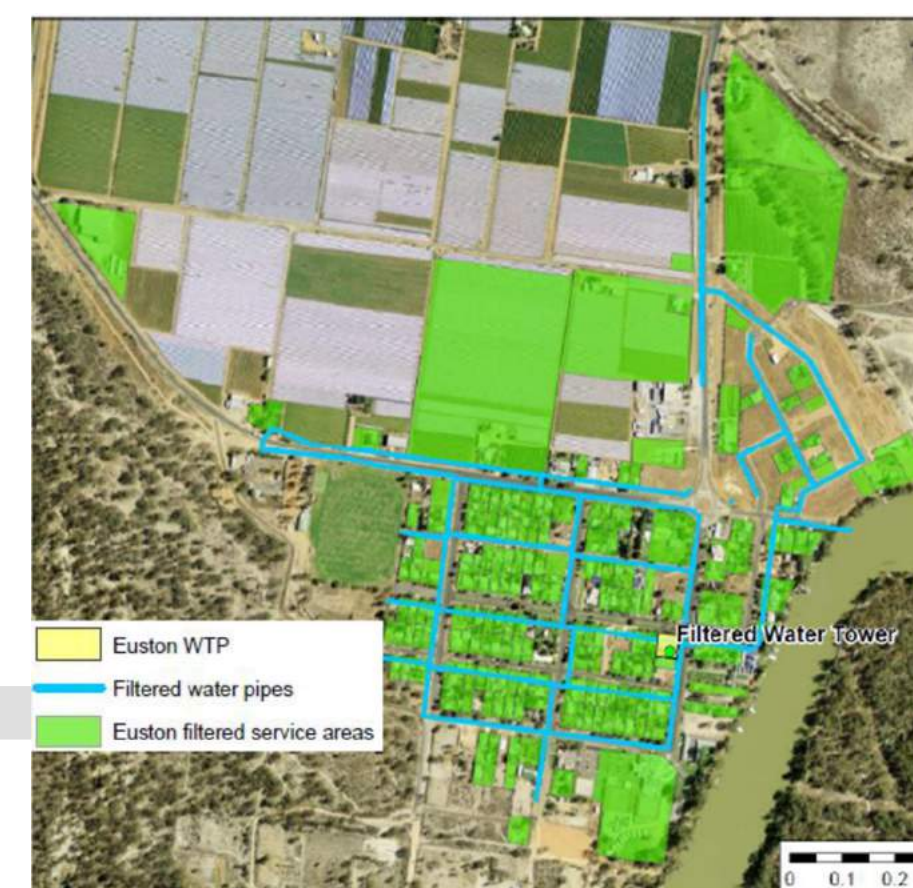
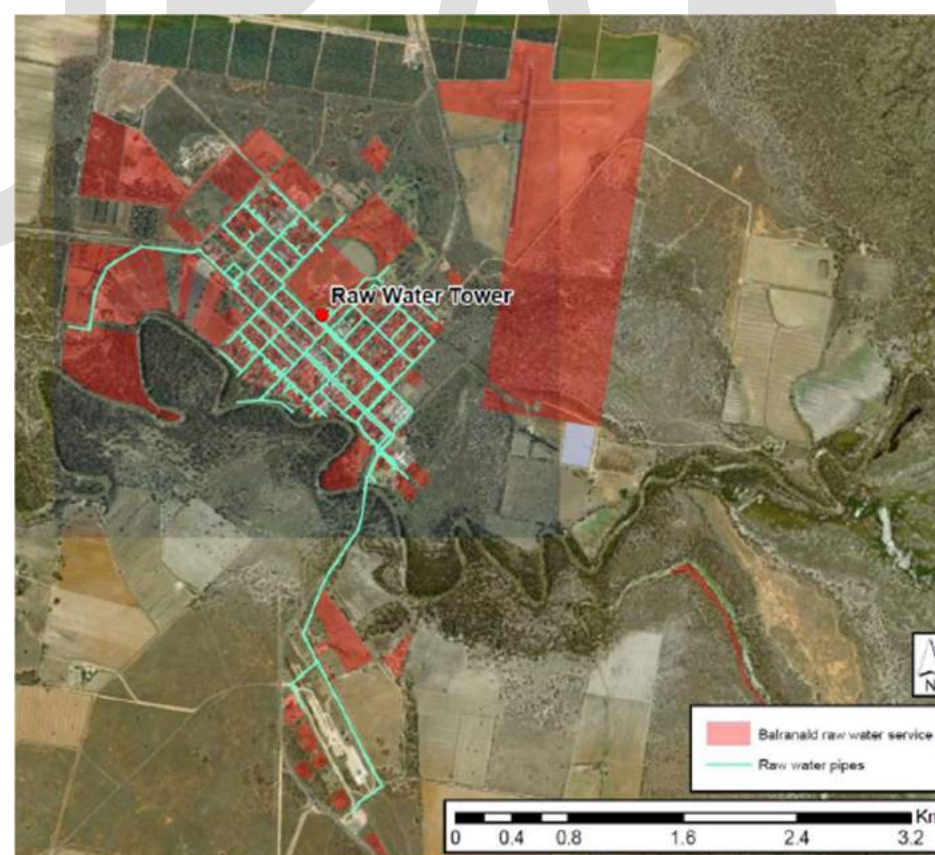
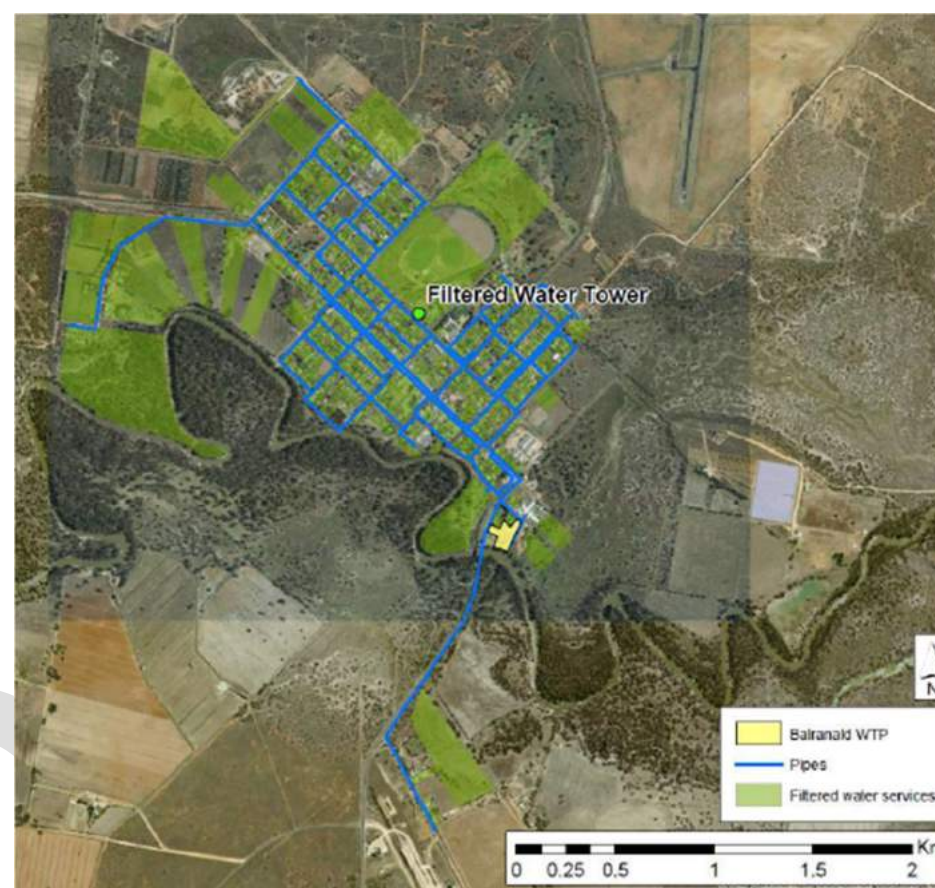
Council has approved grant funding & is assessing whether to construct a new plant (more likely) or refurbish the existing plant with a new processing train/plant to provide additional capacity.

7.2. Water - Euston

Council operates potable & non-potable water supply schemes at Euston. Raw water is extracted from the Murray River for both schemes. Water is supplied to the Zone RU5 area as well as some land to the north-east.

The Euston WTP has a capacity of 0.4 ML/day which is the current peak & is currently affecting pressure & a forecasted peak demand of 0.9 ML/day which it cannot meet requiring augmentation of capacity.

The IWCM notes that based on projected growth rates the Euston WTP peak day demand will exceed the headworks capacity in the short term (1-5 years) for the filtered water supply system & the raw water peak day demand may be exceeded depending on the growth rate. There is also security of supply issues & the existing assets do not have the capacity to meet the growth demands. It is currently being investigated whether additional water storage may improve the head pressure & supply.



7.3. Sewer - Balranald

Balranald has a Sewerage Treatment Plan (STP) located to the north of the town with access from Ivanhoe Road. The STP has a hydraulic capacity of 2,500 EP (2,000 EP @240L/EP/day).

The IWCM notes that based on Council projected growth rates the Balranald STP may exceed its hydraulic design capacity in the short term (1-5 years) & BOD capacity in the medium to long term – though under DPE growth rates there is capacity until after 2049.

7.4. Sewer - Euston

Euston has a STP located to the north-west of town. The STP is assessed to have a hydraulic capacity of 1,360 EP (1,100 EP @240L/EP/day).

The IWCM notes that based on projected growth rates the Euston STP may exceed its hydraulic design capacity in the medium to long term (by 2041). There are some suggestions the BOD capacity may be exceeded in the short term but there may not be a long-term issue.

Therefore, subject to growth rate, the current STP is not a major constraint to growth in the short term but planning is required for duplication of the oxidation pond/evaporation ponds in the longer term.

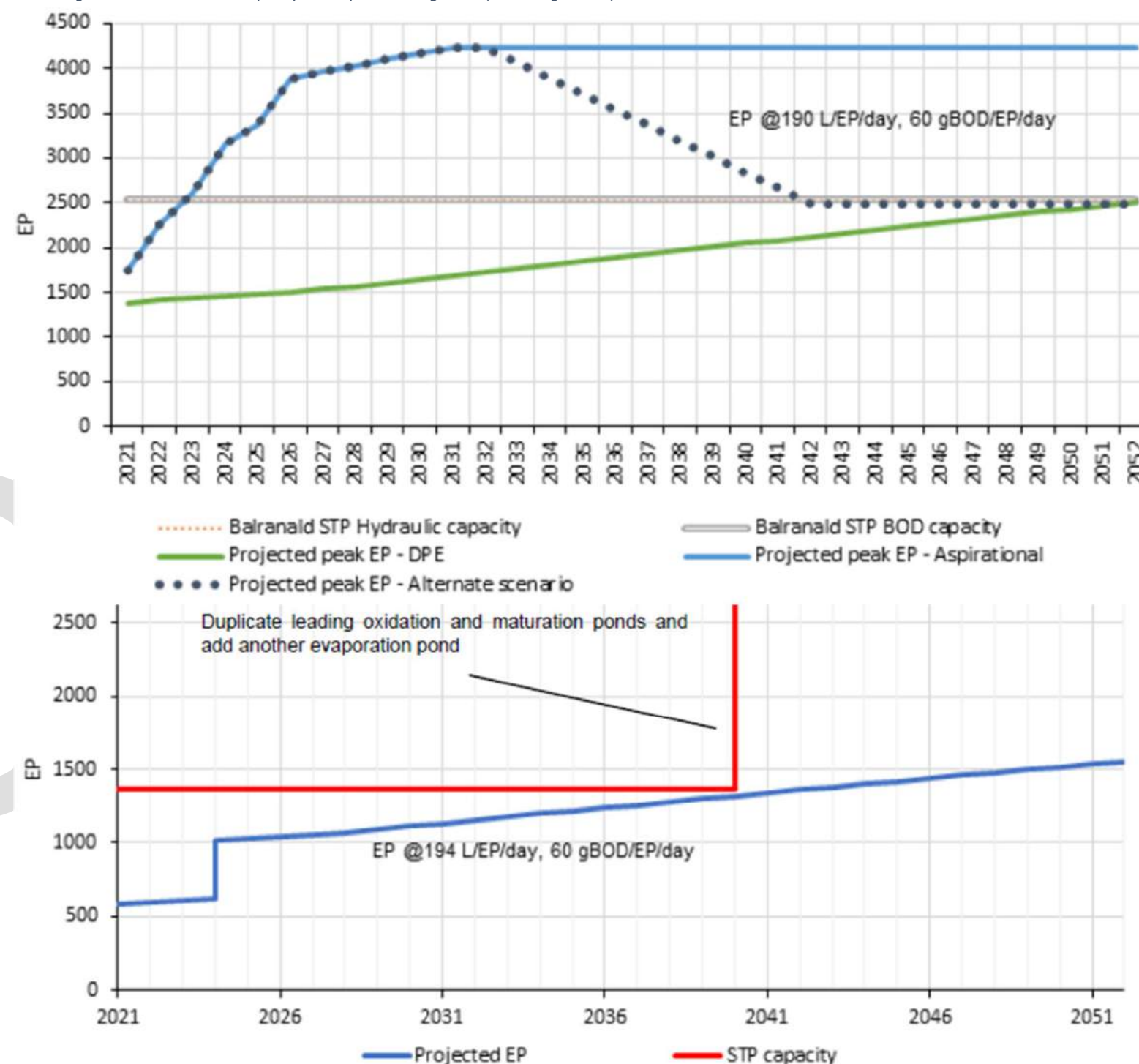
7.5. Water Re-Use

Whilst it may be a longer-term plan – considering the harsh summers & lack of water security, Balranald & Euston could position itself to recycle as much water as possible & reticulate it to most major parks & recreation grounds for irrigation purposes. At this current time there is no recycling of sewage as water costs do not currently make this viable. But this may change as water prices increase.

7.6. Stormwater/ Kerb & Gutter

Generally, Balranald & Euston have kerb & gutter along most major streets in each urban core but less so towards the edges & near the river. This was not reviewed in detail but was not identified as a major issue except where there is standing water after heavy rainfall. Kerb & gutter extensions should primarily be driven by drainage issues but in the longer term could be added to remaining urban streets to improve street appearance (not costed/ subject to detailed review).

Figure 25: Balranald STP capacity under predicated growth (IWCM Figure 7-3).



8. Existing Planning Controls

8.1. Zoning (Land Use)

The key planning controls are in *Balranald Local Environmental Plan 2010* (LEP) that applies Zone RU5 Village to the core urban area of both Balranald & Euston settlements.

A Village Zone is a suitable category at this time. Balranald is of sufficient size that it could potentially support individual residential, business & industrial zones to minimise land use conflict if this was an issue.

At this time there does not appear to be any need to separate business & residential land uses in Balranald or Euston. ***The use of industrial zoning may be considered if it would both highlight them for future development & protect certain them from residential encroachment.***

Interestingly, there has not been any use of *Zone R5 Large Lot Residential* in & around Balranald & Euston to provide these larger residential (lifestyle) lots. In part, this is supported as Zone R5 uses consume significant (often agriculturally important) land. Due to limitation in expansion of urban areas around Balranald & Euston, the use of Zone R5 Large Lot Residential may be a tool to consider for identifying area outside these settlements for growth (not part of this urban strategy).

The LEP Review could also consider use of Zone SP2 Infrastructure to identify & protect key infrastructure such as Sturt Highway, the Balranald aerodrome, waste depots, cemeteries & water/sewage treatment plants (currently in background/adjacent zone).

Euston also has a Zone RU4 Rural Small Holdings area located to the north of the village. This is a mixed-use zone that has intensive horticulture/viticulture but each lot can also support a dwelling application. This is a highly productive area & it is largely due to high agricultural land values that prevent higher take-up for dwellings. However, this should also be considered a quasi-residential zone (This area is not captured in the Census Urban Locality data).

8.2. Lot Size (for Subdivision)

Balranald & Euston Zone R5 areas have a minimum lot size of mostly 600m² for subdivision as it is serviced by sewer & water (see Utilities below).

In Balranald there is a small pocket of 4,000m² lot size land on Moa St north of the Cemetery in Zone RU5. Unless there is a good reason for this anomaly, this should be corrected to 600m².

Likewise, in Euston, there is a larger area of 4,000m² lot size land in the north-eastern section of the Zone RU5 area between the Sturt Highway & Cary St. This area is currently used for horticulture/viticulture but is probably intended to have large lots with the potential for a buffer to the intensive agriculture in Zone RU4 to the north & north-west.

In order to facilitate urban growth in Euston as master plan should be prepared for the current intensive agricultural areas within Zone RU5 Village. This may justify a reduction in the 4,000m² minimum lot size area where land use conflict can be managed.

In Euston the Zone RU4 Rural Small Holdings area has a Minimum Lot Size (MLS) of 10ha & is already largely fragmented for intensive agriculture. Each existing lot has the potential to support a dwelling.

There should be a review of dwelling potential & impacts on agriculture to determine if additional planning controls are required to govern dwelling growth in Zone RU4 around Euston.

Both settlements are surrounded by Zone RU1 Primary Production land (& also Zone RU3 Forestry land around Euston that covers the Euston Regional Park) that has a 40ha minimum lot size. ***The Euston Regional Park could potentially consider a Conservation Zone (instead of Zone RU3 Forestry) if this aligned with its objectives for protection & use.***

This Strategy does not review rural minimum lot size – so any future changes in subdivision potential should be supported by a rural lands (agricultural) strategy.

8.3. Heritage & Culture

The Shire of Balranald has only eight (8) listed heritage items (seven are local & one is international/state listed- Willandra Lakes).

Of these, four (4) listed heritage items are in or around Balranald of which three (3) appear to be Aboriginal cultural items/places & there is only one (1) building in Balranald listed, as follows:

- 1) Aboriginal Cemetery – Island Road
- 2) Diplo Ceremonial Ground – East Balranald
- 3) Fire Station – 123 Market St
- 4) Fish Traps – Murrumbidgee River (downstream).

Of these two (2) listed heritage items are in or around Euston including:

- 1) Lock & Weir 15, Murray River – downstream of Euston; and
- 2) Courthouse, 43 Murray Terrace.

This Settlement Strategy recognises that heritage listing has both its opportunities & constraints as a planning tool. However, it is important that the constraints do not prevent appropriate protections for important historic buildings, sites & archaeology. Whilst growth has been limited, risk may have been lower, but this could change over time.

The first step in building on heritage is a community-led review of its history and artefacts and appropriate recognition of people, places & items. The Heritage Museum in the Discovery Precinct in Balranald may need assistance to curate, display, interpret & protect the wealth of information and combine it with the visitor experience.

Expanded heritage listing should be investigated as part of any review of the Local Environmental Plan to determine if the benefits (protections, public education, heritage grant funding & flexible adaptive re-use) outweigh any perceived constraints from lost development flexibility. Even if key items were identified in a DCP some level of protection may be important. Promoting appropriate adaptive re-use of historic buildings is encouraged by Council.

We have not investigated Aboriginal history & cultural heritage in this area in detail though the area along the Murrumbidgee River & Murray River is

of key cultural & archaeological significance. Recognition, respect, protection & interpretation of known or likely places should be encouraged in all future works under this Strategy.

Council & the community should continue to work with the Aboriginal elders & Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) to determine the best way to protect, enhance & manage key sites & environmental & cultural education & tourism in the area. This could inform signage, public art, & tourism strategies.

8.4. Topography, Watercourses & Flooding

Flood studies have been prepared along the Murray & Murrumbidgee Rivers. However, some of the study information is becoming dated & may not take into account changes in the flood plain.

Balranald is fortunate in that most of the urban area is above the Flood Planning Level (1% AEP plus 500mm freeboard) to support residential development & only a limited levee bank is required. However, it still limits growth to the south & east of the town.

Flood studies (particularly around Balranald & Euston) should be updated as funding becomes available & ideally updated to a 'Floodplain Risk Management Plan & Study (FRMP&S)' in accordance with the current guidelines.

Flooding impacts on growth are addressed in more detail in the chapters below.

8.5. Vegetation, Ecology & Bushfire

The Biodiversity Maps in the *Local Environmental Plan* (LEP) highlight known sensitive areas along the key watercourses around Balranald. However, some of the mapping is fairly 'broad-brush' & could be refined so it is a more useful planning tool (particularly in the key urban areas).

The Commons encircles Balranald & is both a constraint to town growth & an opportunity. There may also be *opportunities to enhance native plantings on Crown land & the Commons for improved connectivity & integrity where it does not exacerbate bushfire risk.*

There is already some visitor information & signage on fauna & bird spotting locations. However, some of these are understated & with funding could be upgraded to provide more local information & link to fauna/bird trails across the LGA & into adjacent LGAs. Social media may be an increasing tool to engage visitors & local to locate & identify threatened /endangered & colourful species to improve awareness & protection.

Bushfire prone land mapping suggests there are risks to the north & west of the town linking along the rivers. This may become more of a constraint during extended droughts & climate change.