ATTACHMENTS

Ordinary Council Meeting
Under Separate Cover

Tuesday, 16 December 2025

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Balranald Shire Council's
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2025 - 2030

Researched & Written by:
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Prepared by:
Council's Tourism & Economic Development Department

Funded By:
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

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SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PLAN ON A PAGE

VISION

Stabilise, consolidate and ultimately grow our community's future by:

- **Building prosperity;**
- **Encouraging enterprise, and**
- **Promoting liveability**

VALUES

- **Inclusion, Equity and fairness - A fair go for all - Social Justice**
- **Communication/Engagement - Frank, honest conversation, clear & open communications**
- **Integrity & Honesty**
- **Transparency**
- **Trust & Respect**
- **Relationship Building, Collaboration & Partnership**

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. OUR INDUSTRIES: We will protect & grow our engine industries and attract & support emerging industries

2. OUR INFRASTRUCTURE & AMENITIES: We will provide and/or facilitate local infrastructure and amenity development to encourage growth and productivity - because great places to live are great places to work and visit

3. OUR PEOPLE: We will grow, attract and retain a creative, talented and skilled community and workforce

4. OUR NATURAL ASSETS & IDENTITY: We will protect natural assets and create a clear, unique and consistent regional identity to attract national and international attention

5. OUR TOMORROW: We will plan now for an even better tomorrow, building local connection, leadership, partnership, legacy and advocacy

PARTNERS

- **The Community**
- **Local Government - Particularly surrounding LGAs**
- **Regional Joint Organisations**
- **State Government**
- **Dept. of Regional NSW**
- **Cross-border commissioners**
- **Local Members of Parliament**
- **NSW Departments including Reconstruction Authority, Planning NSW & Transport NSW**
- **Industry**
- **Key organisations**
- **Data Collectors**

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⋙ BACKGROUND

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.

The Balranald LGA boasts a diverse range of natural assets that contribute to its unique landscape and ecosystem. Positioned 60m above sea level the landscape is mostly flat saltbush and mallee plains accentuated by the diversity of Redgum forests, riparian habitats and wetlands. The LGA is traversed by five rivers including the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Wakool and Edward Rivers and key Lakes including Benanee, Yanga and Paika.

These significant National Parks and wetland areas play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity and providing habitat for various species of birds, mammals, and aquatic life – including 28 threatened species, amongst which are the Southern Bell Frog, Australasian Bittern and the Australian Painted Snipe. The wetlands also contribute to the ecological health of the region by filtering water and providing flood mitigation.

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Balranald's competitive and comparative advantages include its transport corridor centrality; regionally significant environmental and economic features; and established cross-border relationships; all of which tie together the Shire's rich potential to conservation, tourism and commercial opportunities. Beyond these assets however, are people and communities, resilient, connected and deserving of the same opportunities all Australians receive.

The region's engine economies have been agricultural (grains - dryland and irrigated, wool, sheep meat and beef) horticultural (table and wine grapes, some fruits / vegetables and more recently pistachios), forestry, tourism and the service sector. Emerging industries over the past decade have grown to include an increasing diversity of horticultural crops and growing plantations of both pistachios and almonds and mineral sands exploration. More recently again the emerging industries are mineral sands mining and renewable energy infrastructure, production and transmission.

Map of the Balranald Shire region
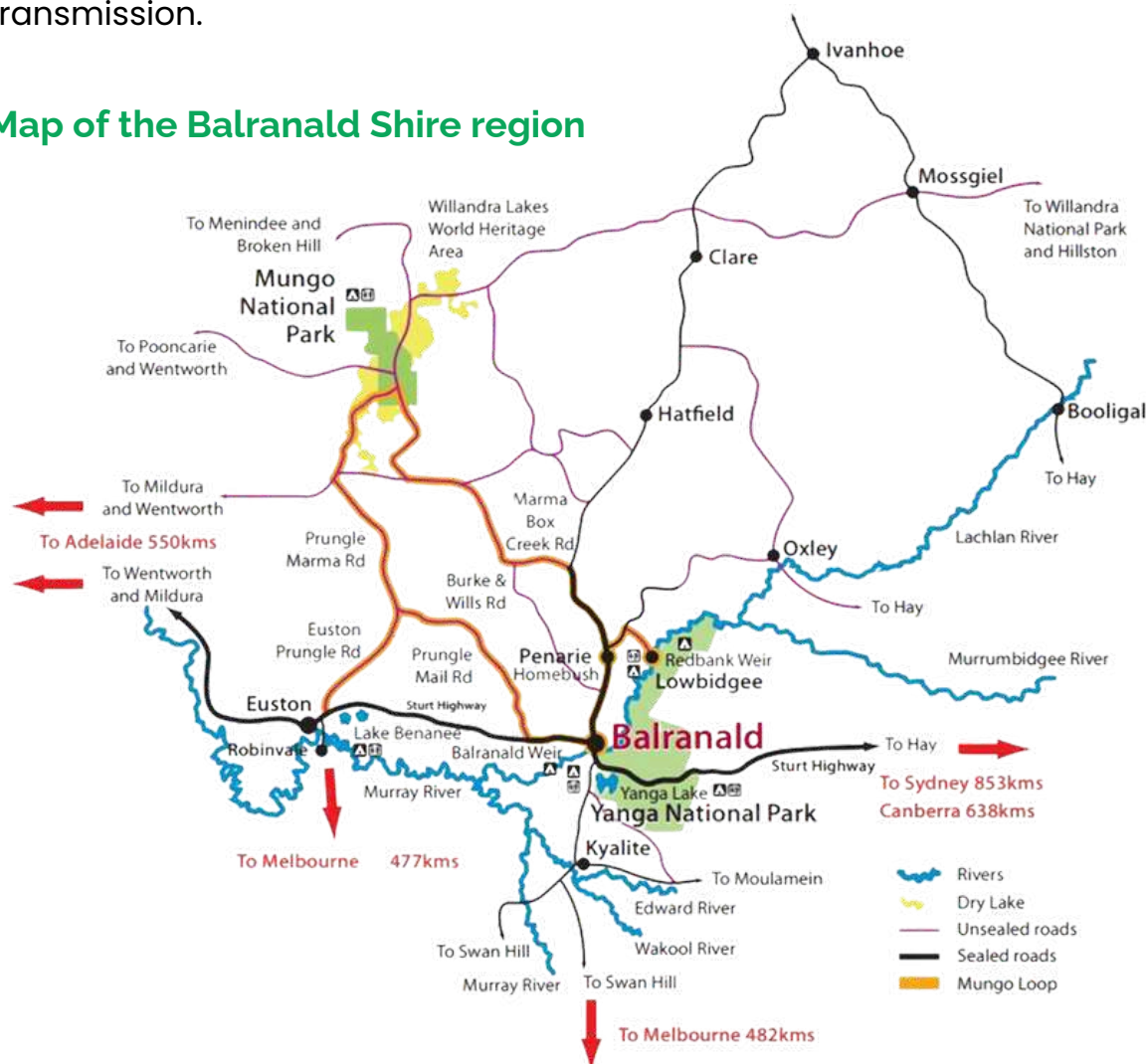
The Balranald LGA has entered a significant economic growth phase. As one community leader noted - "This is our Gold Rush". Another wisely added - "Economic Development is coming down the pipeline so quickly at us and we are dramatically under-prepared".

This is our gold rush

Economic Development is coming down the pipeline so quickly at us and we are dramatically under-prepared
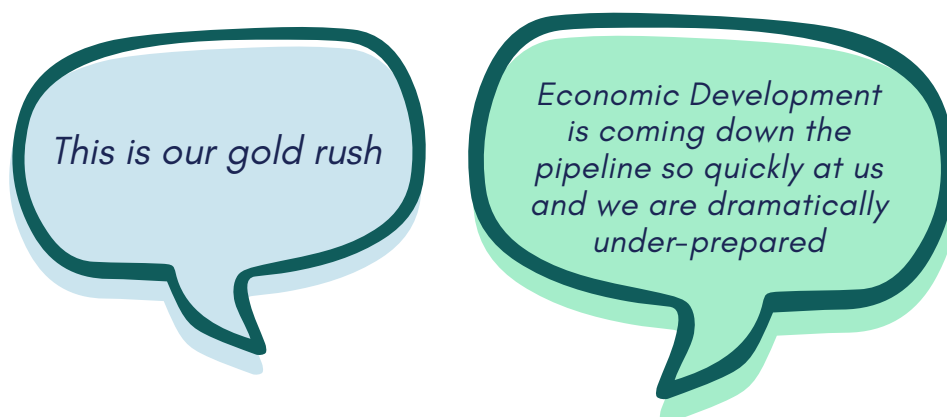
Appendix 2 of this Plan "Key Balranald Shire Council Planning & Reports", provides a brief review of influential reporting and **Appendix 3** maps National, State, Regional and Local level Policy & Programs to inform the creation of the Economic Development Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.

Photo: Premium quality grapes at the Zaffina's family grape-growing farm in Euston

The region's engine economies have been agricultural (grains - dryland and irrigated, wool, sheep meat and beef) horticultural (table and wine grapes, some fruits / vegetables and more recently pistachios), forestry, tourism and the service sector.

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ENGINE AND EMERGING ECONOMIES

The historical **Engine Industry** of South West NSW, and specifically the Balranald and Wentworth Shire Councils, has been agriculture and horticulture. Whilst this continues to be the case, proportionally the contribution of horticulture continues to rise.

In 2021/2022 the Gross Value of Agricultural Production for the **Wentworth LGA** was $302.9M – contributing 54.0% of the total value of their Gross Regional Product of $560M and constituting the largest industry of employment – 15.8% of the workforce*

(Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics & 2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators). *including Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

In 2021/2022 the Gross Value of Agricultural Production for the **Balranald LGA** was $148.2M – contributing 75.6% of the total value of their Gross Regional Product of $196M and constituting the largest industry of employment – 33.9% of the workforce*

(Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics & 2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators). *including Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

Within the **Wentworth LGA** this total Agricultural Production of $302.9M includes:

- Fruit and Nuts – Grapes $108.5M
- Fruit and Nuts (excluding grapes) $93.7M (including a total of $17.7M from almonds)
- Broadacre Crops (including cereal and non-cereal crops) $27.8M
- Livestock slaughtered and other disposals $30.3M
- Wool $12.8M

Within the **Balranald LGA** this total Agricultural Production of $302.9M includes:

- Fruit and Nuts – Grapes $52.9M
- Fruit and Nuts (excluding grapes) $29.6M (including a total of $14.9M from almonds)
- Broadacre Crops (including cereal and non-cereal crops) $20.4M
- Livestock slaughtered and other disposals $25.0M
- Wool $10.5M

Sourced from: https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/value-agricultural-commodities-produced-australia/2020-21#data-download Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-21). Agricultural Commodities, Australia. ABS.

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Several **Emerging Industries** are also significant across the economic and physical landscape of both the Wentworth and Balranald LGAs – notably renewable energy production and critical minerals mining.

Renewable Energy refers to energy derived from naturally replenishing sources considered inexhaustible over human timescales. Sources of renewable energy include sunlight, wind, hydroelectric (including ocean), geothermal heat, and biomass (including energy derived from waste). Renewable energy plays a crucial role in efforts to mitigate climate change and the transition to a more sustainable energy future (https://arena.gov.au/what-is-renewable-energy/ accessed 30/03/2024).

Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) are zones of energy generation alternatives that connect renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, energy storage such as batteries, and energy transmission through high voltage power poles and wires in the same location. Renewable Energy Zones capitalise on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity for NSW.

The **South West Renewable Energy Zones** (SWREZ)was formally declared by the Minister for Energy under section 19(1) of the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 and published in the NSW Gazette on Friday 4 November 2022. The Minister may amend the declaration to expand the specified geographical area of the REZ, increase the intended network capacity or specify additional generation, storage and network infrastructure (https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez#key-facts accessed 30/03/2024).

The Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (the Roadmap) is the NSW Government's plan to transform the electricity sector into one that is clean, reliable and affordable.

NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap
Building an Energy Superpower
Detailed Report
November 2020
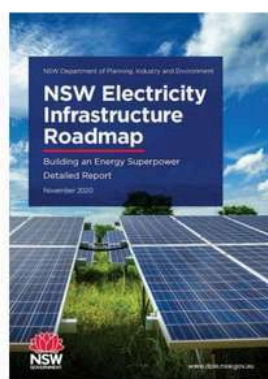
- $32 billion in regional energy infrastructure investment by private companies expected across NSW by 2030
- 12 gigawatts (GW) in new generation and 2GW of long duration storage by 2030
- 90 million tonne reduction in carbon emissions to 2030
- 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs expected in 2030, mostly in regional NSW
- Up to $265 million in community enhancement funds to host communities by 2042
- Up to $1.5 billion in lease payments to landholders hosting new infrastructure, as well as $200,000 per kilometre of transmission hosted, paid out in annual instalments over 20 years
- Greater energy security and lower costs to improve competitiveness of regional energy intensive industries

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The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is the infrastructure planner for the South West REZ and is coordinating all transmission, generation and storage projects.

The indicative location of the South West REZ was chosen following a detailed statewide geospatial mapping exercise undertaken by the NSW Government in 2018. This analysis sought to identify optimal locations to host renewable energy generation. Ultimately the South West REZ was chosen due to an abundance of high-quality wind and solar resources, proximity to existing and planned high voltage transmission including Project EnergyConnect, relative land-use compatibility and a strong pipeline of proposed projects (www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez 26/07/2023).

The map below shows the South West REZ, LGA boundaries and existing and proposed transmission infrastructure

Sourced: (https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez accessed 04/03/2024).

In October 2021, the NSW Government received 49 registrations of interest, representing 34 gigawatts (13 times Project EnergyConnect's intended 2.5 gigawatts capacity) from potential generation and storage projects (www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez 26/07/2023).

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To further support the development of the South West REZ the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has developed the **South West REZ Access Scheme**. A webinar on the 29th January 2024 suggested the tendering process for access to the scheme would open in the second quarter of 2024. At this time a significant number of renewable energy projects will be vying for access (https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez#key-facts accessed 30/03/2024).

Access Rights and Scheme Objectives

An Access Scheme:
- sets a limit on generation and storage that can connect to the REZ
- determines an efficient level of curtailment
- requires projects to be awarded an access right
- charges a fee to join the access right network.

Consumers: optimising the utilisation of network infrastructure
- Limiting oversubscription that leads to inefficient utilisation.
- Incentivising connection to REZ infrastructure to reduce stranding risk.
- Preventing overcapitalisation and poor consumer outcomes.

Communities: fostering support and regional economic benefits
- Fees for community and employment purposes.
- Coordinating delivery and optimising land use considerations.

Developers: provide investment certainty
- Enhanced protection against congestion.
- Encourage investment in new generation and storage projects.

Key Features of the South West REZ Access Scheme

Network transfer capacity: 2.5 GW

Initial access rights: 3.98 GW

Increased target curtailment level: 3.86%

Definition of eligible project:
- ≥2/3 in REZ
- Must connect in REZ

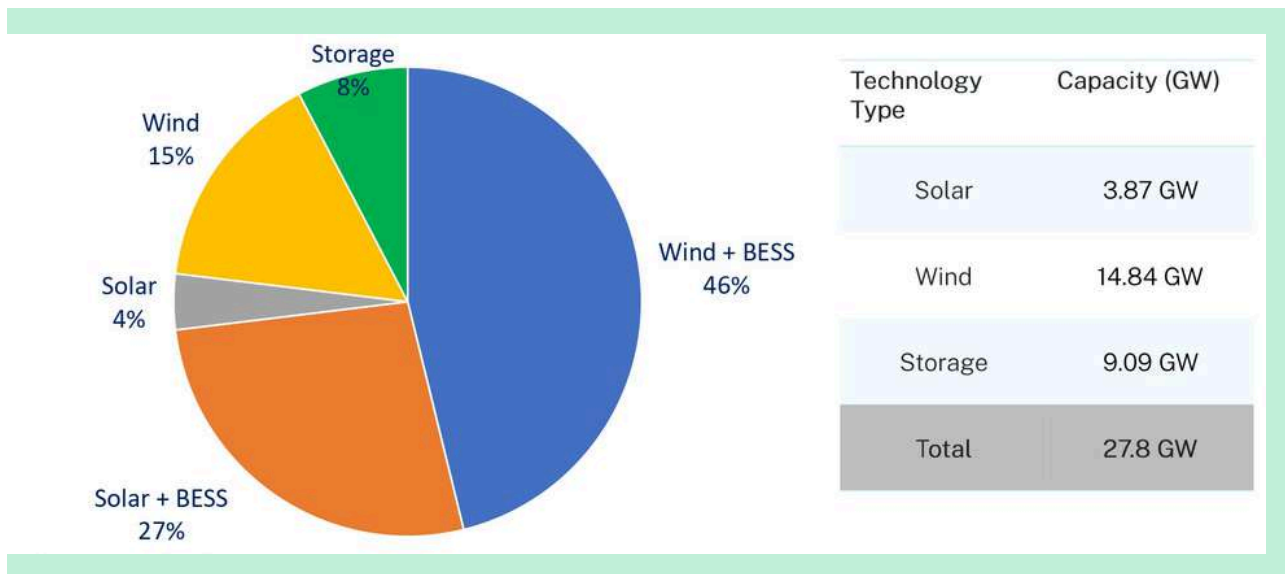Updated access scheme term: 15 years

Community and employment purpose fees from generators: $2300/MW

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Renewable Pipeline in the REZ (June 2024)

Technology Type	Capacity (GW)
Solar	3.87 GW
Wind	14.84 GW
Storage	9.09 GW
Total	27.8 GW

Pie chart: Wind + BESS 46%, Solar + BESS 27%, Wind 15%, Storage 8%, Solar 4%

Project EnergyConnect is the first new electricity interconnector between Australian states in 15 years and Australia's largest energy transmission project to date. An electricity interconnector is a connection that allows power to flow between regions in the National Electricity Market (NEM), providing access to a larger number of electricity generators (Source: Project Overview – Project EnergyConnect flyer).

Project EnergyConnect (PEC) is deemed a Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) project and is a key element of the Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan for a more sustainable energy future (www.transgrid.com.au/about-us/who-we-are accessed 30/03/2024).

Project EnergyConnect will allow energy to be shared between NSW, South Australia, and northwest Victoria and enable the connection of more new renewable generation. Transgrid and construction partner Elecnor Australia (formally SecureEnergy) are building the 700-kilometre NSW section of the project from Wagga Wagga to the South Australian border, and a connection to Red Cliffs in Victoria. PEC is being delivered in South Australia by ElectraNet.

In terms of scale Project EnergyConnect will include 1,500 new towers, new 300KV and 500KV above ground transmission lines, a new substation at Dinawan, upgraded substations at Wagga Wagga and Buronga (with the Buronga substation being the largest ever built in Australia) (https://www.secureenergyjv.com.au/timeline-fast-facts/ accessed 30/03/2024).

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Construction commenced in 2022 (and is due to be completed by early 2025) with sections being energised as they are completed. Internetwork testing and the release of power transfer capacity will occur over time, until the interconnector reaches its full potential to transfer electricity during 2025 and 2026 (Source: South Australia to New South Wales Interconnector flyer). The map (below) shows the Project EnergyConnect path and staging.

Once the eastern section of Project EnergyConnect has been upgraded to 500kV operation, it is anticipated that Project EnergyConnect and HumeLink will unlock around 2.5 gigawatts of transmission capacity in total to support the South West REZ.

Map shows the Project EnergyConnect path and staging

Accommodation and workforce are well recognised challenges of Project EnergyConnect. In terms of accommodation this has been somewhat mediated by Transgrid / Elecnor's use of QVCs Balranald accommodation facility. A further 340 beds are provided for Elecnor's workforce at the Buronga camp.

The Legacy 100 initiative by Transgrid has worked to remedy some workforce shortages. Legacy 100 involved the recruitment and training of 100 people from across the PEC region in a Certificate II in Transmission Line Construction (UET20422). Recruitment included a focus on First Nations community members (Source: Transgrid Media Release 30 May 2023. Home-grown transmission line workforce to power Australia's energy future).

The renewable energy market has responded to the national mandate to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050. Current and proposed renewable energy developments across the region are noted below.

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Current Renewable Energy Developments across the Region

Limondale Solar Farm (RWE) 14km to the south of the Balranald township. Limondale Solar Farm features 872,000 panels on 770 hectares with an installed capacity of 249 MWac, generating enough electricity to power ~ 105,000 homes per year.

Sunraysia Solar Farm located entirely in the Balranald Shire Council area, commencing 17km south of Balranald. With more than 750,000 panels the Sunraysia Solar Farm is spread over an area of 800 hectares and generates 529GWh electricity, and supplying enough clean energy to power 50,000 households. Sunraysia Solar Farm connects to the existing Transgrid 220Kv Substation, 3 km north from its location.

The Buronga Substation central to Project EnergyConnect the Buronga substation is one of the largest and most sophisticated substations in the Southern Hemisphere it will act as the main hub for the connection between NSW, South Australia and Victoria. The 16ha Buronga Substation site will house essential equipment including:

- Five 200MVA phase-shifting transformers
- Four 330kV 60MVAr shunt reactors
- Two 120MVAr synchronous condensers (housed in a 60m long 1200m2 machine hall)
- Two 120MVA 330/12kV step down transformers
- Three 200MVA 330/220kV power transformers
- Two 330kV 52MVAr capacitor banks (Source: Transgrid Media Release, 18 October 2023. Arrival of more key equipment marks leap forward for the energy transition).

Photo: Limondale Solar Farm located 14km south of Balranald

Photo courtesy of the RWE in Australia website

Proposed Renewable Energy Developments across the Region

As at September 2024, there are multiple projects are proposed and the companies vying for space on the grid was evolving as the research progressed. Understood at the time of writing were at least the following:

Junction Rivers Windfarm (WindLab). Whilst this project sits within the Murray River LGA Balranald is located 15km to the north and Kyalite 10km to the south (making Balranald the closest community and service centre). If approved the project will involve up to 96 wind turbine generators and associated ancillary infrastructure, including a complimentary grid support battery project. At full operation the Junction Rivers project could have an installed capacity of up to 750MW, powering up to 470,000 homes https://junctionrivers.com/).

Wilan Wind Farm (Kilara Energy). The project sits within the Murray River Council and Hay Shire Council areas located 25km to the east of Balranald (again making Balranald the closest community and service centre). If successful the Wilan Wind Farm will deliver up to 138 wind turbines, capable of producing up to 800 MW which is the equivalent of providing energy up to 470,000 homes. https://www.wilanwindfarm.com/

Kerri Kerri Wind Farm (Acciona Energia). This proposed project will be located 35km east of Balranald within the Murray River local government area. If successful the project will include 155 wind turbine on site with up to 884MW capacity which provide energy to approximately over 500,000 homes, as well as 200MW/800Wh battery storage. https://community.acciona.com.au/kerikeri

Euston Wind Farm (DP Energy) located 8km north of Euston in New South Wales within the Balranald LGA the Euston Wind farm if successful will include approximately 100 wind turbines (capable of producing 700MW) and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) generating enough electricity to power up to 324,903 homes. https://eustonwindfarm.com.au/

Koorakee Energy Park (Squadron Energy) located about 12km north of Euston in the Balranald LGA, consists of a wind farm with up to 167 wind turbines approximately 270m in height, a solar farm and battery energy storage. With potential to produce 2GW and power 1.1 million homes. https://www.squadronenergy.com/our-projects/koorakee-energy-park

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Mallee Solar Farm (Spark Renewables) to be located approximately 10kms north-east of Buronga in the Wentworth LGA. If successful the Mallee Solar Farm will be capable of producing up to 600 MW which is the equivalent of providing energy up to 225,000 homes. https://sparkrenewables.com/mallee-solar-farm/

Mallee Wind Farm (Spark Renewables) to be located adjacent to the Mallee Solar Farm the Mallee Wind Farm proposes up to 130 wind turbine generators producing up to 1GW and powering as many as 450,000 homes annually. https://sparkrenewables.com/mallee-wind-farm/

Gol Gol wind, solar and battery projects (Squadron Energy) is located 10km north of Buronga in the Wentworth LGA. The proposed Gol Gol Wind Farm will include up to 120 wind turbines with an overall proposed capacity of 840 megawatts (MW). Gol Gol Solar Farm has an approximate footprint of 1,200 hectares and will have a capacity of up to 600MW and the Gol Gol Battery will be a 1,500 MW battery that lasts for 8 hours. https://www.squadronenergy.com/our-projects/gol-gol-wind-farm

Mineral Sand Mining is another significant emerging industry

Mineral sand mining is the other significant emerging industry (albeit increasingly established) across both the Balranald and Wentworth Shire Council areas with the maps (right & next page) showing Tronox, RZ Resources and Iluka mine locations respectively. (NSW Critical Minerals Map, July 2023, www.regional.nsw.gov.au/meg)

Mineral sands (sometimes known as heavy mineral sands) contain concentrations of minerals that are useful for a variety of (usually) industrial purposes.

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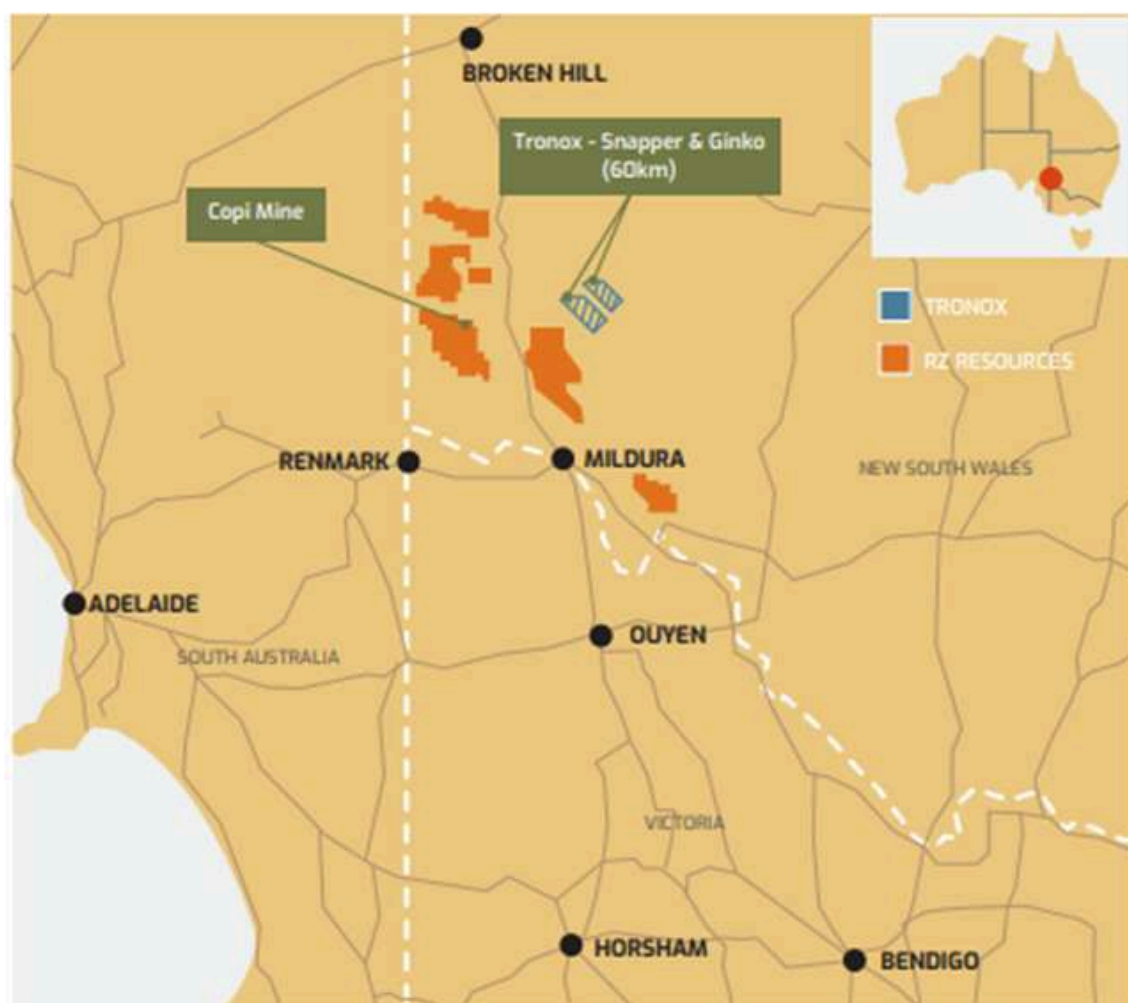
These minerals are originally derived from igneous (e.g. granite, basalt) or metamorphic (e.g. schist) rocks that have been broken down by natural weathering processes, transported in fluvial systems and eventually deposited in placer deposits in beach, lake or river environments.

Within beach environments in particular, processes such as wave action and longshore drift taking place over thousands or millions of years concentrate the heavy minerals into quantities that may be cost-effective to exploit. Because sea levels have changed significantly over geological time, ancient mineral sand deposits may be well removed from modern coastlines.

The principal components of heavy mineral sands are rutile (TiO_2), ilmenite ($FeTiO_3$) and zircon ($ZrSiO_4$). Minor amounts of other minerals such as monazite ($[Ce,La,Th]PO_4$) and xenotime (YPO_4) may also sometimes be present (Australian Resource Reviews, Mineral Sands 2017, Geo Science Australia.

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The table below and map on the next page presents the current state of Minerals Mining across the Balranald and Wentworth LGAs as at July 2022. The *Italicised* text in the Project Status column shows current project status based on discussions held during this research.

Critical Mineral	Project Name	Company Name/ Ownership	Project Status
Titanium	Atlas-Campaspe	Tronox Holdings Plc	Construction / *Operating*
Titanium	Balranald	Iluka Resources	Definitive Feasibility Study - Trial UG Mining Method/ *Construction*
Titanium	Ginkgo-Crayfish-Snapper	Tronox Holdings Plc	Decommissioning Phase
Titanium	Copi	RZ Resources	Feasibility Study
Zirconium	Atlas-Campaspe	Tronox Holdings Plc	Construction / *Operating*
Zirconium	Balranald	Iluka Resources Ltd	Feasibility Study / *Construction*
Zirconium	Copi	RZ Resources	Feasibility Study
Zirconium	Ginkgo-Crayfish-Snapper	Tronox Holdings Plc	Decommissioning Phase
Zircon, Titanium and rare earth oxides	Euston Critical Minerals Project	Iluka Resources Ltd	Early Planning phase with a number of assessments underway to determine the preferred mining method, deposit viability and to assess the potential environmental impacts.

Source: Critical Minerals 2022 NSW Project List - July 2022. https://www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/nsw-critical-minerals-projects-and-prospects-july-2022.XLSX).

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The map showing the proposed mining pit location west of Euston in the Wentworth Shire
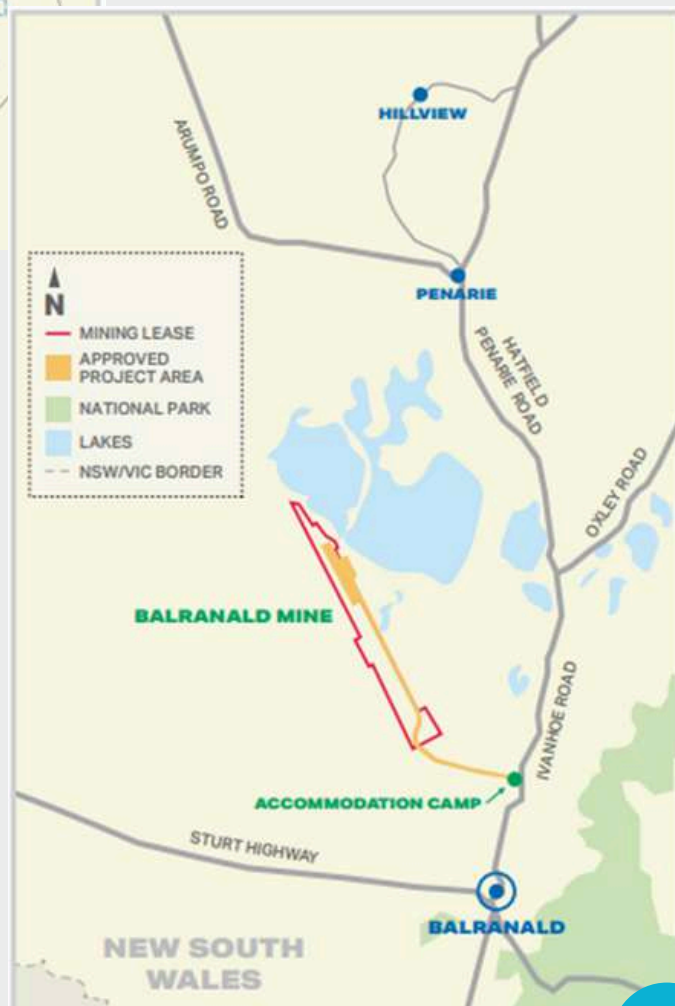
The map showing the approved project area near Balranald in the Balranald Shire

FACTS & STATS ABOUT THE BALRANALD LGA
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

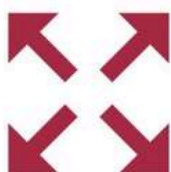**ANNUAL CHANGE IN LOCAL JOBS +1.04%**
Regional NSW 1.02%
2023 NIER State of the Regions Economic Indicators

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

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FACTS & STATS ABOUT THE BALRANALD LGA
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 tha (2021/2022) - 141
Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics

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FACTS & STATS ABOUT THE BALRANALD LGA
Community Facts & Stats at 2021

POPULATION - 2,208
Male: 50.4%
Female: 49.6%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people: 6.4% (NSW 3.4%)
Country of birth (Australia): 77.8% (NSW 65.4%)

AGE
Median age: 43 years (NSW 39 years)
Working age population: people aged 15-64 years form 59.6% of the population (NSW 64.2%)
20.4% of the population are aged 65 years and over (NSW 17.7%)

ALL PRIVATE DWELLINGS - 1,075
20.8% of dwellings were unoccupied (NSW 9.4%)
Average number of people per household: 2.5 people (NSW 2.6)
$200 / week was the median rent (NSW $420)

HOUSEHOLDS
68.7% were family households (NSW 71.2%)
28.4% (208 people) were single person households (NSW 25.0%)
2.9% were group households (NSW 3.8%)
5.7% of households had no registered motor vehicle (NSW 9.0%)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Across the Balranald LGA 22.1% of households had a weekly household income of less than $650 (NSW 16.3%) and 13.2% of households had a weekly income of more than $3,000 (NSW 26.9%)

HEALTH
2.8% of the Balranald LGA residents reported three or more long-term health conditions (NSW 3.0%)
Not Stated: 17.0% (NSW 8.1%)

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
Language used at home: English only (76.8%), Italian (2.2%), Mandarin (1.7%), Fijian (1.0%), Tongan (0.7%), Vietnamese (0.6%)
Countries of Birth: Australia (77.8%), Malaysia (1.6%), Fiji (0.8%), England (0.8%), Italy (0.7%), India (0.5%)

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FACTS & STATS ABOUT THE BALRANALD LGA
Community 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%)

EMPLOYMENT, HOURS WORKED
Employed people aged 15 years and over worked:
1-19 hrs - 11.0% (NSW 13.7%) and 20-34 hrs - 17.7% (NSW 17.6%)
35-44 hrs - 34.3% (NSW 41.3%) and 45 hrs or more - 29.7% (NSW 16.8%)

OCCUPATION, TOP RESPONSES
Managers: 24.5% (NSW 14.6%)
Labourers: 17.0% (NSW 8.2%)
Technicians and Trades Workers: 11.0% (NSW 11.9%)
Machinery Operators and Drivers: 10.6% (NSW 6.0%)
Community and Personal Service Workers: 10.3% (NSW 10.6%)
Clerical and Administrative Workers: 10.2% (NSW 13.0%)
Professionals: 9.0% (NSW 25.8%)
Sales Workers: 5.5% (NSW 8.0%)

INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT, TOP RESPONSES
Grape Growing: 6.7% (NSW 0.0%)
Sheep Farming (Specialised): 5.1% (NSW 0.2%)
Other Fruit and Tree Nut Growing: 4.6% (NSW 0.0%)
Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals): 4.3% (NSW 4.2%)
Local Government Administration: 4.2% (NSW 1.3%)

LEVEL OF HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
People aged 15 years and over:
Bachelor Degree level and above: 8.3% (NSW 27.8%)
Advanced Diploma and Diploma level: 5.5% (NSW 9.3%)
Year 9 or below: 13.7% (NSW 7.4%)
Not stated: 18.0% (NSW 8.3%)

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THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

> *Local economic development is a process that builds up the economic capacity of the local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business, government and non-government sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. Economic development focuses on enhancing competiveness, increasing sustainable growth and ensuring that growth is inclusive.*
>
> *The World Bank, 2013*

The role for Local Government in economic development is to facilitate economic activity and growth by identifying opportunities and challenges and responding to these, and by improving the flow of information and bringing relevant parties together (including business, industry representative groups, all levels of government) to use this information for greater economic benefit.

In achieving this role Local Government will advocate, inform/promote, invest/provide, lead, partner/connect, research, regulate, review, and support. All with the aim of:

- Retaining existing business,
- Encouraging the growth of existing business,
- Attracting new business,
- Attracting investment,
- Diversifying the economy,
- Enhancing infrastructure
- Improving community outcomes through job creation, training & education
- Growing the population
- Attracting visitors, and
- Reducing impediments to commercial activity

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Research by WALGA (2019) has identified four best practice principles to guide economic development strategies:

1. Regional Collaboration - Local areas have sought opportunities to collaborate with other local governments by lending support to regional networks and associations. Businesses are active participants in local government business development. Local stakeholders have been consulted in the development of a local economic development strategy.

2. Functional Integration - Local level government incorporates a focus on understanding their core responsibilities as part of a local level economic development strategy. Economic development is ingrained in the way a local authority conducts itself. Economic development activities are undertaken in a cost-efficient manner, and leverage external funds.

3. Strategic Alignment - Local level economic development strategy has a clearly defined role within a given local government's overarching strategic framework. It also aligns with Federal, State and broader regional policy priorities.

4. Current and emerging competitive advantage - Local level government structures its economic development strategy in order to leverage their current and emerging competitive advantages, and the strengths of their local industries (WALGA, 2019).

> *It takes an integrated approach, on the understanding that the city economy is influenced by a range of factors such as liveability and amenity; access to affordable housing for key workers and childcare for parents; a diverse and well-educated community as well as those more commonly associated with the economy such as market access, sector specialisation, innovation and productivity.*
>
> *Sydney 2030*

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The **Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework** came into practice in 2009. The IP&R Framework begins with the community's aspirations and includes a suite of integrated plans that set out a vision, goals and strategic actions to achieve them. It involves a reporting structure to communicate progress to council and the community as well as a structured timeline for review to ensure the goals and actions are still relevant. Central to the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework is the **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)** as the image below depicts.

https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/ & https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/framework/other-strategic-plans-and-planning/

Whilst economic development is usually embedded in the CSP local governments are also, increasingly, developing dedicated Economic Development Strategies which must align to the CSP.
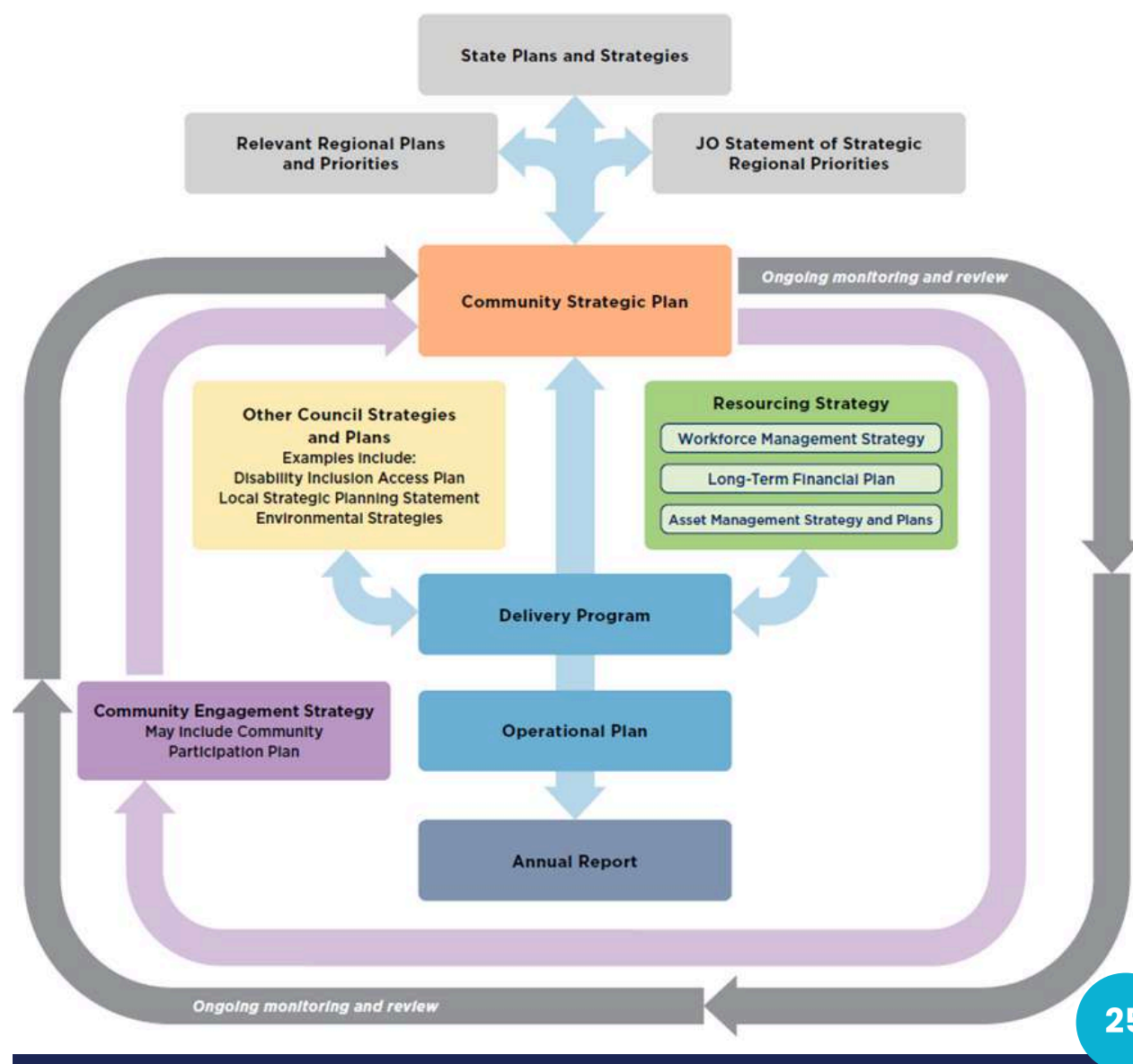
WHAT DRIVES US - VISION & VALUES

Whilst Local Government is not required to develop an Economic Development Strategy, its potential for influence in this sphere is being increasingly recognised. As the closest layer of Government to community and the most important proximate level of advocacy for local communities the role of Local Government is critical. The key is in aligning the Economic Development Strategy to the **Community Strategic Plan** – giving it 'licence and longevity'.

The **Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032** (undertaken in 2021/2022) presented the following 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 Vision gave rise to **Six Pillars** (noted within these Pillars are the Future Directions of high relevance to this Economic Development Strategy):

Pillar 1: Our Lifestyle - Future Direction 1.2 Improve access to a diverse range of housing opportunities, and Future Direction 1.3 Improve local access to education and careers;

Pillar 2 – Our Community - Future Direction 2.2 Innovate and improve community services, activities and events;

Pillar 3 - Our Economy - Future Direction 3.1 Support the expansion of our local industries, Future Direction 3.2 Nurture local businesses, and Future Direction 3.3 Increase tourism and visitation to the area;

Pillar 4 - Our Infrastructure

Pillar 5 - Our Environment - Future Direction 5.1 Celebrate and promote our unique local environment, Future Direction 5.2 Protect our water assets, and Future Direction 5.3 Manage our waste sustainably; and

Pillar 6 – Our Council - Future Direction 6.1 Develop capabilities, and Future Direction 6.4 Develop and maximise strategic planning and partnerships

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Synthesised from the 210 community, business and industry voices that shared their thoughts and knowledge in the development of the **Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (2024-2028)** are the following Vision themes and guiding values. Importantly these themes continue to endorse and reflect the Community Strategic Plan's Vision.

When asked **What is your VISION** for your Council area (what will it have, look and feel like)? Key themes mentioned by **Community** were:

✓ Improved infrastructure and community amenities;

✓ Nurturing our small community 'feel';

✓ Sustainable economic growth that protects natural and built resources;

✓ Improved employment opportunities for locals;

✓ Improved services;

✓ Self-governance and the return of elected representatives to Council; and

✓ Locally grown leaders and professionals who are empowered and invested in their communities

> " *A safe, healthy, thriving, sustainable community with access to a multitude of services across various sectors, where education is key, local businesses are well supported and opportunities are encouraged and individuals are empowered.* "

> " *To be a thriving active community with connection to our local area and natural aspects whilst maintaining a 'village feel'. Economic development supporting the township's identity.* "

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Interviews were undertaken with 13 individuals identified as **Council, Community and Regional Leaders** revealing a unified Vision for:

✓ The creation of a strategic 'legacy' ensuring widespread benefit;

✓ Sustainable, well-planned economic and social development which does no harm;

✓ Opportunities maximised for ALL locals;

✓ Services / amenities / infrastructure improve for locals and positively impact the attraction of new residents;

✓ Council collaborates with community, neighbours and industry, represents and advocates for the area and provides high quality and integrity leadership;

✓ Council partners with Traditional Owners and supports reconciliation;

✓ Local self-determination; and

✓ Existing industries and businesses are upheld/protected alongside the new

> *BSC needs an Aboriginal Advisory Board advising the Shire – just 5 or 6 people advising on all elements of Council work including tourism, employment etc. There needs to be Traditional Owners at the table*

The **Values** that sat alongside this Vision included:

| nclusion, equity & fairness – A fair go for all – Social Justice | Communication/ engagement – frank, honest conversations; clear, open communications, willingness to listen | Integrity & honesty | Transparency | Trust & Respect | Relationship building, collaboration, partnership |

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> *Integrity – if someone says they are going to do something then they must deliver on it – there must be action not just talk.*

> *There are huge opportunities for people who are well informed – we just need to know about it – people need to know about opportunities for themselves and their children*

> *Actively seeking to expand the local economy so that everybody gets a fair share, that the benefits of economic development reach everyone*

From these **Vision themes and Values** the following **Principles** have been formed to guide how the Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy will be implemented. These Principles act as rules to guide Council's decision making around economic development – in this way new economic initiatives should uphold the following principles:

Our existing businesses and industries are central to who we are and our successes to date. New Economic Development should not occur at their expense.	Further innovation, diversification and growth is supported in ways that promote and safeguard the area as a world class destination and food and fibre producing region.	We are planning for today and all our tomorrows. Economic growth will protect and enhance existing natural and built assets, reflecting the community's vision for long-term sustainable economic development.
Equity of health, wellbeing and opportunities for all community members remain our highest priority. The improved liveability of our towns through planning, advocacy and provision of services and amenities are critical for locals and central to workforce attraction and retention.	All of our community members have a place at the decision-making table, we will continue to grow our leaders and uphold self-determination. Our First Nations community are central to this, and models must be created to ensure their contributions.	The current and cumulative impact of Economic Development is accurately costed to ensure our communities are compensated in both the short and long term.

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KEY STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Strategic Goal 1. Our Industries

We will protect and grow our engine industries and attract and support emerging industries

Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
1.1 Existing businesses and industries are supported to benefit from economic growth	**1.1.1** 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)	Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.2
	1.1.2 Understand the accreditation, licencing and procurement needs of emerging industries. Inform local industry and business and attract relevant trainings to support with accreditation/licencing	Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.1
	1.1.3 Map local business and industry to support their full utilisation by larger emerging industries such as mining and renewables	
1.2 The importance of the agricultural and horticultural industries is protected	**1.2.1** Manage residential encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land	Right to Farm Policy 2015
	1.2.2 Consider the impact of emerging industries encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land to food/fibre security	
	1.2.3 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	
1.3 Emerging and prospective industries and businesses are aware of and attracted to the LGA	**1.3.1** 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	Department of Planning NSW Department of Regional NSW
	1.3.2 A high level LGA Prospectus is developed (with supporting promotional materials) detailing endowments and opportunities and listing the preferred investments, industries and businesses	Regional Development Trust Fund, Department of Regional NSW in the distribution of this BSC LGA Prospectus

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Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
1.3 Emerging and prospective industries and businesses are aware of and attracted to the LGA (cont.)	**1.3.3** An Economic Development Officer/Team/ Concierge role is created and funding secured (could be shared role between BSC/WSC) providing a single entry and advocacy point for all Economic Development enquiries **1.3.4** An inter LGA Economic Development Advisory Group is formed utilising Council and local knowledge and representation from key industries **1.3.5** Preferred investment interests, businesses, industries and services are proactively sought out and welcomed	Investigate incentive schemes Sustainable Communities Funding Alignment to Drought Resilience research
1.4 Our broad visitor economy potential is recognised, understood and enabled	**1.4.1** The BSC Destination Management Plan is recognised as the key visitor economy planning document to be applied in parallel to this Strategy **1.4.2** The Encourage visitor geographic dispersal and length of stay • 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	BSC Settlement Strategy

The Iluka Resources site in Balranald

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Strategic Goal 2. Our Infrastructure & Amenities

We will provide and/or facilitate local infrastructure and amenity development to encourage growth and productivity – because great places to live are great places to work and visit

Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
2.1 Greater diversity in, and availability, of housing stock with utilities and amenity assets to support	**2.1.1** Suitable land for new builds is identified and promoted including through infill of vacant land within communities and through new residential estates	BSC Settlement Strategy
	2.1.2 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	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 1.2
	2.1.3 Council encourages broader community thinking about the possible forms of housing (including tiny homes, prefabricated homes, transition to independent living units and higher density living)	
	2.1.4 Develop a plan for works in line with new residential developments to ensure these developments have required utilities. Seek funding streams to support with this work	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 1.2
	2.1.5 Drawing on the community voice captured in the development of this EDS to identify key amenity assets sought by the community and facilitate the attraction of these assets to the LGA	
	2.1.6 Explore the contribution of industry to housing solutions through legacy / social licence	
	2.1.7 Council reviews its existing assets and creates strategies for the use/repurposing for currently un-utilised/under-utilised assets	

he development of a shire-wide Housing trategy is essential to support growth

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| Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
2.2 Physical and digital connectively enables full use of the LGA's potential – both human and natural	**2.2.1** Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard road infrastructure, including vigilance in identifying, accessing and utilising available funding streams **2.2.2** 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 **2.2.3** Council continues to advocate at appropriate governmental levels for high standard technical connectivity infrastructure	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Section 4.1
2.3 Residents of the LGA have access to key services via in person or online mechanisms	**2.3.1** Council works with key community groups and the broader community to advocate for and facilitate 'to scale' key community services including health and education services such as childcare, preschools, schools, adult education, health services and aged care **2.3.2** Council works with key community groups and the broader community to advocate for and facilitate access to tertiary level services via alternate models of delivery including hub and spoke, role-sharing and tele-delivery **2.3.3** Advocate for the critical importance of cross border funding and service delivery	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Sections 2.1 & 2.2 BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Section 2.2

Advocating for high standard road infrastructure is essential to enable the shire's full potential

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Strategic Goal 3. Our People

We will grow, attract and retain a creative, talented and skilled community and workforce

Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
3.1 Understand local/regional workforce training and skills gaps and actively support remediation	**3.1.1** 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 **3.1.2** Council works with key community groups and the broader community to advocate for increased post school / tertiary training provision locally **3.1.3** 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	TAFE, Country University Centre (Swan Hill) BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 1.3
3.2 Uphold the importance of the early years in unlocking the full potential of future generations	**3.2.1** Advocate for the ongoing delivery of high quality and consistent early years health, wellbeing, education and care services across the LGA **3.2.2** Support all children have access to and attend high quality early years education in the two years before commencing school	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 2.1
3.3 Increase awareness of, and facilitate employment pathways for community members	**3.3.1** Work with key community organisations to reach unemployed and under-employed community members, facilitating their awareness of employment opportunities and connecting them to training and employment pathways **3.3.2** Negotiate with large industries for a minimum localised employment expectation, recognising this as a long-term legacy impact for individuals, families and communities	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.1 BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.2
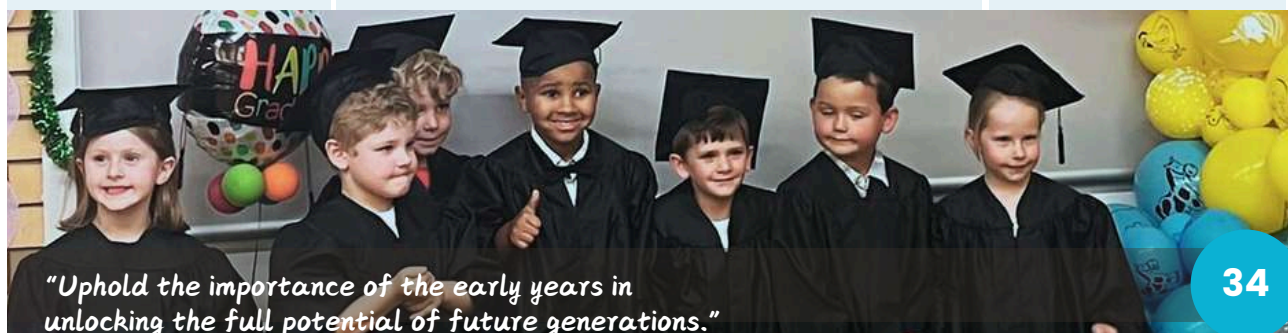
"Uphold the importance of the early years in unlocking the full potential of future generations."

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Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
3.4 Create the conditions for and actively support population and skills attraction	**3.4.1** Support initiatives that promote and/or provide incentives for population migration to the Shire and the region	Move to More Country Change programs
	3.4.2 Invest in place-making, streetscape and resident, prospective resident and visitor amenity improvements	
	3.4.3 Activate opportunity to the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) initiative within the RDA Murray region	RDA Murray
	3.4.4 Investigate local solutions to workforce gaps by exploring more flexible working arrangements, workforce sharing and role sharing models	

Strategic Goal 4. Our Natural Assets & Identity

We will protect natural assets and create a clear, unique and consistent regional identity to attract national and international attention

Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
4.1 Our natural and cultural assets are protected and honoured	**4.1.1** Our system of rivers, lakes, wetlands and landscapes are protected including the monitoring of loss of water from the region, ecosystem and water health (the potential of the Balranald Low-Level weir proposal) and the impact of industry including visual and physical impacts	Murray National Parks Better Bidgee Program
	4.1.2 Our cultural and heritage assets are mapped, their significance recorded and protected	Traditional Owners Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council National Parks / World Heritage Willandra Lakes Advisory Committee
	4.1.3 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	

The Murrumbidgee River at the Yanga Woolshed

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Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
4.2 An aligned, modern and comprehensive suite of visitor economy assets and experiences are developed (including ecological, cultural and heritage)	**4.2.1** Explore and encourage the growing demand for and potential of eco and agri-tourism across the LGA **4.2.2** 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 **4.2.3** Develop the Far West Culture and Heritage Trail to highlight the First Nations and settlement / pastoralists story **4.2.4** Facilitate new tour package products including heritage, food and wine, Indigenous, nature-based and walking tours and charters	Riverina Murray Tourism DMP
4.3 Our brand is distinct, synonymous with our region and broadly recognised	**4.3.1** Create a regional brand that encapsulates the strengths of our people and place and showcases hero products **4.3.2** Leverage local character by sharing, engaging, and using genuine local stories to improve how visitors connect with the region **4.3.3** Develop and deliver a digital tourism marketing strategy to guide consistent use of social media and other digital assets **4.3.4** Develop print and digital materials including guides, itineraries and packages to promote touring routes	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Section 3.3
4.4 Continue to build improved visitor access, accommodation, amenity and awareness	**4.4.1** Extend new and maintain existing cycling and walking trails **4.4.2** Work with Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders towards a sealed road loop encompassing Balranald – Mungo – Buronga. Be mindful of the Mungo site and experience being 'ready' (adequate levels of protection in place) **4.4.3** Continue to facilitate a broadening suite of accommodation options to meet visitor demand and encourage overnight and extended stays **4.4.4** Plan and provide for adequate visitor amenity at key visitor sites, including lighting, signage, public toilets, seating and shade **4.4.5** Ensure the core visitor economy workforce is familiar with key attractions and experiences and can promote these in an informed, high integrity manner	Riverina Murray Tourism DMP

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Strategic Goal 5. Our Tomorrow

We will plan now for an even better tomorrow, building local connection, leadership, partnership, legacy and advocacy

Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
5.1 Strong, diverse local leadership is built and community connection is supported and celebrated	**5.1.1** A Reconciliation Action Plan is researched and developed locally, creating a central platform for healing and from which to move forwards **5.1.2** BSC form a First Nations Advisory Group of Council to guide decision making and work **5.1.3** We recognise a strong Local Government needs skilled elected representatives and so invest in our Councillors with training, experiences and support mechanisms **5.1.4** We celebrate our community leaders, promoting their achievements at all levels. We create a culture that values and respects community leadership **5.1.5** We seek out funding and opportunities to build our local leadership profile through training, experiences and support mechanisms	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Section 6.1
5.2 We build partnerships to achieve equity for our region and have collective impact	**5.2.1** 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 **5.2.2** 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 **5.2.3** 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	Department Regional NSW RDA Murray Riverina Murray Tourism Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Section 6.2

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Objectives	Actions	Strategic Alignment
5.3 We seize the full opportunity and potential of legacy, making strategic long-term investments	**5.3.1** Council and community form a governance model to enable the collection and strategic distribution/investment of social licence/legacy payments from industry **5.3.2** BSC, WSC and HSC collaborate 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 **5.3.3** Council and community use legacy strategically and long-term so the benefits drawn from emerging industries last beyond their lifespan within the region	Government mandated rates for REZ Loss of Resources for Regions modelling
5.4 We grow our Council workforce – skilling locals and encouraging career progression	**5.4.1** Council adopts a leadership role in promoting local government as a career path, highlighting high demand fields **5.4.2** Council strengthens its trainee and apprenticeship program by including work experience or other industry placements **5.4.3** 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	BSC Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 6.1

Balranald Shire Council is part of the Tri State Cross-Border Taskforce to help build partnerships & equity for the region

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COMMUNITY, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Business & Industry engagement

Business and 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) (totaling 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

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) (totaling 13 interviews).

Combined (not including participation in key events, item four above) engagement to inform that Balranald Shire Council's Economic Development Strategy heard the voices of 210 community, business and industry representatives.

Complete analysis of all engagement data is presented in Consultation Summaries provided to Balranald Shire Council leadership and staff. This Consultation Snapshot provides a succinct synthesis of all engagement data to demonstrate to readers the foundation to, and pathway of, the recommendations presented in this Economic Development Strategy

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Business & Industry Engagement & SWOT

Through the online survey, focus groups and phone interviews with **business and industry** the following sectors were engaged and have informed the Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy: Retail, Education / Training, Tourism, Recreation / Entertainment / Hospitality services, Accommodation services, Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Mining, Renewable Energies, Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale/warehouse, Freight and logistics, and Automotive.

Of the survey respondents 63.6% noted their operation was Expanding, 31.8% noted their operation was Stable, and only 4.5% noted their operation was Reducing. Workforce scale varied between 59.1% of respondents having 1-5 staff through to 13.6% having more than 61 staff. In total 71.0% of this workforce lived within the LGA.

Collectively the most significant challenges in establishing and operating a business / industry were: Government restrictions / regulations, Operating costs (wages, utilities, rents, licencing etc), Housing, Attracting staff, Financing for start-up or on-going costs, and Balancing staffing across peak periods.

The most readily available supports / local strengths / assets in establishing and operating a business / industry operation were:
- Available infrastructure – roads, Local government advice / knowledge, Established support industries (such as trades, suppliers etc.,)
- Locally available expertise – Construction, and Available land

The LEAST available supports / local strengths / assets were:
- Financial grants, business incentives and in kind supports,
- Locally available expertise – Environmental, Locally available expertise – Financial,
- Locally available expertise – Legal, and Locally available expertise - Planning and Development.
- Whilst not selected in the survey itself Housing was the most mentioned need through further comments

The survey provided an extensive list of factors which can support Economic Development. Of these the following were **rated as either Poor or Very Poor** within the Balranald Shire Council area (acknowledging many of these are not within Council's remit):
- Start-up funding for new businesses / industries
- Maintaining high quality roads, Improving infrastructure to support and encourage industrial / commercial growth
- Attracting and growing our working-age population

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- Providing affordable housing
- Removing barriers to residential development
- Ensuring reliable internet and phone service
- Encouraging businesses / industries that are identified as 'gaps' by the community, Removing barriers to industrial development and
- Providing access to quality adult education

> 66 *Road closures frequent due to poor standard and low funding to improve quality. To promote industry we need quality roads to access sites from both council areas.* 99

From the same list of factors survey respondents were asked to select the **5 most important for this Council to focus on**. Overwhelmingly (all above 65%) the following were selected.

- Encouraging businesses / industries that are identified as 'gaps' by the community,
- Ensuring access to affordable and reliable utilities (water, power, waste management),
- Removing barriers to industrial development, Improving infrastructure to support and encourage industrial/commercial growth, and
- Partnering with neighbouring Councils,
- Providing affordable housing and Improving the area's liveability and amenity value (ensuing options for recreation and socialising) were the next most mentioned – both at 60.0% or higher.

> 66 *Road In summary, Balranald Shire has industry coming to it in the form of renewables, mineral extraction and nut growing. The Shire needs to be able to house the workers and their families that will move to work and live and be schooled here.* 99

A **SWOT analysis** was undertaken with two focus groups dedicated to **business and industry** leadership. The first in Euston with the Euston Progressive Advisory Committee (EPAC) and the second in Balranald with the Growing Business Industry and Tourism Advisory Committee (GBITAC).

Both are Advisory Committees of Balranald Shire Council. Across the two events a total of 20 business and industry leaders and Balranald Shire Council executive staff participated in discussions.

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These same questions were asked of participants through the one-on-one interviews. A synthesis of all business and industry voice – both focus groups and interviews - is presented below.

STRENGTHS

- Richness in natural assets – rivers and water, solar and wind energy, rare earth / mineral sands and opportunities for product development around these.
- Physical location on the highway and at important road junctions (Sturt Highway [A20], Murray Valley Highway[B400], Yanga Way, Ivanhoe Road).
- Existing and proposed / possible tourism assets – including natural, cultural and built – National Parks (Mungo/Yanga), rivers, and natural landscapes, Visitor Information Centre, Clubs, the Darling River Run, privately owned facilities.
- Established engines industries, notably agriculture and horticulture.
- Some established and well-respected local businesses and industries offering unique services and / or services at the scale required for large emerging industries.
- Regional level plans with clear local level relevance support alignment with higher level opportunities.
- Some high-quality built assets and local investment and leadership – Euston Club, Sporting facilities etc.
- Council owned assets such as caravan parks and available vacant lands (for residential and industrial developments and tourism / amenity assets).
- Council executive, leadership and staff.
- Local leadership and volunteerism.
- Close knit and caring communities.

> *Mungo is a bucket list park – Mungo has re-written humanity's history*

> *We're unique with the five rivers – we're Kakadu without the crocs.*

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> *Active Business Industry and Tourism committee, along with the other Council Advisory Committees. Council executive and leadership is looking strong – this is attractive to industry but also to community confidence.*

> *Our Crimson Seedless table grapes are world renowned as specific to here. They are removing these plantings in California because of this, because they cannot get the colour we do. Between them Euston and Robinvale provides 70%+ for the Australian table grape industry.*

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of local workforce in terms of both scale and skillset.
- Minimal opportunities for further education and training locally.
- Lack of housing scale and diversity, and lack of new land opened up to develop residential areas.
- Poor and inconsistent physical and digital connectivity, both impacting tourism and broader industry development.
- Lack of dedicated industrial areas in both the Euston and Balranald communities.
- Inadequate accommodation, service and amenity levels to attract permanent population or increased overnight stays from tourists.
- Varying levels of servicing, some adequate, some inadequate and most inconsistent – especially in relation to health and wellbeing and services to support healthy ageing.
- Consistency / availability of key utilities sewerage and water (quality and pressure).
- Lack of public transport.
- Local leadership – in particular the high turnover of Council staff at Executive level, the lack of dedicated Economic and Community Development staff and also the impact of no elected representatives (Councillors).
- Cohorts and areas of the community feel unheard, have experienced limited inclusion and engagement.

Poor & inconsistent digital connectivity is a weakness due to the impact on attracting industry.

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"People want to be here, but we need the infrastructure and services to stack around this."

"Balranald Shire Council is part of a task force working with other LGAs who share the Sturt highway with the view to improving the highway. We are the only highway in Australia without overtaking lanes."

"Creating roads into something we could use took too long – this was a huge cost to us ultimately."

"The Euston Caravan Park is now full of permanent residents – turning away tourists – so they can't stay even if they want to."

"The turnover of council staff can be challenging – Balranald and Wentworth Shire Councils need to be working together in this space, this ensures there is continuity in delivery of strategy regardless of personnel changes."

"Leadership capacity – we need the 'go to' person at council. There have been five General Managers in [our] timeframe here."

"Housing is an issue. We have had early conversations with the accommodation village, they are interested. They currently house less than 200 but are working with BSC for expansion to 400 [people]. Local motels may be of interest – but we do not want to take away from available accommodation for tourists too."

"We would always be open to more local recruitment, and have skills shortages in trades, electricians etc. But different skill sets, specific to mining, they will probably remain as FIFO. But operations of equipment, leadership, OHS etc., mechanical and electrical... That could be sourced locally."

ousing and short-term accommodation is a growing issue in the shire

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> *Workforce and housing for the construction phase is a recognised challenge. Labour force is limited, the unemployment rate is quite low and there is a lack of alignment with available local skills.*

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of **visitor economy** opportunities
  - Lack of local workforce
  - Established tracks and trails such as the Darling River Run, Mungo Loop, Far West Culture and Heritage Trail
  - Tour and event assets (including through National Parks 'Park Experience Providers')
  - Agritourism opportunities (as one of Destination Riverina Murray's Regional Priorities)
  - Broad visitor assets (Visitor information Centre, Balranald Caravan Park, Balranald Weir) through the sealing of roads, utilising State Government supports, strengthened advertising, aligned promotional materials and the respectfully curated cultural and heritage significance of the region.

- Development of a Traditional Owner / First Nations led and owned visitor economy which supports reconciliation, shares our history, creates business ownership and employment opportunities for First Nations people and builds intra and inter community relationships. Traditional Owners want this positive relationship.
- Ensure all visitor 'experiences' are understood by locals working in and supporting the visitor economy including Local Government.
- Mineral sands and rare earth mining. A number of mining companies have multiple exploration tenements so plan a long-term investment, giving rise for the potential to draw on local resources, including staff, housing and services.
- The South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), transmission line infrastructure and renewable developments

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OPPORTUNITIES (cont.)

- Growing horticulture industries, including localised opportunities for processing and further value adding.
- Grow your own workforce opportunities including through industry-based training and apprenticeships and advocacy for an improved offering of tertiary education regionally.
- Need for housing / new residential developments presents a strong opportunity for population growth and the attraction of services and amenities around this.
- Appetite for dedicated industrial development areas in both Euston and Balranald presents an opportunity for business and industry growth.
- Election of Shire Councillors presents an improved opportunity for local knowledge to further guide advocacy and decision making – effectively increasing the 'reach' of Balranald Shire Council outside the region.
- The opportunity for communities to strategically gather and utilise legacy / social benefit funds for long-term and widespread community gains. Potential for additional opportunities for First Nations and Traditional Owners from these processes with an important focus on equity of distribution.
- Working with industry leaders to fully understand the Economic Development opportunities that come with any development. This could include inviting these industry leaders onto purpose formed Local Government(s) Economic Development Advisory Committees to support with strategic planning based on their close knowledge of the industry.
- Frameworks (dedicated Economic Development positions within Local Government) to support clear and consistent communications and a central contact point (person or small team) supporting and pursuing community approved investment and attraction opportunities.

> *Regional towns can make small incremental increases – one of the key things to stop the through traffic. Good signage, good amenity, good place, and working with small business to give travelers reasons to stop.*

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> *The Australian story started in Mungo, international interest and travel potential is HUGE – high end accommodation, flights, immersive tour events. Across the Balranald and Wentworth LGAs a visitor can loop through for a full Australian history from an Aboriginal Perspective and a Pioneer Perspective... both are very rich in stories and 'hero' status characters – such as Possum from Wentworth.*

> *Events are big drivers of visitation – create a reason for people to go to a destination if they have not thought about it before. Imagine a major event in Balranald that has Aboriginal Culture at heart.*

> *There are still assets [mines] in the shire that might not suit our company structure but may suit other companies. The best, easiest assets are always mined first.*

> *I you really want to develop the region well – the next task for Council is to facilitate more miners to come into the region – investment and attraction... Use the knowledge from within the industry to do this work within communities, get these industry people on to the Economic Development reference group (for both Shires) as part of their social licence and the support they should be giving. Relationships and knowledge would improve.*

boriginal cultural tourism is a development opportunity for the shire

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" *Aligning the right people to talk to is key – one initial contact within a Local Government is key, then we know what to expect, then we are not re-telling the issues... This was very difficult with Balranald but is getting a little better.* "

" *X and X are both on the Aboriginal Advisory Group for World Heritage Mungo and Willandra Lakes. Both want to work with Balranald Shire Council and grow and improve this relationship* "

" *We are seeking an open and trusting relationship with council, through the approval process, but even post approval we need this open relationship – this could be a dedicated contact person. We need local people who understand the community and are accessible. Delays are a huge issue – if turbines sit at port in Adelaide it is $100,000 / day for us..* "

" *It is so important that Traditional Owners are telling the story, this has life changing outcomes for Traditional Owners and their families as well.* "

" *We just need to work this out locally, that is why getting Council exec on park for a famil is important.* "

" *We will try to create as many opportunities as possible for local employment. We will go out to tender for main works to large contractors – these contractors must also look to employ locals. We will then announce the preferred suppliers and they will then look to involve local businesses with our main works contractors, like a match making event. These will be advertised and facilitated by [us]. We will create a database for local suppliers like PPE etc., and provide advice to help locals scale up and scale down well from the boom process. Because the project does not start for a while there is scope for local training. Local business may just need some basic certification to help as well.* "

" *I dropped into Hay TAFE the other day – face of TAFE has completely changed – technology hubs, facilitated online through large centres in Sydney, high quality learning, right next to the high school – cutting edge – great opportunities for students. Could we have this in Balranald?* "

" *There are a lot of opportunities – we need to be ready to take advantage of these. Development will go ahead despite us – but how do we make it really work for us?* "

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THREATS

- Climate change.
- Regulations and red tape, including OHS barriers to agritourism.
- Inaccurate Government understanding of, and catering to, the true scale and diversity of population across the LGA and particularly in Robinvale / Euston.
- The default 'standard' for large industries to use a Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) workforce and accommodate this workforce on-site (and out of townships) - making it easy for industry to not recruit locally. The mining industry is typical of this.
- Industry and government failure to partner / prioritise the skills development / training of local populations to enable increased local employment.
- The lack of training and licencing standardisation between States / Nationally is a threat, limiting workforce transferability and impacting heavily on border communities. Poor quality of training is also identified by some.
- Water use and insecurity across multiple industries including horticulture, agriculture and mineral sands mining.
- The visual impact of some industries is significantly changing the landscape – accommodation villages, wind turbines, power infrastructure - there are one off impacts and cumulative impacts.
- The increasing traffic along the Sturt Highway (and other road networks) must be managed to reduce impact on both amenity and road safety.
- Tourism suffers from limited marketing budgets across multiple levels – local and regional especially – this impacts opportunities for product development.
- Growing the visitor experience of Mungo without threatening this sacred site in any way. Ensuring no overexposure.
- State government expectations of Local Government are overly burdensome for small rural LGAs.
- Myth and mistrust can prevail between large industry and small communities.

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"
Southwest Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) – this area has the least resistance to renewable energy infrastructure – farmers are wanting it to happen, especially across the marginal farming areas.
"

"
There is never enough money for marketing and product development, there is no specific budget for this for Wentworth / Balranald from Destination NSW. Then this falls back to Local Government who have even less money. We need to be looking to big industry / business to support with this promotion.
"

"
The Euston Club RV Park was established in 2007 at a cost of about $1M. The Club owns 1 lot and lease 2 other portions from Crown Lands. I have just been advised by Crown lands we can no longer park vehicles on the Crown Lands lots because of their potential cultural significance. I have been told I must work with Barkandji peoples to negotiate use of the land.
"

"
Ways of work standardisation across the industries – OHS, certification of equipment handling (telehandler etc.,) – are people skilled and competent in the 'tools of the trade'. OHS – schools and TAFE are not really getting people up for success in this space – assessment of risk skills for example.
"

"
We need to be protecting the area in terms of visual impact of wind farms – the proposed Windlab development will be visible from Yanga Lake.
"

"
Mungo is not ready for sealed roads – National Parks are not ready and Traditional Owners are not ready. If we have sealed roads people will come and walk all over Mungo. New areas of significance are being uncovered as the sands shift these areas are too fragile and we do not have good systems in place to protect them.
"

"
The voice of small communities does not reach State and Federal Government – the closure of the road between Ivanhoe and Balranald went on and on and locals put up with it. People in Sydney would never put up with something like that, and they would not be expected too either.
"

Climate Change is viewed as a key threat to economic growth

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WHAT ARE THE LOW HANGING FRUIT?

- Establishment of the community foundation, enabling strategic long-term use of legacy funds.
- Tourism and destination management.
- Utilising Council's increasing / improved management structure to achieve community goals.
- Identification and development of Industrial and residential precincts across Shire communities.
- Delivery on existing grant funding.
- Support to develop existing local businesses and encourage new.
- Continued advocacy for amenity and services (water pressure, recreation, health and education).
- A relocation campaign – encouraging people to move to our communities.
- Return of elected representatives to Council – opportunity for equity, community voice, upstream advocacy.
- Increasing Tri-state / cross-border awareness and conversation.
- Robinvale Euston Workforce Network (REWN), potential for expansion to encompass all of Balranald Council area.

> *Horticulture, renewables, mineral sands – they come, some are great, some are not – I would like to see a vision where industry has a lot more input – legacy into our communities. Strategically lobbying for childcare, housing etc., Industry needs to have skin in the game to change this. They need to make meaningful commitments to our community that makes a difference. Must have a structure or mechanism that is capitalising on this – a fund or a foundation*

> *We need a community trust fund. The mandatory contribution of projects of state significance helps this but those funds still need to be coordinated through legacy projects.*

> *We will be ensuring representation for Euston in the Council Elections, there will be a deliberate strategy to ensure this happens.*

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> *"There are table grape farms here for sale that are residential zoned (30 acres that is currently for sale) another 80 acres is zoned residential that may come on the market soon. These are along the highway (opposite the footy oval). We do have an industrial area zoned as well – this is where the services station would go. (Euston)"*

> *"Council's management structure means some priority can now be given to finding land for residential and industrial development – this must be driven by Council as we are not big enough for outside large investors – low hanging fruit is council can do this preliminary work."*

> *"The area is buzzing – need a supermarket on this side of the river. (Euston)"*

Tourism & Destination Management is one of the Shire's key "Low Hanging Fruits"

TRI-STATE & CROSS-BORDER CONVERSATIONS

Over the course of the research for the Economic Development Strategy for both Balranald Shire Council and Wentworth Shire Councils significant Tri-state conversations were also occurring.

Regionally, over the past several decades, there has been increasing dialogue about the importance of cross-border relationships. Over the past 12 months especially there has been a renewed interest in this – with a NSW, Victoria and South Australia Tri-State economic region being proposed and the following events / research activities occurring:

- Euston Economic Development Forum (March 2023)
- Tri-State Workforce Forum (Euston, December 2023),
- Tri-State Economic Zone Scoping Study: Murray Mallee Cross Border

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TRI-STATE & CROSS-BORDER CONVERSATIONS (cont.)

Euston Economic Development Forum (March 2023) Region' March 2024. Developed by REMPLAN for Regional Development Victoria and the Mallee Regional Partnership

- RDA Murray's Buronga Business Breakfast and Murray-Darling Interstate Regional Development Stakeholder Consultation (both Buronga, April 2024).

Amongst these multiple entities and efforts it is universally agreed that a Tri-state governance model and working agreement would foster regional development, enhance economic growth, and ultimately benefit the residents of all participating states.

The following are just some of the quotes gathered from participation across these events:

> *In a lot of place-based projects industry is the last one that is connected. REWN wanted to flip that on its head and lead with industry. This brings the community benefit and legacy stuff to the fore as well. Can a work camp be left as legacy accommodation for example and how would that look?*

> *We want to create a regional NSW where people actually want to live and work. What can we do to create communities we want to live and work in?*

> *Local Government does their bit, industry does their bit but very rarely do we come together and share this knowledge and capitalise on the opportunities.*

> *The answer – All skills, all ages, all people – unlocking all local potential for employment. Skills shortages in Australia is an enduring issue – Snowy Mountain scheme had to import workforce as well. (attracting workforce)*

> *We do not want to contribute to the housing crisis – we will have 250+ people as transient workforce. We want to build housing during our busy period then hand that back to Council or community. (renewable energy)*

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> *Regional communities are in fact what many suburbs aspire to be. But so many people don't see this...*

> *There is a real challenge for local businesses to get into the work of the really large investments – they will likely only bring in large scale outside contractors – with some use of smaller business sub-contracting.*

> *When an industry is starting the EIS – this is when you should be asking them about their employment needs – because then there is the opportunity to plan forwards. What training will they deliver to support local employment etc. Get on the boat quickly.*

> *In a $1M investment for example – larger communities do better because they can potentially supply more of what is needed – so Mildura will do better than Wentworth for the same project because they can provide more of what is needed.*

> *Avoiding a zero sum change in the local economy is important – they [industry] come, they build, they leave... What is 'local' in a 'local' investment. Industry will 'spruik' their investment, but how will local communities benefit?*

> *Ensuring new industries don't cannibalise existing workforce and leave engine industries without workforce.*

> *We have high standards of accreditation and compliance expectations so it is hard for local businesses to get on board. So, if you hear of industry coming reach out early and find out their specific accreditation requirements.*

> *We need to be identifying pipelines of work as well – so businesses can plan long term at the scale required. Mine site expectations may also align with the renewables expectations. So look at areas of alignment, where businesses can cross leverage in this space.*

> *Lots of dots being joined up with opportunities for Planning infrastructure, Building resilience and a Tristate auspicing body. (Tri-state governance)*

> *Iluka gave the BFNC $25K per year for 4 years, then announced their jobs are 8 days on, 4 days off, which means no one can work for the mine and actually play footy.*

> *Bigger than one employer, one industry or one area – a regional system (and brand) to be visible and an advocacy strength. (attracting workforce)*

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> " Putting this part of Australia on the map is a challenging one, you are at the coal face of the climate conversation, the indigenous cultural conversation lives here, you need logic over politics and it makes more sense to be working together. "

> " Some of these horticulture companies are also tristate companies as well – so the relationship is fluid. "

> " We're seeking funding for a Masterplan for our aerodrome – developing this as an asset. Iluka might contribute to enable FIFO workforce but we would want to cap this so there is not too much FIFO and still and effort and focus on local workforce development and recruitment "

> " We have a policy imperative from the Feds in terms of Net Zero and State significant investment in terms of the REZ infrastructure but no investment from the Feds in how to manage this – housing shortages, workforce pressures. "

> " The fight for space on the transmission line is very real. Council's should be protecting their time in terms of engaging with every possible proponent and give an efficient answer – 'we're not in a position to fully outline the legacy input expected at this stage, but will do so if you are successful' – and maybe think about this more as a proportion of profit as opposed to a specific amount. "

Council is investigating grant opportunities to fund the implementation of the aerodrome's Masterplan

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"in the early 2000s there was a tri-state model with WSC, MRCC, and Renmark and Paringa... so some of this work done a while ago"

"The sugar hit is not making a difference here, it has not had a trickle down impact like Economic Development theory would predict."

"With the 450GL water buy back for environmental purposes – will it stay into the region to benefit the local environment – how does this sustain and build a wetland environment that has an ecotourism opportunity, protect a RAMSAR site?"

"Advocacy should be area wide – then we have a critical mass of population and need... And the similarity of 'shared experience' is pervasive – housing, childcare, workforce demand – you are stronger in aggregate than in isolation."

"We need an increased understanding of chain of production and local processing potential – minerals sands makes so many of the components we need locally – batteries, turbine blades etc.,"

"In the Tri-state conversation it is easy to bring people together but so hard to get them to keep moving together."

"Leveraging opportunity is about what you have to leverage it with..."

"Legacy is also about skills retainment beyond the sugar hit."
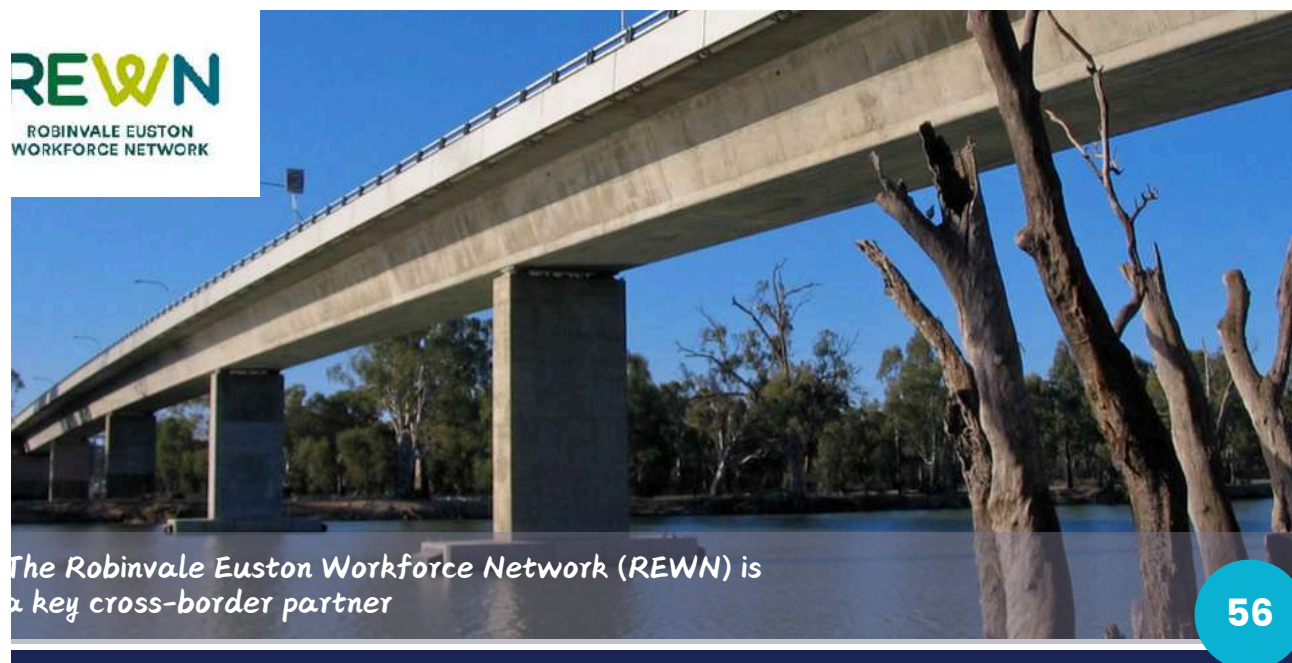
The Robinvale Euston Workforce Network (REWN) is a key cross-border partner

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Community Engagement & SWOT

Community Consultation occurred between January – April 2024 gathering a total of 147 community, community and Council leadership and government representative voices.

In total 134 community members completed the online and hard copy survey with 98.0% of respondents living within the Balranald Shire Council area. In total 4.7% of all respondents identified as Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander and a further 4.7% of respondents indicated they were born overseas.

Respondents most valued about where they live:
- Small community atmosphere;
- Healthy environment;
- Family ties;
- Access to health and education services; and
- Thriving local businesses / industries.

The **most sought-after businesses** / industries were:
- Health / Medical services;
- Recreation / Entertainment / Hospitality services;
- Education / Training services;
- Tourism; and
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing
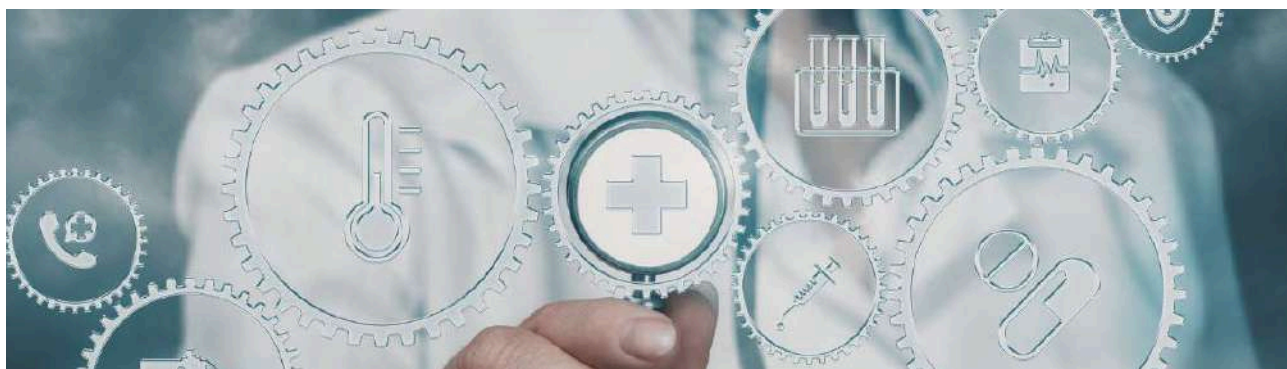
When asked **What kinds of businesses / industries would you NOT like to see** in your area? Respondents noted:
- Renewables; Waste (toxic, nuclear);
- Heavy industrial;
- Industries / Businesses that jeopardise the current social and economic fabric of the community - that are unsafe, unethical or unsustainable;
- Polluting causing (noise, air, smell, chemicals, waste);
- Intensive Agricultural / Horticultural including irrigation,
- Housed animal production; and
- Mining

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Respondents felt the **BEST THING to happen because of Economic Development** included:

- Increased employment opportunities for locals and especially young people;
- Growth in population, particularly of families:
- More activities and amenities for community members;
- Increase in services (health, education, training) available locally; and
- Improved sustainability of local businesses.

> *An increase in population, services and opportunities. Employment for local people who have been under-employed or unemployed. Better life outcomes for children and families*

Conversely the **WORST THING to happen because of Economic Development** included:

- Unsustainable development, boom and bust patterns,
- Harm to environment, high levels of waste / pollution, natural resources are 'mined';
- Loss of sense of community, loss of peace, safety, local community 'voice';
- No housing for locals, key workforce and workforce for industry growth;
- Reduced access to, or quality of, local services;
- Increase in cost of living; and Negative impact on long term local businesses

> *Anything that did not contribute in some way to a better life for local people, that we are 'mined' of our natural resources and left with no long-term enduring benefits*

Respondents most strongly agreed Council should support Economic Development through: Recruitment campaigns to fill high need employment gaps; Negotiating with new industries / businesses to bring them to the area; and Providing infrastructure (road, housing estates etc.,). Respondents also noted the need to advocate for improved education / training opportunities and the rezoning land for industrial and residential estates.

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When asked **What is your VISION for your Council area** (what will it have, look and feel like)? Key themes were for:

- Improved infrastructure and community amenities;
- Nurturing our small community 'feel';
- Sustainable economic growth that protects natural and built resources;
- Improved employment opportunities for locals;
- Improved services;
- Self-governance and the return of elected representatives to Council; and
- Locally grown leaders and professionals who are empowered and invested in their communities

> "*A safe, healthy, thriving, sustainable community with access to a multitude of services across various sectors, where education is key, local businesses are well supported and opportunities are encouraged and individuals are empowered.*"

> *To be a thriving active community with connection to our local area natural aspects e.g. River, local flora and fauna whilst maintaining a 'village feel' Economic development supporting the township's identity.*

Interviews were undertaken with 13 individuals identified as Council, Community and/or Regional Leaders. Each interview participant was asked about their Sustainable Economic Development Vision and Values, the Council / Regions SWOT and strategic alignment and partners. Findings from these interviews are presented in depth in the Community Consultation Summary document and in brief below.

In terms of their **Vision participants wanted**:

- The creation of a strategic 'legacy' ensuring widespread benefit;
- Sustainable, well-planned economic and social development which does no harm;
- Opportunities maximised for ALL locals;
- Services / amenities / infrastructure improved for locals and to positively impact the attraction of new residents;
- Council collaborates with community, neighbours and industry, represents and advocates for the area and provides high quality and integrity leadership;
- Council partners with Traditional Owners and supports reconciliation;
- Local self-determination; and
- Existing industries and businesses are upheld / protected alongside new.

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> *BSC needs an Aboriginal Advisory Board advising the Shire – just 5 or 6 people advising on all elements of Council work including tourism, employment etc. There needs to be Traditional Owners at the table*

> *There is also a visual impact to wind turbines too – so there needs to be some recompense for this situation and the impact on the landscape. Residents of Hyde Park would be up in arms if a wind turbine was erected there.*

> *Integrity – if someone says they are going to do something then they must deliver on it – there must be action not just talk*

> *Actively seeking to expand the local economy so that everybody gets a fair share, that the benefits of economic development reach everyone.*

The **most mentioned Strengths/Assets** were:

| Built	Natural	Human/Social
• Roads • Public meeting places, parks and recreation reserves, river fronts developments, Clubs - Euston and Balranald, pubs • Agriculture and horticulture farm infrastructure • New low-level dam at Balranald would be a "game changer"	• The local river system • Mungo, Yanga and other National Parks • World Heritage Willandra Lakes • Solar and wind resources It was noted that natural asset require built assets for optimal use: • i.e. transmission line with solar and wind, agriculture/ horticulture with water, roads for tourism	• People – resilient, strong 'social fabric' • Capable existing workforce • Flexible, organised, adaptive communities • Importance of itinerant workforce • BSC Advisory Committee structure • Networking / collaboration, extending and outsourcing skill sets • Indigenous population are under-valued, under-utilised and under-resourced

Mungo National Park

Yanga National Park

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It is important that the development of renewables contributes positively to the local economy – our wind farms will be larger than those at Horsham for example, larger turbines. These developments must compensate the community for the visual cost that comes with hosting them. Destruction of visual amenity is significant. We benefit in the construction phase – but how does our community experience longer term benefits.

"We do have amazing people with a lot of resilience. They can sort out their own problems, people are resourceful, capable. The social fabric is strong – people just get on with it. We need to watch this too – because there is always a point where we need to ensure people do get help and don't just go it alone… sometimes people are reluctant to step up into 'official' roles, maybe because there can be criticism, because they fear getting it wrong. We need to look at ways for people to feel confident to step-up. How do we draw that out of our community – that they feel 'safe' to lead.
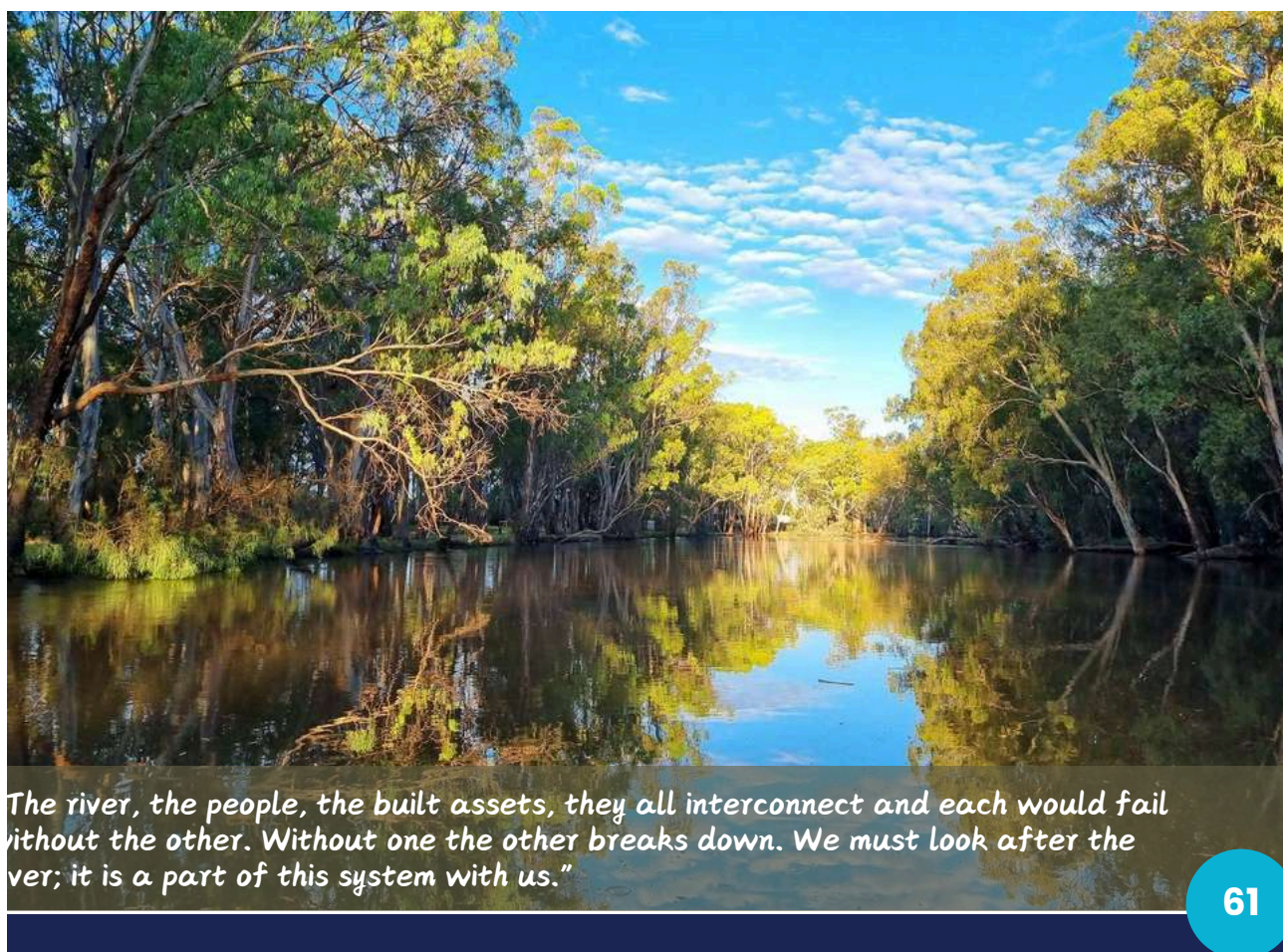
The river, the people, the built assets, they all interconnect and each would fail without the other. Without one the other breaks down. We must look after the river; it is a part of this system with us."

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The **most mentioned weaknesses** were:

- Land planning / availability;
- Workforce at scale and skill;
- Physical and Technical connectivity;
- Government investment / royalties for regions / remoteness from head of state;
- Increasing cost of living;
- Lack of key services (childcare etc.,);
- Inconsistency of BSC Senior staff and ongoing under-capacity workforce;
- Lack of Economic Development HR;
- Governance and management concerns within the Local Aboriginal Lands Council (LALC);
- Racism;
- Lack of coordination and showcasing of cultural history; and
- Fear to lead / lack of community support for leaders

> *To date we have not structured ourselves up to provide available and accessible land for the ancillary developments that will flow from the renewables developments etc. This plan needs to recognise this and make actions towards this end – we need to be more ready than we are – land available to accommodate the industries that could be associated with what is coming – really capitalising on these opportunities."*

> *If tiny homes were more allowable within the council regulations and council staff were more familiar with the concept then this would really open up local income streams and increase the available housing stock. There are tiny homes being built at Goodnight. We should be able to get our block sizes down and use our existing infrastructure better.*

> *People's sense of self-reliance is high BUT sense of self-worth is lower, sense of feeling valued is lower – we're not seeing our importance in this space. We should have a high self-value and expect engagement from key people / services / bodies. Stop assuming we are not important enough – we are worthy.*

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The **most mentioned Opportunities & Emerging Trends** were:

- Industry growth (especially mining, renewables and horticulture) and value adding potential;
- South West REZ;
- Growing interest in First Nations culture and experiences;
- Euston;
- Emerging profile of local leadership and capacity;
- Community Foundation model;
- The potential for strategic partnership between Balranald Shire Council and Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council;
- State and National programs / policies are aligned to local assets;
- Cross-border / tri-state economic zone;
- Robinvale Euston Workforce Network;
- Development of new industrial areas;
- Freight hub development; and
- Advocacy for increasing local and regional further education opportunities.

> *We don't need to generate the opportunities – we need to take advantage of them! A lot of rural and remote communities are in the desperate phase of trying to create a reason to come to them – that is NOT us, opportunities abound here.*

> *Tourism is huge – the biggest industry in Australia and they want to see the oldest culture in the world. Mungo Man and Woman are buried... in the Balranald Shire.*

> *Renewables – I would be asking – what can we be doing around longer-term opportunities – manufacturing etc, not just the current 'sugar hit'.*

> *When you have water and energy you have some incredible assets, so then it is about building case for why major investors should come to the area.*

> *We need to keep people in Balranald – so we need to intermingle with Yanga, Paika, Homebush – it's the story of Australia, it's black and white. Post settlement there were just three properties – Yanga, Paika, Canally – there is that history too. All Aboriginal people worked on farms, so pastoral history is Aboriginal history, we were all a part of that. Aboriginal encampments around the lakes*

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> *We know these industries are coming – they are in the preliminary stages of preparing DAs, and we know because of our location on the transmission line. In terms of Agriculture the industry is naturally growing around the river system so we are perfectly positioned.*
> *The highway is an asset and provides opportunities to natural assets like Mungo.*

> *I think we're ready to have an elected council again too. That will be a turning point for the LGA, a really exciting one. Councillors need to be open to have a respectful difference of opinion. Huge advocacy opportunity with local knowledge and local stories. At the moment we are competing with all the other LGAs that have Councillors that can go off and do that.*

The **most mentioned Threats** included**:**

- Climate change / extremes and the associated requirement for comprehensive and to scale disaster planning;
- Inaccurate socio-demographic data; Inconsistent / illogical placement of lines of maps;
- Large industries using a Fly-In Fly-Out workforce;
- An inaccurate understanding of the 'costs' (social, environmental etc.,) of certain industries;
- Export market reliance / commodity fluctuations;
- A Federal and State climate of tightening funding opportunities;
- The impact of Government policies being more heavily worn by rural communities (water buy back scheme and Renewable Energy Zones – both of which push the higher cost of environmental imperatives onto rural communities despite these imperatives having national and global benefits); and
- Service delivery models such as hub and spoke which are a response to thin markets and can unduly penalise rural communities.

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> *Also need to be looking at actual disaster planning – flood, fire, drought – really looking at it. The current adverse events plan needs to grow to incorporate mining, horticulture, renewables as well. This is an equity issue because small rural LGAs will not have the human resources to create these plans in house.*

A Regional Drought Resilience plan has been developed in collaboration with Wentworth Shire Council to prepare and accommodate the threats of Climate Change
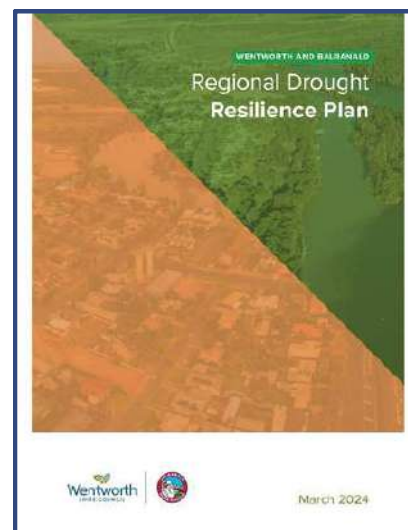
> *There must be an accurate understanding of the full COST of certain industries to community. Some of these deals [in terms of industry contributions] were done 15 years ago, but we need to learn from that, and make sure everything else is done better... more robust bargaining for equity of road quality, telecommunications and the drain on local resources where local people suffer and big industry does not.*

> *Economic Development is coming down the pipeline so quickly at us and we are dramatically under-prepared.*

> *We need to be stronger in getting the best value out of industry – mature conversations about how to use funding well for the longer-term*

The Community and Employment Program provides the framework for how EnergyCo administers access fees for the community and employment purposes across REZs within a declared access scheme. This will counter the threat of inequitable industry contributions to the communities within the affected LGAs

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The **following key partners** were identified:

- Community;
- Local government, and especially neighbouring LGAs across the Tri-State area;
- Joint Organisations (FSWJO and RAMJO);
- Department of Regional NSW;
- State government (cross-border issues are significant);
- Cross-border commissioners;
- Local members of parliament;
- Ministers in relevant portfolios;
- NSW Departments - Reconstruction Authority, Planning NSW, Transport NSW;
- Federal government and RDA Murray as a conduit; Industry;
- Key organisations (Our Place, Robinvale District Health Service); and
- Data collectors.

> *The most important key partners are the community. Participatory democracy will be key – we will be more visible. 80% of employment is in small business – so even though the 'big' industries look like they are central – LOCAL employment happens locally in local businesses.*

> *Transgrid posts boasting spending $96M in the Riverina Murray region – Local Governments are saying don't take Transgrid's poison money. Celebrate the contribution our regions are making in terms of the NATIONAL benefit. The regions that are doing the heavy lifting ARE worthy and deserve economic development that SERVES them.*

> *Because we are not seen as a key player in NSW we need to be better at collecting the data that showcases our region and selling ourselves and who we are. All the major projects are in NSW and the people benefitting are VIC based – we need to turn this a round so the benefactors are NSW based*

> *Both LGAs need to advocate together to get key people out here – ministers and department heads etc.*

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APPENDIX 1:

Glossary of Terms

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▶▶▶ APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active transport: Transport that is human powered, such as walking, cycling or using a wheelchair.

Affordable housing: Housing for very low-income households, low-income households or moderate-income households, as prescribed by regulations or provided for in an environmental planning instrument.

Agribusiness: A business that earns most or all of its revenues from agriculture, such as food and fibre production, agrichemicals, seed supply, farm machinery wholesale and distribution, freight, logistics, processing, marketing or retail sales.

Biodiversity: The variety of life on Earth. The life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.

Circular economy: A model that redesigns current linear systems (take-make-waste) to a closed loop or circular system which maximises resource efficiencies, reduces waste and improves natural systems.

Comparative Advantage: Are advantages that are born out of differences in social, political, and economic conditions.

Competitive Advantage: Are advantages that were gained through active action or positioning by the competitor.

Disruptors: A disruptive innovation is an innovation that creates a new market and value network and eventually disrupts an existing market and value network, displacing established market-leading firms, products, and alliances.

E-Commerce/Ecommerce: Also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce, refers to the buying and selling of goods or services using the internet, and the transfer of money and data to execute these transactions. Ecommerce is often used to refer to the sale of physical products online, but it can also describe any kind of commercial transaction that is facilitated through the internet.

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Employment lands: Areas zoned for industrial or similar purposes. Generally lower density employment areas that provide space for utilities and urban services, including depots, repair trades and service centres, as well as the research, design, and manufacturing of goods through to their warehousing, distribution, and sale.

First mile/last mile: The first and final stage of a journey in which people or goods travel to a broad range of origins or destinations, such as the trip between a train station and the final destination of a shopping centre or place of work.

Green infrastructure: The network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities, including waterways; bushland; tree canopy and green ground cover; parks; and open spaces.

Gross Domestic Product: A measure of economic activity in a Country. It is calculated as the total value of the countries' outputs minus the cost of the Countries' inputs.

Gross Regional: Product Is a measure of economic activity of a region. It is calculated as the total value of the region's output minus the cost of the region's inputs.

Gross State Product: A measure of economic activity of a state. It is calculated as the total value of the State's outputs minus the cost of the state's inputs.

Hero destinations: Hero destinations have high brand awareness and are considered to be world class, iconic and unique, and help to define the region they are located in.

High environmental value land: Land with:
- sensitive biodiversity values
- native vegetation of high conservation value
- key habitat of threatened species
- important wetlands
- areas of geological significance

Household size: The average number of people living in a dwelling.

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Housing affordability: The capacity of individuals or households to enter the rental and privately owned housing markets.

Housing diversity: The mix of housing types such as detached dwellings, boarding houses, purpose-built rentals, dual occupancies, group homes, hostels, multi-dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, secondary dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, seniors housing and shop top housing.

Infill development: Development in areas used for urban purposes, including the re-use of a site within the existing urban footprint for new housing, businesses, or other urban development.

Innovation: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines innovation as "the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), process, a new marketing method, or a new business practice, workplace organisation or external relations".

Input: Are the factors of production Land, Labour and Capital used to create economic activity (outputs).

Intensive agriculture: Agriculture activities such as horticulture, irrigated crops, glass housing, feedlots, poultry farms that rely on high levels of inputs such as labour and capital to increase yield.

Local Environmental Plan (LEP): The main statutory instrument to guide planning decisions for LGAs through zoning and development controls.

Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS): Sets out the 20-year vision for a local government area, demonstrates how change will be managed and identifies local priorities for updating council Local Environmental Plans

Output: The result of an economic process resulting from the use of Land, Labour and Capital (inputs).

Population projections: Projections of future size and structure of a population based on past trends and assumptions about the future, such as births, deaths and migration.

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Productivity: The relationship between inputs and outputs as a measure of efficiency of production.

Renewable Energy Zone (REZ): Zones of energy generation alternatives as power stations close that connect renewable energy such as wind and solar, storage such as batteries, and high voltage power poles and wires in the same location to capitalise on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity for NSW.

Resilience: The capacity of a place, town, city or region's systems, businesses, institutions, communities and individuals to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

Riverine environments: Land identified on a riparian lands and waterways map in an LEP and land within 40m to the top of the bank of a watercourse.

Ribbon development: Extensive residential/commercial/industrial development occurring in a linear pattern along a river corridor.

SME Small Medium Enterprise: According to the Australian Tax Office a Small Medium Business is one that has an aggregate turnover of less than $10,000,000. The Australian Bureau of Statistics use the following definitions:

- Micro-business employs between 0-4 persons
- Small business employs between 5-19 persons
- Medium business employs between 20 and 199 persons

Smart technology: Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology (SMART) technology that provides cognitive awareness to objects by making use of advanced technologies like internet of things, artificial intelligence, machine leaning and big data.

Social licence: A social license to operate refers to the perceptions of local stakeholders that an industry that operates in a given area or region is socially acceptable or legitimate.

Statutory planning: Includes planning proposals, development applications and other statutory processes that require planning decisions.

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Sustainable development (versus development) has a greater focus on intergenerational equity and achieving a balance between economic and environmental outcomes. The United Nations defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Underemployment: Is a term referring to individuals who are employed but are wanting to work more hours.

Unemployment: A term referring to individuals who are employable and actively seeking a job but are unable to find a job.

Urban land: Land zoned under any of the following land use zones:

- MicroRU5 Village (Balranald and Euston)
- R1 General Residential
- R2 Low Density Residential
- R3 Medium Density Residential
- R4 High Density Residential
- R5 Large Lot Residential
- E1 Local Centre
- E2 Commercial Centre
- E3 Productivity Support
- E4 General Industrial
- E5 Heavy Industrial
- B1 Neighbourhood Centre
- B2 Local Centre
- B3 Commercial Core
- B4 Mixed Use
- B5 Business Development
- B6 Enterprise Corridor
- B7 Business Park
- IN1 General Industrial
- IN2 Light Industrial
- IN3 Heavy Industrial
- SP3 Tourist

Value-added: The economic value that is added by each industry sector in a defined region. It can be calculated by subtracting local expenditure and expenditure on regional imports from the output generated by industry sector.

Visitor - Daytrip: Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.

Visitor – Overnight: People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.

Visitor – International: A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

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APPENDIX 2:

Key Balranald Shire Council Planning & Reports

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APPENDIX 2: KEY BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING AND REPORTS

Several key pieces of local research are precursors to this document including the:

- Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032 (May 2022)
- Balranald Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020)
- Settlement Strategy (Enhancement & Growth) – Shire of Balranald (Adopted 18 July 2023)
- Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (Booth Associates, 2012)
- Investment Attraction Plan - Hay, Balranald and Wentworth (Booth Associates, 2012)

Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032

The Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032 was undertaken in 2021/2022. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by a council, as such all other plans must support achievement of CSP objectives. From research undertaken for the Community Strategic Plan the following Vision was formed:

> 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 Vision gave rise to six Pillars – Our Lifestyle, Our Community, Our Economy, Our Infrastructure, Our Environment and Our Council. Of particular relevance to the current research for the Economic Development Strategy were:

Pillar 1 – Our Lifestyle - Future Direction 1.2 Improve access to a diverse range of housing opportunities, and Future Direction 1.3 Improve local access to education and careers;

Pillar 2 – Our Community - Future Direction 2.2 Innovate and improve community services, activities and events;

Pillar 3 - Our Economy - Future Direction 3.1 Support the expansion of our local industries, Future Direction 3.2 Nurture local businesses, and Future Direction 3.3 Increase tourism and visitation to the area;

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Balranald Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

The Balranald Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) (2020) works with Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) on how Council will meet the community's needs through land use planning. The LSPS planning priorities and actions provide the rationale for decisions about using our land to achieve the community's broader goals. It underpins the updates required to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP).

> In Planning is an essential facilitator of regional development. It provides a framework for long-term visions and distils them into the orderly use and management of our natural and built environment. The support of the Local Strategic Planning Statement, for Council's Community Strategic Plan, is essential
> Mike Colreavy, Administrator

To ensure consistency in strategic planning approaches, all councils within NSW are required to prepare an LSPS to act as a link between identified regional strategic priorities and more specific, detailed local level planning – expressed in council's local environmental plan and development control plans. In doing so this LSPS synthesises a Vision Statement drawn from Balranald Shire's vision in its Community Strategic Plan and to deliver the broader aims of the Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036:

> - Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for the economy;
> - Make Balranald Shire the best-possible place to live, work and invest
> - Achieve outstanding results in managing, enhancing and improving our natural and built environment

Regarding Our Economy the Local Strategic Planning Statement notes:

Agriculture is the largest industry in the Shire by land use, employment and value of production. Traditionally, this was largely comprised of dryland cropping and grazing. However, high value irrigated horticultural production has begun to rapidly emerge, underpinned by historically secure access to water from the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers.

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Balranald's southern communities and economy are highly reliant on guaranteed and predictable water supply. Historically secure water supply in the hot summers and mild winters of southwest NSW make Balranald Shire an attractive location for irrigated horticulture but also recreation and tourism.

Developments in mining and renewable energy projects in the Shire provide opportunities to bolster the economies of our townships. The West Balranald rutile-rich mineral sands deposit situated 10km north of Balranald township is the largest in the Murray Basin and is currently undergoing a Definitive Feasibility Study. The deposit represents a significant source of global supply, especially high value minerals such as rutile and zircon... Likewise, in the central area of Balranald Shire, 90 km north of Balranald, the Atlas-Campaspe mineral sands deposit is about to enter production with an expected mine life of twenty years.

As Australia transitions into using renewable energy, Balranald is ideally situated to capitalise on its ability to provide solar energy. Balranald has already seen the construction of two large solar energy farms that have access to transmission infrastructure, land availability and favourable climate conditions.

Tourism is a significant industry in the Shire contributing $7.0M/annum. The growth of tourism will increase economic diversity and reduce the region's reliance on agriculture and water dependent industries. Council will need to facilitate opportunities to leverage off our natural and cultural heritage assets including five significant rivers, national parks, iconic world and national heritage sites.

The planning priorities outlined in the LSPS are long-term and share features with the Community Strategic Plan. It is noted this does not preclude other opportunities and actions being taken and delivered.

OUR ECONOMY - INDUSTRY

Because Balranald Shire located on interstate crossroads in South Western NSW, there is long-term opportunity for Balranald to strengthen its industrial economy based on the resource, transport and agricultural sectors. Highlighting the following Actions:

1. Investigate opportunity to establish a heavy transport hub located adjacent to the grain rail siding and old sale yards along Sturt Hwy (over the bridge ~2km out of town, past Malcolm Street on left heading south)

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2. Undertake a 20yr infrastructure plan identifying key road assets that support our industries

3. Finalise roads asset management plan

4. Ensure planning applications and approvals are completed within the statutory timeframes

OUR ECONOMY – AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the major industry in the Balranald LGA due to a favourable climate, good soil types, plentiful supply of large tracts of land and access to irrigation water. In order to leverage these strengths and take advantage of growing demand for fresh, high quality produce, Council will protect important agricultural land. This planning priority reflects Balranald's aspirations to support its agricultural identity and to ensure a strong local economy that capitalises on the favourable climate and strategic connectivity to domestic and international markets via regional freight routes. Highlighting the following Actions:

5. Approve on-farm residential applications in line with the Balranald Local Environmental Plan 2010

6. Commission a rural land use strategy

7. Commission a rural land use strategy

8. Adopt Right to Farm policy

OUR ECONOMY – RESOURCES

Balranald Shire has natural resources that are economically and environmentally important to the region and to the State including large deposits of mineral sands and renewable energy assets – notably solar and wind. Council will support new and existing extractive industries in locations with safe access to a well maintained local and regional road network and minimal impacts on surrounding residents and agricultural lands. Council acknowledges its role in collaborating with industry and other levels of government to ensure quality development in accordance with economic and environmental balance. Highlighting the following Actions:

9. Ensure roads used for extractive material haulage have the capacity to support the activity

10. Activate contributions from solar farm proposals for community projects through negotiations in stakeholder consultation and pre consent stages of proposals

11. Commence analysis of transmission grid corridor options through collaboration with utility agencies

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OUR ECONOMY - UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

infrastructure is critical to the proper functioning and wellbeing of the community so timely, well-managed maintenance and development programs are a key to economic development. Understanding the current capacity and planned investments in utility infrastructure will enable Council to capitalise on any opportunities for economic and housing growth. Planned growth should be aligned with upgrades to town water, wastewater, electricity and telecommunication facilities. Highlighting the following Actions:

12. Advocate for and support land use for improved telecommunications

13. Complete identified upgrades and construction projects within Councils Operational Plan and Overarching Asset Management Plan (2017)

14. Develop a 20-year infrastructure plan in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan 2020-2040

15. Make application to undertake Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy

16. Promptly investigate water infrastructure upgrades for both townships to increase capacity

17. Extend Euston town water/sewer to Euston irrigation co-op area (the village)

OUR ECONOMY - TOURISM

Tourism is an emerging driver of growth in Balranald Shire and opportunities presented by sustainable, nature-based, cultural, and experiential tourism will enhance and diversify the economy. Tourism offerings include the five major rivers, national parks, and aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultural heritage. Popular visitor areas include picturesque Euston on the Murray River, as well as Yanga National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area which includes the internationally renowned Mungo National Park. Food and agri-tourism have future opportunities, supported by this LSPS and the Community Strategic Plan. Highlighting the following Actions:

18. Work with other entities such as Service NSW/ Easy to Do Business and BEC Business Advice and encourage business initiatives that target tourism and visitation to the shire

19. Recognise our 'hero' iconic and unique destination landscapes and grow marketing strategies to attract visitors to the region

20. Increase collaboration within all levels of NSW Destination networks, including cross border organisations, to deliver value in partnership cooperative programs

21. Seek out grant opportunities to enable investment in quality infrastructure and assets

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OUR SOCIETY – SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENTS

Balranald Shire's continuing economic development will require a better and broader commitment to improving housing. Council has an influential but not solo role in achieving this. Housing diversity will be achieved gradually with

22. Prepare a Land Release Strategy for Euston and Balranald

23. Economic Development Strategy to identify market accommodation needs

24. Continue to develop aged care facility options

25. Transient population study

OUR SOCIETY – VIBRANT PLACES

There are two basic elements to the vibrancy of communities – the physical setting whether natural or built, and the activities which routinely or occasionally happen. Balranald and Euston have sound examples of each. Highlighting the following Actions:

26. Design and execute township masterplans implementation for both Euston and Balranald incorporating places and spaces that are healthy to live in, to work in and to visit

27. Design and execute Greenham Park and Euston Recreation Complexes masterplans

28. Review and expand the pedestrian access management policy to permit sustainable transport options

OUR ENVIRONMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS

Balranald has a diverse natural environment that is valued by residents and visitors alike. Broadly, Balranald Shire can be divided into two geographic regions: the wetlands (incorporating the five rivers and their associated wetland connectors and lakes) and the outback including such environmental assets as the Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.

These two segments encompass contrasting ecosystems that provide significant wildlife habitats for a wide range of native flora and fauna. They also provide opportunity for the Shire to attract visitors for outback and wetland journeys, with many of the national parks providing great places to camp, hike and undertake 4WD touring, contributing to the 'Outback' experience for both international and domestic travellers. Highlighting the following Actions:

29. Fix the Balranald Weir pool infrastructure to deliver optimal environment and economic outcomes

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30. Relentlessly advocate to regional, state and national organisations to commit to managing and improving the supply and use of water resources

31. Through knowledge networks, ensure support for landholders in their understanding and management of dryland ecologies

32. Use the planning system to the limit, to deliver economic/environmental balance in zonings and processing

33. Development Applications

34. Include heritage and outstanding contemporary assets in community asset planning and the Balranald-Euston brand

35. Prepare Cultural Heritage Studies to inform amendments/review of Council's LEP

Settlement Strategy (Enhancement & Growth) - Shire of Balranald (July 2023)

The Settlement Strategy (Enhancement & Growth) – Shire of Balranald (July 2023) 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 and opportunities for urban enhancements. In line with this review the following summary of Challenges / Threats specific to Economic Development and population growth were noted:

- Climate change and impacts on agriculture and sustainability;
- Water security for agriculture and potable water supplies;
- High dependence on agriculture which can be cyclical;
- Value capture by other LGAs, including larger settlements such as Swan Hill and Mildura that may have higher level services/infrastructure to attract industrial/business/retail growth;
- Long travel distances and limitations to existing infrastructure including transport and communication;
- An ageing population;
- Lack of access to higher education and 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 and exacerbates use of temporary workforces (FIFO/DIDO) for major projects;
- Lack of available and suitable housing (both to buy and rental) is exacerbating the difficulties faced with attracting skilled workers to fill local positions and for major projects.

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The Settlement Strategy noted key planning controls (Balranald Local Environmental Plan 2010) applies a Zone RU5 Village to the core urban area of both Balranald and Euston settlements, adding "a Village Zone is a suitable category at this time... [and] there does not appear to be any need to separate business and residential land uses in Balranald or Euston. The use of industrial zoning may be considered if it would both highlight them for future development and protect certain them from residential encroachment."

Specific to Balranald the Settlement Strategy suggests the need for a Signage Strategy with a strong focus on boundaries and Gateways; Town Centre and Main Street Upgrades; Town Centre Signage and Art; Key Sites / Recreation Area(s) (including sports grounds, Discovery Centre Complex, Lions and ANZAC Parks, River Bend Reserve / Memorial Drive, Golf Club, Pony Club and Motocross) and the need for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass.

It was noted that Balranald's potential growth/expansion is significantly constrained by Crown lands which limit growth in all directions, but particularly to the north and west and, as such, it would be far more efficient to develop infill land. Infill land opportunities included Temporary Workers Camp, Privately Owned Lands and Golf Course Estate. Expansion of the Urban Area - South Balranald (Malcolm/Duryea Streets).

Specific to Euston the Settlement Strategy suggests the need for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass; Entrance Design and Signage Strategy; and Key Sites/Recreation Area(s) (including Euston Recreation Reserve, Euston Club and Riverfront Park, Anderson Park, Berrett Memorial Park, Medley Art Park, 'Bates' Subdivision – New Park).

Like Balranald, the Euston-Robinvale area appears to be experiencing significant growth pressures based on growth in intensive agricultural/ horticultural activities in the area (irrigation), a number of significant projects adding to employment demands, a large itinerant workforce, and significant constraints to growth of new housing areas. Euston also has significant tourism potential with its location on the Murray River and a wide range of accommodation types based around the Euston Club.

It was noted that Euston's potential growth/expansion is significantly constrained by the Murray River, Crown Lands, high value horticultural holdings, the Highway and the current capacity of sewer and water infrastructure. Like Balranald the greatest potential is in infill development.

The Settlement Strategy concluded that Euston's dwelling approval rates suggest significant demand in the current market.It is clear that there is a distinct lack of land suitable for housing to meet projected growth in the medium term (up to 10 years) and certainly not for long-term (10+ years) growth so additional land supply is likely to be required.

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The **Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy** (2012) held the Vision to:

> *Stabilise, consolidate and ultimately grow our community's future by: Building prosperity; Encouraging enterprise, and promoting liveability.*

In achieving this Vision the following Key Actions were prioritised:

- Tourism;
- Promote agriculture opportunities and address water security;
- Aged and health care;
- Trade training centre; and
- Small Business, Retail and Service Sector Strategy.

The Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy was undertaken alongside Economic Development Strategies for the Hay and Wentworth Councils. As a result the following key actions were identified with merit for a 'Cluster Alliance with kindred councils':

- Tourism;
- Digital Economy Strategy;
- Lobbying Strategy; and
- Promotion of agricultural opportunities

These additional key actions were detailed further in the **Investment Attraction Plan – Hay, Balranald and Wentworth (2012)**, a companion document to the 2012 Economic Development Strategy.

A Digital Economy Strategy was identified as a key action

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APPENDIX 3:

National, State, Regional and Local level Policy & Programs

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>>> APPENDIX 3: Key Balranald Shire Council planning and reports

NATIONAL

Regional Investment Framework

Regional Investment Framework: the Australian Government's approach to supporting strong and sustainable regions (2023) - Investing in People; Investing in Places; Investing in Services; and Investing in Industries and Local Economies

https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/regional-investment-framework-july2023.pdf

Regional Australia Impact Statement

State of Australia's Regions Report (2024)

Regional Australia Development (RDA) Charter

National Transformation Principles
For an orderly transition to a clean energy future for Australia and its regions

National Skills Agreement
Strategic investment in the vocational education and training sector

National Housing Accord
To deliver more secure and affordable housing) includes initiatives such as:
 - National Planning Reform Blueprint containing planning and zoning reforms, land release and other measures to improve housing supply and affordability
 - Housing Support Program ($500M) funding program for local and state governments to increase housing supply

The Growing Regions Program
Provides access to capital works grant funding of between $500,000 and $15 million for community and economic infrastructure across regional, rural and remote Australia.

The Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program
Provides access to capital works grant funding of between $500,000 and $15 million for community and economic infrastructure across regional, rural and remote Australia.

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Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities

Government's vision for a dynamic and inclusive labour market where people, businesses and communities thrive.

The Migration Strategy (December 2023)

Outlines the Australian Government's vision for a new migration system.

Infrastructure Investment Program

10-year $120 billion pipeline that provides funding for land transport infrastructure across Australia, including regional Australia

National Climate Adaption and Risk Program

Better Connectivity Plan for Regional & Rural Australia

Infrastructure Investment Program

10-year $120 billion pipeline that provides funding for land transport infrastructure across Australia, including regional Australia

National Climate Adaptation and Risk Program

Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Austral

Innovative Models of Care (IMOC)

Program aim is to find effective ways to deliver health and care services to people who live outside of major centres to address distance and access issues, as well as workforce shortages. The IMOC Program supports organisations to trial innovative multidisciplinary models of primary care in rural and remote communities and to evaluate whether they lead to better health outcomes.

Aged Care Capital Assistance Program (ACCAP)

Infrastructure grants fund that aims to invest in projects that will increase access to quality aged care services in regional, rural and remote locations and for older Australians with complex and diverse needs, including First Nations people and those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

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Productivity Commission's A Path to Universal early childhood education and care Draft Report (November 2023)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Childcare inquiry Interim report (September 2023)

National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the ECEC sector co-designed the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy.

Cheaper Child Care In July 2023

The Australian Government lifted the maximum CCS rate to 90% for families earning $80,000 or less, and increased subsidy rates for families earning less than $530,000.

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)

Supports around 900 services to reduce barriers to access, particularly for children and families in rural and remote communities experiencing disadvantage, First Nations communities, and where services are in limited supply. The CCCF will deliver approximately $611.3 million over four years from 2023, with more than 60% of this funding over the next two years being used to support services operating in regional and remote Australia.

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)

Supports around 900 services to reduce barriers to access, particularly for children and families in rural and remote communities experiencing disadvantage, First Nations communities, and where services are in limited supply. The CCCF will deliver approximately $611.3 million over four years from 2023, with more than 60% of this funding over the next two years being used to support services operating in regional and remote Australia.

Jobs and Skills Councils

As part of VET reform, the Australian Government has established 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) to identify skills and workforce needs for their sectors, map career pathways, develop contemporary VET training products, support training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting their industries, including across rural, regional and remote areas. HumanAbility, is the JSC for the children's education and care, aged care and disability, health, human services, and sport and recreation sectors.

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Net Zero Plan

Will articulate how Australia will transition to a net zero economy by 2050, consistent with our international and domestic commitments. This will include six Sectoral Plans to reduce emissions across agriculture and land, electricity and energy, industry, resources, the built environment and transport.

New Energy Skills Program ($17.8M)

This whole-of-government approach will support the growth of regional clean energy skills. The Australian Government has also enhanced the Local Jobs Program to support transformation to a net zero economy. New place-based flexible funding pools will connect workers, and communities with new jobs and skills opportunities. Four employment regions have received additional on-the-ground resources to plan for and optimise the opportunities for economic transformation..

National Statement on Climate Change & Agriculture

Offering a unified vision and commitment from agriculture ministers to work in partnership with the sector

Future Drought Fund

Provides funding of $100M / year for drought resilience initiatives, supporting innovation, adaptability, proactivity and preparedness for resilience. Under the Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020–2024, initiatives are funded to: improve access to climate information; build capability for farmers, local councils and regional stakeholders to develop resilience plans; support the development and use of new farming and land management practices; and drive local action to prepare for drought.

Regional Drought Resilience Planning

Provides up to $40M), alongside co-contributions from state and territory governments. This Program supports the development of community-led drought resilience plans across agricultural regions, based on evidence and driving proactive management of risks. WSC and BSC are currently undertaking a collaborative Plan.

Regional Drought Resilience Planning ($84M)

Provides ($89M) to support farmers and communities. There are eight regionally based centres spanning a variety of agricultural regions that bring together farmers, industry, business and experts to connect with the latest technologies and practices. BSC / WSC closest Hub is Charles Sturt's AgriPark in Wagga Wagga with a 'Hub node' in Broken Hill (Western Rangelands node)

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Securing the Future of Agricultural Trade (105M)

To support our agricultural commodity groups to navigate changes through stronger export and agricultural trade services.

Forestry Sector Support

Support Plantation Establishment Program assists with establishment of new long-rotation softwood and hardwood plantation forests in Australia to increase domestic timber supply and improve carbon outcomes.

Forestry Sector Support - Accelerate Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation

Will enhance the forestry sectors' ability to supply more of Australia's wood demands, improve the use of available wood supplies, and reduce its carbon footprint.

Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030

In 2023 the Government announced it would increase the Critical Minerals Facility from $2 billion to $4 billion to support the growth of this sector and boost value-adding jobs in regional Australia. Our critical minerals sector is well placed to seize the opportunities of the clean energy transition thanks to Australia's:

• rich geological reserves
• expertise at extracting minerals
• track record as a reliable producer and exporter of energy and resources.

The Strategy's vision is that by 2030 Australia:

• has grown the geostrategic and economic benefits of its critical minerals sector
• is a globally significant producer of raw and processed critical minerals
• supports diverse, resilient and sustainable supply chains.

Its objectives are to:

• create diverse, resilient and sustainable supply chains through strong and secure international partnerships
• build sovereign capability in critical minerals processing
• use our critical minerals to help become a renewable energy superpower extract more value onshore from our resources, creating jobs and economic opportunity, including for regional and First Nations communities.

National Parks

Plays a critical role in attracting tourism to regions. Recognising the importance of protecting and preserving Australia's Commonwealth-managed National Parks, the Government has allocated $262.3M to address critical funding and infrastructure requirements.

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National Reconstruction Fund ($158M)

One of the largest investments in manufacturing in Australian history. The NRF will co-invest into projects that build industrial capability and create jobs across seven priority areas of the economy identified by the Government. There is a strong regional focus across the priority areas, which includes value-add in agriculture, forestry and fisheries; value-add in resources; transport and low-emission and renewable technologies.

Industry Growth Program

Supports innovative small and medium enterprises in National Reconstruction Fund Government-identified priority areas – to commercialise their ideas and grow their businesses. There will be an additional focus on helping industry in these challenging development phases. Some businesses will be able to apply for matched grant funding of $50,000 to $5 million, as well as advice from industry experts.

THRIVE 2023 (The Strategy)

Is Australia's national strategy for long-term sustainable growth of the visitor economy, highlighting the importance of tourism to regional communities, generating jobs and providing services and amenities to people in the regions. Specific regional visitor expenditure targets are set (an interim target of $70B in regional visitor expenditure by 2024 - already achieved) and $100B by 2030.

First Nations Tourism

The Government is supporting the growth of First Nations tourism under THRIVE 2030 including through:
• grant opportunities ($9M) supporting over 160 First Nations tourism operators,
• $10M tourism mentoring program, to June 2025,
• ongoing discussions with state and territory governments on potential co-investment with the Commonwealth on First Nations tourism projects
• co-designing with First Nations tourism industry leaders and state and territory governments, a new First Nations Visitor Economy Partnership to provide a national voice for First Nations tourism

Travel & Tourism Package

Caravan Parks Grant Program is part of the Australian Government's $48M Supporting Travel and Tourism Package providing $10M to 112 caravan parks around Australia, located almost exclusively in regions, which will leverage more than $30M of investment in new visitor infrastructure.

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STATE

NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint - Investing the state's future (2019)

Regional Strengths and Infrastructure Gaps Regional Analysis: New South Wales (March 2022)

Regional Development Trust Fund

The NSW Government has announced an initial investment of $350 million into a Regional Development Trust Fund for sustainable and strategic investment with a focus on priorities that make a real difference to regional communities. The Regional Development Trust Fund will be invested in regional and rural communities through four focus areas:

1. Sustainable regional industries, including emerging and engine industries
2. Aboriginal economic development and enterprise
3. Community infrastructure and capacity building
4. Improving regional service delivery

Decision making on investment from the Regional Development Trust will be supported by recommendations from the Regional Development Advisory Council, and guided by clear investment principles aligned with the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework

Our Vision for Regional Communities (November 2022)

VISION: "People in our regions should have confidence in local services, enjoy the benefits of a regional lifestyle, and be able to access the services they need, when they need them." Prioritising action and outcomes across four key focus areas: Healthcare; Education; Communities and places; and Regional homes. The Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) is the custodian of this Vision

The Local Housing Strategy Guideline

The NSW Local Government Housing Kit

Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030

The net zero priorities

PRIORITY 1 - Drive uptake of proven emissions reduction technologies that grow the economy, create new jobs or reduce the cost of living

PRIORITY 2 – Empower consumers and businesses to make sustainable choices

PRIORITY 3 - Invest in the next wave of emissions reduction innovation to ensure economic prosperity from decarbonisation beyond 2030

PRIORITY – 4 Ensure the NSW Government leads by example

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The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a net zero economy (Jobs and Skills Australia)

Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline for State Significant Development NSW Hydrogen Strategy and Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program

Climate-Smart Agriculture Program (2023)

Through the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) the Australian Government has established the $302.1 million Climate-Smart Agriculture Program over five years from 2023-24. This program will drive agricultural sustainability, productivity, and competitiveness. It supports the following program outcomes:
>The agriculture sector is adopting practices to reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change.
>The agriculture sector is supported to harness carbon and biodiversity incentives and implement industry sustainability frameworks.
>Farmers are supported to drive agricultural growth, while adopting sustainable natural resource management practices that protect and conserve natural capital and biodiversity.

Future Ready Regions 2023 Upgdate

Supporting drought resilient communities and economies. The $64M Future Ready Regions strategy was released in 2021 with the goal of helping regional communities plan and prepare for drought by building resilience and bringing government agencies together to deliver solutions. The strategy outlined 14 actions to help achieve (1) sustainable, secure and healthy water resources, (2) stronger primary industries and (3) resilient, more economically diverse communities.

NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 - A Roadmap for Growing the NSW Visitor Economy.

Strategic Pillar 1. Road to Recovery
Strategic Pillar 2. Build the Brand
Strategic Pillar 3. Showcase Our Strengths
Strategic Pillar 4. Invest in World-Class Events Strategic Pillar 5. Facilitate Growth

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NSW's Critical Minerals and High-tech Metals Strategy (2021)

The NSW Government is committed to supporting the growth of the sector across the critical minerals supply chain, through investments in exploration, mining, processing, downstream industries and recycling.

The Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy outlines the NSW Government's vision to build on our existing potential and position NSW as a major global supplier and processor of critical minerals and high-tech metals well into the future. Under the Strategy the NSW Government will:

1. Establish Australia's first Critical Minerals Hub in the Central West
2. Promote exploration for critical minerals resources
3. Activate the industry through proactive development of supply chains
4. Attract investment for critical minerals resources, downstream processing and recycling
5. Critical minerals investment represents a vibrant, new frontier for regional communities and economies.

Key resources:
- NSW Critical Minerals Map (July 2023)
- Critical Minerals 2022 NSW Project List - July 2022

REGIONAL

Draft Far West Regional Plan 2041 (September 2022) Department of Planning & Environment

With the Vision: "The Far West Region is a unique part of western NSW with a diverse economy, the right infrastructure,
an exceptional natural environment, a rich Aboriginal culture and resilient communities." And 16 Objectives to support this (within three Parts - Part 1 Environment; Part 2 People and communities; and Part 3 Ongoing prosperity).

Office of the Cross-Border Commission

The NSW Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner works with, and on behalf of cross-border communities, businesses and organisations, and the NSW Government to identify, analyse and resolve cross-border issues. Our vision - Equitable access and opportunities, and seamless service delivery for people and businesses in cross-border communities.
Our strategic priorities:
1. Advocacy for and engagement with cross-border communities
2. Improving outcomes for cross-border communities
3. Investing in cross-border communities

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Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities, 2022 – 2026

Priority Pillar 1: Improve Water Security
Priority Pillar 2: Improve Energy Security & Affordability
Priority Pillar 3: Improve Transport Connectivity
Priority Pillar 4: Improve Digital Connectivity
Priority Pillar 5: Better Match Health Services to Our Changing Needs
Priority Pillar 6: Boost Industry/Workforce/Jobs
Priority Pillar 7: Housing
Priority Foundation: Strengthen Councils' Capacity and Capability

Far West Joint Organisation (FWJO), Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2019 – 2022 (August 2019)

Priority 1 – Proactivity A Region that is future focussed and enterprising
Priority 2 – Prosperity A prosperous growing Region full of opportunities for business, industry and tourism
Priority 3 – Sustainability A Region caring for the environment, and taking action when needed

Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2022-2030 (2022).

Vision - Supporting Riverina Murray stakeholders to develop and showcase the region as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers a suite of experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore and contributes to the regional NSW $25 billion visitor expenditure target by 2030.
Strategic Pillars – (reflect the NSW VES)
1. Road to Recovery
2. Build the Brand
3. Showcase our Strengths
4. Focus on World Class Events
5. Facilitate Growth

Murray Region Destination Management Plan, Murray Regional Tourism (2023)

VISION: The Murray Region will be recognised as Australia's premier inland destination to experience waterways, abundant nature and rich culture.
PRIORITY PROJECTS
Pillar 1: Activate Waterways
Pillar 2: Invest in Icons
Pillar 3: Create Vibrant Destinations
Pillar 4: Elevate First Nations Experience
Pillar 5: Drive Demand
Pillar 6: Build Industry Capacity and Facilitate Growth

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Regional Development Australia – Murray Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (2022)

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 1. Connectivity & Infrastructure

RDA Murray Strategy - Improve digital infrastructure, communication and literacy, and accessibility AND Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive freight transport, visitation and tourism, logistics and warehousing

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 2. Human Capital & Skills

RDA Murray Strategy - Creating networked and knowledgeable learning communities capable of attracting, connecting and retaining workforce

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 3. Leadership & Collaboration

RDA Murray Strategy - Model ethical leadership and inclusion of diverse perspectives AND Collaborate for stronger and more attuned collective impact

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 4. Regional Employment & Business

RDA Murray Strategy - Accelerate capacity building and economic diversification

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 5. Amenity & Liveability

RDA Murray Strategy - Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities, for all

National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth - 6. Sustainable Natural Resources

RDA Murray Strategy - Champion behaviours that preserve, conserve and regenerate our natural resources (focussing on water, vegetation, soil and carbon) to address climate change

Far (South) West Joint Organisation Destination Management Plan (September 2022).

PRIORITY PROJECTS
1. Odyssey travel by road, rail or air
2. Transformative experiences
3. Events in the landscape

1. ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS
1.1 New model for Aboriginal Cultural Tourism
1.2 Digital transformation and visitor services
1.3 Cross-region collaboration & industry develop't
1.4 Connectivity & accessibility

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Planning for a Shared Future, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage property, Final Report – 25 November 2023

Report finds that the current World, National and State heritage listings do not fully express the heritage values and attributes of the Willandra Lakes Region property. It is recommended that the full expression of the values and attributes of the property should be pursued in relation to the National Heritage List and State Heritage Register.

Improved access to Mungo National Park was a recommendation of the report. Acknowledging the importance of a 'round trip' Buronga – Balranald. Improved Visitor Product development and the development of the Dark Skies asset was also recommended.

Importance of key stakeholders especially 3TTG and adjacent landholders.

LOCAL

Balranald Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032 (May 2022) & Delivery Program 2022-2026 (May 2022)

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 Vision gave rise to six Pillars – Our Lifestyle, Our Community, Our Economy, Our Infrastructure, Our Environment and Our Council. Of particular relevance to the current research for the Economic Development Strategy were:

Pillar 1 – Our Lifestyle - Future Direction 1.2 Improve access to a diverse range of housing opportunities, and Future Direction 1.3 Improve local access to education and careers;

Pillar 2 – Our Community - Future Direction 2.2 Innovate and improve community services, activities and events;

Pillar 3 - Our Economy - Future Direction 3.1 Support the expansion of our local industries, Future Direction 3.2 Nurture local businesses, and Future Direction 3.3 Increase tourism and visitation to the area;

Pillar 5 - Our Environment - Future Direction 5.1 Celebrate and promote our unique local environment, Future Direction 5.2 Protect our water assets, and Future Direction 5.3 Manage our waste sustainably; and

Pillar 6 – Our Council - Future Direction 6.1 Develop capabilities, and Future Direction 6.4 Develop and maximise strategic planning and partnerships.

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Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (2012) & Investment Attraction Plan (2012)

Vision to: Stabilise, consolidate and ultimately grow our community's future by: Building prosperity; Encouraging enterprise, and Promoting liveability.
In achieving this Vision the following Key Actions were prioritised:

› Tourism;
› Promote agriculture opportunities and address water security;
› Aged and health care;
› Trade training centre; and
› Small Business, Retail and Service Sector Strategy.

The Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy was undertaken alongside Economic Development Strategies for the Hay and Wentworth Councils. As a result the following key actions were identified with merit for a 'Cluster Alliance with kindred councils':

› Tourism;
› Digital Economy Strategy;
› Lobbying Strategy; and
› Promotion of agricultural opportunities

Balranald Shire Council Economic Development Strategy (2012) & Investment Attraction Plan (2012)

Highlighting the following Actions:

1. Investigate opportunity to establish a heavy transport hub

2. Undertake a 20yr infrastructure plan identifying key road assets that support our industries

3. Finalise roads asset management plan

4. Ensure planning applications and approvals are completed within the statutory timeframes

5. Approve on-farm residential applications in line with the Balranald Local Environmental Plan 2010

6. Commission a rural land use strategy

7. Value agriculture in decisions about land uses

8. Adopt Right to Farm policy

9. Ensure roads used for extractive material haulage have the capacity to support the activity

10. Activate contributions from solar farm proposals for community projects

11. Commence analysis of transmission grid corridor options through collaboration with utility agencies

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12. Advocate for and support land use for improved telecommunications

13. Complete identified upgrades and construction projects within Councils Operational Plan and Overarching Asset Management Plan (2017)

14. Develop a 20-year infrastructure plan in accordance with the CSP 2020-2040

15. Make application to undertake Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy

16. Promptly investigate water infrastructure upgrades for both townships to increase capacity

17. Extend Euston town water/sewer to Euston irrigation co-op area (the village)

18. Work with other entities and encourage business initiatives that target tourism and visitation

19. Recognise our 'hero' iconic and unique destination landscapes and grow marketing

20. Increase collaboration within all levels of NSW Destination networks, including cross border

21. Seek out grant opportunities to enable investment in quality infrastructure and assets

22. Prepare a Land Release Strategy for Euston and Balranald

23. Economic Development Strategy to identify market accommodation needs

24. Continue to develop aged care facility options

25. Transient population study

26. Design and execute township masterplans implementation for both Euston and Balranald

27. Design and execute Greenham Park and Euston Recreation Complexes masterplans

28. Review and expand the pedestrian access management policy to permit sustainable transport options

29. Fix the Balranald Weir pool infrastructure to deliver optimal environment and economic outcomes

30. Relentlessly advocate to regional, state and national organisations to commit to managing and improving the supply and use of water resources

31. Through knowledge networks, ensure support for landholders in their understanding and management of dryland ecologies

32. Use the planning system to the limit, to deliver economic/environmental balance

33. Include heritage and outstanding contemporary assets in community asset planning and the Balranald-Euston brand

34. Prepare Cultural Heritage Studies to inform amendments/review of Council's LEP

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Settlement Strategy (Enhancement & Growth) – Shire of Balranald (July 2023)

Specific to Balranald the Settlement Strategy suggests the need for a Signage Strategy with a strong focus on boundaries and Gateways; Town Centre and Main Street Upgrades; Town Centre Signage and Art; Key Sites / Recreation Area(s) (including sports grounds, Discovery Centre Complex, Lions and ANZAC Parks, River Bend Reserve / Memorial Drive, Golf Club, Pony Club and Motocross) and the need for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass.

Specific to Euston the Settlement Strategy suggests the need for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass; Entrance Design and Signage Strategy; and Key Sites/Recreation Area(s) (including Euston Recreation Reserve, Euston Club and Riverfront Park, Anderson Park, Berrett Memorial Park, Medley Art Park, 'Bates' Subdivision – New Park).

Balranald Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan and Settlement Strategy are currently 2 of Council's key strategic plans

2026-2031

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Researched & Developed by The Tourism & Economic Development Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Balranald Shire Council acknowledges the Custodians of the lands and waters within our Shire and recognises their continuing responsibilities to care for country and of teaching and learning.

We pay respects to Elders past and present, and extend our respects to all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Isander First Nations Peoples.

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BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

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BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

1. Executive Summary

a. Purpose of the Destination Management Plan

The **Balranald Shire Destination Management Plan** (DMP) provides a strategic framework to guide the sustainable growth, development and promotion of Balranald Shire's visitor economy. It aligns with the NSW Government's Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, Destination NSW regional priorities, Council's Economic Development Strategy and Community Strategic Plan, while reflecting the community's vision for economic resilience, cultural celebration, and environmental stewardship.

The plan outlines a coordinated approach to tourism development that reflects the Shire's unique identity—where ancient landscapes, vibrant wetlands, riverscapes and rich cultural heritage converge.

This plan is informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, market analysis, and place-based insights. It integrates tourism with broader community development goals, ensuring that growth in visitation delivers tangible benefits to residents, businesses, Traditional Owners, and the environment.

BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

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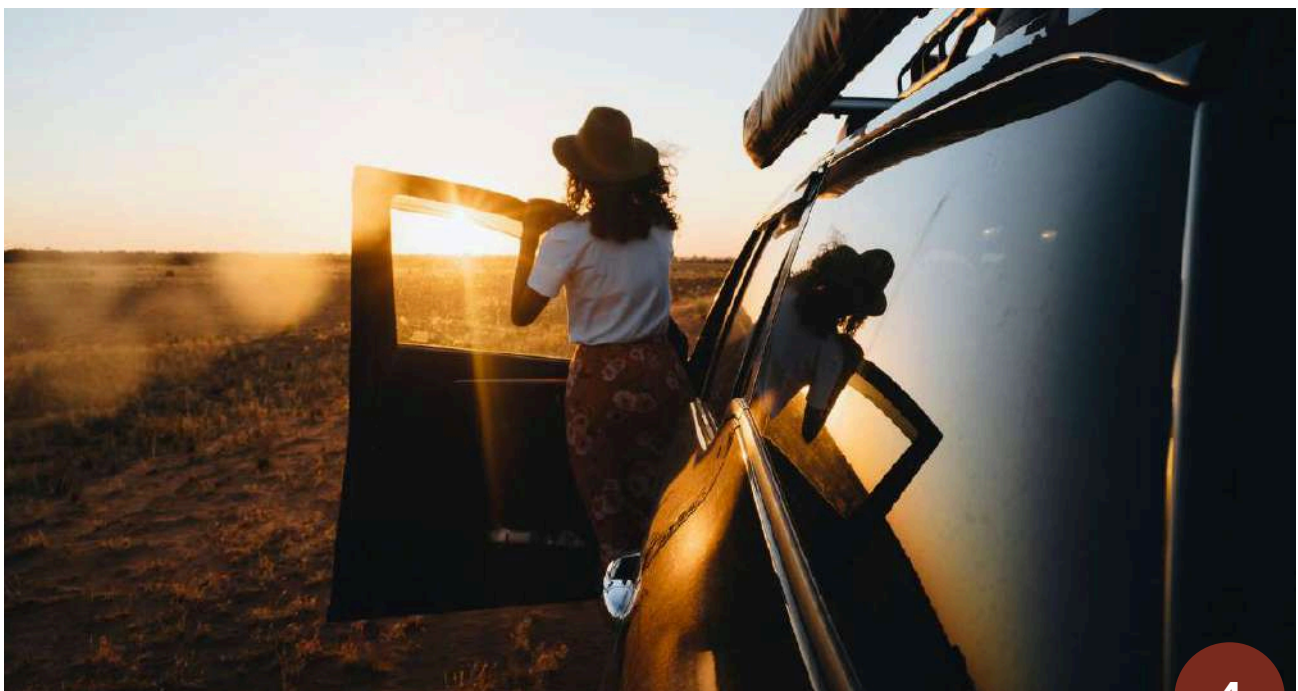
b. Strategic Objectives

The following are the **eight core objectives** in Balranald Shire's Destination Management Plan (DMP). These are aligned with tourism trends, regional and local priorities, and Balranald Shire's unique assets

1. Strengthen Regional Identity

Brand Cohesion: Embed "Where the Wetlands Meet the Outback" across signage, campaigns, and experiences to unify messaging.

Cultural Leadership: Position Balranald Shire as the gateway to Mungo & the Willandra Lakes region with First Nations-led storytelling and interpretation.

Creative Placemaking: Transform public spaces into meaningful places through art, culture, design, and community participation. Foster identity, pride, and connection—making destinations emotionally resonant and socially inclusive

Regional Collaboration: Lead initiatives and strategic partnership with neighbouring councils, tourism operators, cultural organisations, and state bodies to deliver shared outcomes across geographic boundaries and to amplify shared narratives and drive dispersal.

2. Enhance Visitor Experience & Visitor Infrastructre

Wayfinding & Interpretation: Design physical and digital cues that guide visitors through the shire, helping them navigate sites while uncovering local stories. Wayfinding will ensure ease of movement, while interpretation will deepen understanding through signage, storytelling, and engagement with place. Together, enhancing sense of arrival and emotional connection to Country and community.

Amenities Upgrades: Improve visitor-facing infrastructure that ensure comfort, accessibility, and functionality. These include toilets, shade structures, water refill stations, seating, lighting, and pet-friendly zones—enhancing dwell time, increasing satisfaction, and enabling inclusivity for all ages and abilities.

Digital Integration: Use technology to improve visitor information delivery, engagement, and transaction capability. Include mobile-responsive VIC platforms, QR-linked trail maps, real-time promotions via Google Maps and booking systems that create a seamless, connected journey.

Experience Packaging: Bundle tourism products (accommodation, events, trails, tours) into coherent and bookable offerings that match seasonal interests, visitor profiles, and strategic goals. Help extend stays, boost spend, and drive destination loyalty through curated, memorable itineraries.

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3. Boost Economic Diversification

Tourism as a Growth Sector: Position tourism as a key driver of regional prosperity, alongside industries like agriculture, logistics, renewable energy, mining and health, an industry with the ability to generate employment, diversify income, and spark innovation across Balranald Shire's towns and communities. This designation encourages investment, policy support, and cross-sector linkages.
Creative Enterprise Support

Creative Enterprise Support: Target initiatives that nurture local artists, makers, designers, and cultural producers, transforming creative talent into sustainable businesses and tourism offerings. Support is to include mentoring, training, co-branding, retail pathways, and shared studio spaces.

Infrastructure Investment: Invest in capital funding and strategic upgrades that enable tourism activation, workforce mobility, and visitor comfort. Infrastructure to include both hard assets (toilets, trails, signage, accommodations) and digital assets (connectivity, booking systems). This investment is critical for economic development and community liveability.

Housing Strategy: integrate tourism-related accommodation development with broader housing and workforce plans to ensure short-stay, seasonal, and DIDO lodging needs do not disrupt affordability or access for residents. The alignment is to strengthen Council's planning position and support inclusive growth.

4. Grow Overnight Stay & Spend

Event-driven Activation: Drive a tourism strategy that leverages festivals, community celebrations, and seasonal activations to attract visitors, increase overnight stays, and drive local spend. Event-driven visitation is to generate emotional connection, create media buzz, and invite repeat engagement through shared cultural experiences.

Accommodation Packaging: Bundle lodging options with experiences, events, or itineraries into curated offers that incentivise longer stays and simplify visitor planning. Packages could include meals, trail maps, tour tickets, or festival access, providing tangible value and showcasing local operators.

Digital Booking Enablement: Where possible turn tourism products (accommodation, tours, events) available through online platforms, mobile apps, and third-party booking sites. Ensure operators are visible, bookable, and integrated with VIC systems, supporting seamless visitor journeys and conversion.

Touring Route Development: Design themed and connected travel itineraries that link attractions, towns, and experiences across the region, encouraging visitation dispersal and storytelling along the way. Routes can be self-drive, guided, or digital and supported by passports, signage, or VIC pickup packs.

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BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

5. Support Local Businesses

Capacity Building: Empower individuals, businesses, and community groups with the skills, tools, and confidence needed to participate meaningfully in the visitor economy. It includes training, mentoring, knowledge-sharing, and resource development that strengthen local capability across tourism, governance, cultural programming, and enterprise.

Business XChange Forums: Facilitate gatherings that bring together local businesses, Traditional Owners, creatives, and Council staff to share insights, build relationships, and spark cross-sector collaboration. The forums are to foster innovation, peer learning, and co-design of new visitor experiences aligned with regional goals.

Co-branding Toolkit: Develop a suite of branded assets, templates, and signage guidelines that enable local businesses and tourism operators to align visually and thematically with Balranald Shire's destination identity. Co-branding enhances recognition, consistency, and collective storytelling across touchpoints.

Grant Navigation Support: Guide and assist operators and community groups identify, apply for, and deliver tourism-related grants. This is to include matching opportunities to needs, preparing supporting materials, and ensuring compliance with reporting requirements.

6. Convert Pass-through Traffic into Meaningful Visitation

Highway Activation: Transform key highway corridors, such as the Sturt Highway, into branded, engaging gateways that invite travellers to stop, explore, and connect. This could include sculptural landmarks, directional signage, rest stop enhancements, and visual storytelling that reflect Balranald's identity and encourage dispersal into town precincts.

Short-Stay Itineraries: Curated 1–3 hour experiences designed for pass-through travellers, encouraging them to pause and engage with local attractions. These itineraries are to be mapped, themed, and supported by VIC pickup packs, signage, or digital guides, providing low-barrier entry into Balranald Shire story.

Geo-Targeted Ads: Establish digital campaigns that deliver real-time promotional content to travellers based on their location, travel route, or search behaviour. These ads appear on platforms like Google Maps, Waze, Spotify, or LiSTNR—nudging visitors toward local experiences, events, or VIC services as they approach Balranald shire.

Rest Area Enhancements: Implement upgrades to highway rest stops and town entry points that improve comfort, accessibility, and visual appeal. Enhancements could include shaded seating, clean toilets, water refill stations, interpretive signage, and public art—turning passive stops into active invitations.

BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

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7. Drive Sustainable Growth

Eco-Tourism Development: Create nature-based visitor experiences that are environmentally responsible, culturally respectful, and economically beneficial to local communities. Eco-tourism will prioritise conservation, education, and low-impact design, offering immersive encounters with landscapes, wildlife, and cultural knowledge systems.

Cultural Protocols Compliance: Consistently apply Aboriginal cultural protocols across tourism planning, interpretation, and delivery. This is to include respecting story ownership, gendered knowledge, ceremonial obligations, and consent for use of language, imagery, and sites. Compliance ensures cultural safety, integrity, and Traditional Owner leadership.

Green Infrastructure: Establish environmentally sustainable assets and systems that support tourism while protecting natural resources. This could include solar-powered amenities, water refill stations, waste sorting bins, native landscaping, and low-impact trails, designed to reduce ecological footprint and enhance visitor comfort.

Monitoring & Evaluation: Establish ongoing collection, analysis, and reporting of data to assess the performance, impact, and community satisfaction of tourism initiatives. This includes tracking visitation, biodiversity engagement, cultural protocol compliance, and economic outcomes—ensuring transparency, accountability, and adaptive management.

8. Foster Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Co-design as Core Practice: Establish a collaborative planning approach where community members, Traditional Owners, youth, and stakeholders are equal partners in shaping tourism experiences, infrastructure, and messaging. Co-design will ensure that decisions reflect lived experience, cultural knowledge, and local aspirations

Inclusive Governance: Establish a decision-making model that actively includes diverse voices across age, culture, ability, and sector, in the leadership and oversight of tourism strategy. It promotes transparency, equity, and shared ownership of outcomes.

Layered Engagement Channels: Establish multiple and accessible ways for community members to contribute ideas, feedback, and creativity—beyond formal consultation. These include pop-ups, creative workshops, surveys, youth activations, and informal gatherings that meet people where they are.

Transparent Communication: Implement clear, consistent, and honest sharing of information about tourism planning, decisions, and outcomes. This will build trust, invites feedback, and ensures that community members understand how and why things happen.

Capacity Building for Participation: Deliver training, mentoring, and support that empowers community members to engage meaningfully in tourism planning and delivery.

Youth & Intergenerational Focus: Commit to amplifying young voices while fostering connection across generations. This will position youth as leaders, creatives, and storytellers, while honouring Elders as knowledge holders and mentors.

Feedback-to-Action Loop: Establish a responsive system where community input visibly shapes decisions, and contributors are acknowledged. This will close the gap between consultation and delivery—ensuring that feedback leads to tangible outcomes.

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BSC DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

c. Guiding Principles

The following are a set of guiding principles that will **underpin the delivery** of Balranald Shire's **Destination Management Plan** (DMP). These principles ensure that implementation remains community-led, culturally respectful, strategically aligned, and adaptable, while reflecting the Shire's unique identity and aspirations.

Community-Led & Place-Based

Tourism development must reflect the aspirations, stories, and lived experiences of Balranald's communities. This principle ensures that planning is grounded in local identity, co-designed with residents, and responsive to place-specific opportunities.

Cultural Respect & Inclusion

All initiatives must honour Aboriginal cultural protocols, support Traditional Owner leadership, and foster inclusive participation across generations, backgrounds, and abilities. Tourism becomes a platform for reconciliation, respect, and shared learning

Sustainability & Stewardship

Tourism should protect and regenerate the natural and cultural assets it relies on. This principle promotes low-impact experiences, climate resilience, and stewardship models that empower visitors and locals to care for Country.

Collaboration & Capacity Building

Destination development is a shared responsibility. This principle encourages partnerships across sectors, mentoring for local operators, and investment in skills, governance, and innovation to build a resilient visitor economy.

Transparency & Accountability

All actions must be measurable, reportable, and open to community feedback. This principle supports trust-building through clear communication, performance dashboards.

Creativity & Innovation

Tourism should spark imagination and pride. This principle champions creative placemaking, youth expression, and bold storytelling that positions Balranald as a destination of wonder, curiosity, and cultural depth.

d. Action Themes

These **10 Action Themes** will be used to structure the **Action & Implementation Plan** of the Destination Management Plan. These themes align with the plan's strategic objectives and provide a clear framework for prioritising initiatives, allocating resources, and engaging stakeholders.

Place Identity & Storytelling

Establishes Balranald Shire as a place of layered stories —where natural wonders, local personalities, and cultural heritage converge. This theme ensures tourism experiences are authentic, emotionally resonant, and reflective of local pride.

Visitor Infrastructure & Experience Design

Elevates the visitor journey through targeted upgrades to facilities, accessibility, and interpretive tools. Focus on immersive, multi-sensory experiences that encourage longer stays and repeat visitation.

Cultural Leadership & Aboriginal Tourism

Embeds Aboriginal voices, leadership, and cultural protocols at the heart of destination planning. This theme fosters respectful collaboration, economic opportunity, and cultural renewal through tourism.

Events & Activation

Uses events as catalysts for community connection, tourism dispersal, and regional branding. Prioritise inclusive formats that amplify youth voices, celebrate diversity, and showcase local creative talent
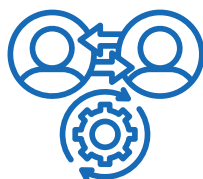
Business Capacity & Collaboration

Supports local operators and community groups to thrive through training, mentoring, and co-design tools. This theme builds a resilient, quality-assured tourism ecosystem driven by shared learning and innovation.

Creative, Art & Culture

Celebrates the Shire's artistic talent, cultural diversity, and creative expression. Strengthen Balranald Shires's identity as a hub for authentic storytelling and innovation. Creativity will foster pride, attract cultural travellers.

Highway & Gateway Activation

Transforms passing traffic into purposeful visitation. This theme focuses on sculptural landmarks, welcoming signage, short-stay itineraries, and highway-based campaigns that create a compelling first impression.

Sustainability & Stewardship

Champions low-impact tourism models that protect ecological and cultural assets. Promote environmental responsibility regenerative practices, and visitor education aligned with Balranald's values and long-term vision.
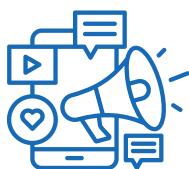
Marketing, Promotions & Digital Engagement

Elevates Balranald Shire's visibility and appeal through innovative marketing, branding, and digital strategies. Destination campaigns, highway traveller promotions, social media activations, influencer partnerships, and interactive tools will attract new visitor markets, and convert awareness into longer stays and higher spend.

Governance & Community Engagement

Ensures transparent, inclusive, and collaborative governance of the DMP. Activate mechanisms for feedback, youth leadership, and Traditional Owner input so that destination development reflects shared ownership.

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e. Vision, Mission & Positioning Statement

Vision

Balranald Shire will be recognised & celebrated as a vibrant, inclusive and culturally rich destination, where nature, heritage & community spirit converge to create unforgettable experiences and shared prosperity.

Mission

We will achieve our vision by consistently and collaboratively delivering and promoting authentic, inclusive, immersive & nature-based experiences and assets that celebrate our five rivers, world heritage landscapes, stunning wildlife, arts & cultural treasures and community sparkle.

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Positioning Name, Logo & Positioning Statement
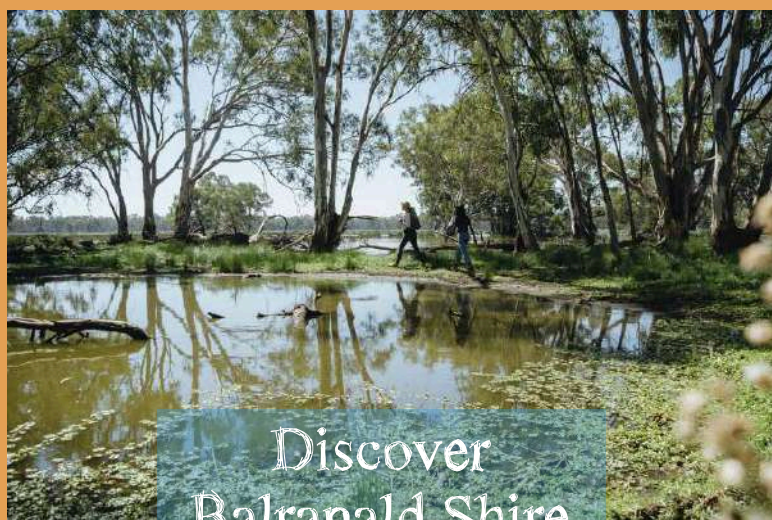
Current positioning name, and logo with positioning statement "Where the wetlands meet the outback"

Optional logo (mock up only) to replace positioning name "Balranald & Surrounds" with "Balranald Shire" or keep original name but with the name of shire towns around the circle

The evocative positioning statement **"Where the wetlands meet the outback"** captures the essence of Balranald Shire's unique appeal: a place where ancient landscapes, vibrant wetlands, and rich cultural heritage converge in one unforgettable destination. It positions the region as a gateway to contrast and connection—where the serenity of river systems and bird-filled wetlands flows seamlessly into the rugged beauty of the outback.

The phrase invites travellers to slow down, explore deeply, and connect meaningfully with Country, community, and story. It reflects Balranald's dual identity as both a nature-based sanctuary and a cultural crossroads, offering immersive experiences that span from the lunar dunes of Mungo National Park to the ecological richness of Yanga Wetlands and the Five Rivers.

More than a tagline, it's a promise: that every visit will reveal something new.

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2. Destination Overview

a. Regional Identify

Balranald Shire is a place of striking contrasts and deep connections—where ancient landscapes, vibrant wetlands, and resilient communities converge to create **a destination unlike any other** in New South Wales. The shire is a natural playground for eco-tourists, cultural travellers and road trippers.

Ecological Distinctiveness

- Defined by the confluence of **five iconic rivers**—the Murrumbidgee, Murray, Wakool, Edward, and Lachlan, Balranald is a living wetland system that sustains biodiversity, agriculture, and cultural practice.

- The Shire borders semi-arid outback plains, creating a rare ecological transition zone that supports both wetland birdlife and desert-adapted species.

- This duality is reflected in the tagline: "**Where the Wetlands Meet the Outbac**k" which is a poetic invitation to explore nature's diversity.

Nature & Parks - A Landscape of Connection Across the Shire

Balranald Shire offers **extraordinary access to nature**, with each community—Balranald, Euston, Kyalite, and the northern localities—connected to distinct **ecological treasures**.

From the wetlands and red gum forests of **Yanga National Park** near Balranald, to the tranquil shores of **Lake Benanee** and the vibrant birdlife of **Euston Regional Park**, the Shire is a sanctuary for wildlife and outdoor exploration.

Near **Kyalite, the Murray Regional Park** and **State Forests** provide shaded retreats and riverside camping, while the **Willandra Lakes Region in the north** reveals ancient landscapes and cultural stories etched into the earth.

With five iconic rivers weaving through its heart, **Balranald Shire is a living canvas of biodiversity**, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in nature's rhythm.

Cultural Depth & Aboriginal Leadership

- Balranald is home to the Muthi Muthi, Barkandji/Paakantyi, and Ngiyampaa peoples, whose cultural knowledge and custodianship shape the region's identity.
- Sites like Mungo National Park, Dippo Ceremonial Ground, and Lake Benanee hold global significance for their archaeological, spiritual, and ecological value.
- The Shire's identity is inseparable from its Aboriginal heritage, which informs its protocols, storytelling, and tourism development.

Pioneering History

- Balranald Shire's identity is deeply rooted in its pioneering history of **river trade**, **sheep station heritage**, and **timber production**, each shaping the landscape, economy, and community character across generations
- Together, these industries form a **layered heritage** that continues to shape Balranald shire's identity—reflected in its museums, interpretive trails, and community storytelling. They offer rich opportunities for heritage tourism, creative placemaking, and intergenerational learning, connecting past resilience to future innovation.

Transport & Aviation History

- In the 19th century, Balranald and Euston thrived as **river trade hubs**, with paddle steamers transporting wool, timber, and supplies along the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers. Wood piles were spaced every 40 km to fuel the steamers, and the towns' survival was closely tied to this river economy.

- As river transport declined, **railways emerged**, briefly connecting Balranald to broader freight and passenger networks. However, the rise of sealed roads and highway infrastructure eventually made rail obsolete, shifting the town's commercial and civic centre from Mayall Street (near the river port) to Market Street on the Sturt Highway

- Balranald also holds a unique place in Australia's aviation history. The town is home to the **Balranald Southern Cross Museum**, which celebrates legendary aviator Charles Kingsford Smith and his connection to the region. The museum features a replica of the Southern Cross—the aircraft used in the first transpacific flight from the U.S. to Australia—acquired through the efforts of local resident **Colin Jacka** and his son **Paul Jacka**.

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- **Kingsford Smith's visit to Balranald** in the 1930s inspired generations, and today the museum stands as a tribute to both national achievement and local pride. It also reflects the Shire's ongoing commitment to storytelling, education, and creative placemaking.

- Balranald Shire's **transport and aviation history** is more than infrastructure—it's a story of adaptation, ambition, and connection. From riverboats to replica planes, it reflects the Shire's enduring role as a gateway to discovery.

Creative & Community Expression

- Balranald Shire embraces **creative placemaking** as a tool for civic pride, intergenerational connection, and tourism activation.

- Balranald shire's **Art Gallery and Creative Learning Centre** stands as a dynamic beacon of community and creative expression, showcasing the talents of local and regional artists through rotating exhibitions that reflect the spirit and stories of the region. The Centre hosts a vibrant calendar of cultural workshops, youth-led programs, and intergenerational learning experiences that foster artistic exploration and social connection. From painting and sculpture to storytelling and cultural craft, it's a place where creativity is not only celebrated but deeply woven into the fabric of community life.

- Balranald Shire shares a strong and vibrant partnership with **South West Arts**, a regional arts body that provides strategic direction for sustainable cultural development across six local government areas. Through this collaboration, Balranald Shire benefits from access to regional exhibitions, touring programs, and creative initiatives. South West Arts also supports youth engagement, Aboriginal cultural programming, and professional development for artists—helping Balranald Shire amplify its creative voice and connect with broader regional networks.

- The **frog motif, drawn from the Southern Bell Frog's ecological presence,** has become a symbol of resilience, regeneration, and local spirit. This is embodied in the playful Funky Frog Sculpture Trail which has become a major draw card for visitors while learning of ecological connection.

- Similarly, Euston celebrates its vibrant identity through **Reggie the Regent Parrot**, a playful and striking motif that honours the town's rich birdlife and natural surrounds. Much like Balranald's iconic frogs, Reggie invites locals and visitors alike to explore the unique ecosystems of the shire, sparking curiosity and pride in the colourful species that call Euston home.

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Balranald Shire - A Landscape of Legacy & Opportunity

Balranald Shire is not just a place to visit—it's a place to connect, reflect, and rediscover the stories that shape Country and community.

Opportunities include:

- **Eco-Tourism & Nature-Based Experiences:** Leveraging wetlands, river systems, and parks for immersive, low-impact tourism.

- **Cultural Tourism & Aboriginal Leadership:** Supporting Aboriginal-led enterprises, interpretation, and co-designed experiences.

- **Heritage Activation:** Revitalising river trade, pastoral, and aviation stories through trails, signage, and creative placemaking.

- **Regional Dispersal & Connectivity**: Strengthening highway and touring route integration to attract pass-through visitors and extend stays.

- **Creative & Community Expression:** Amplifying local identity through art, youth engagement, and partnerships with South West Arts.
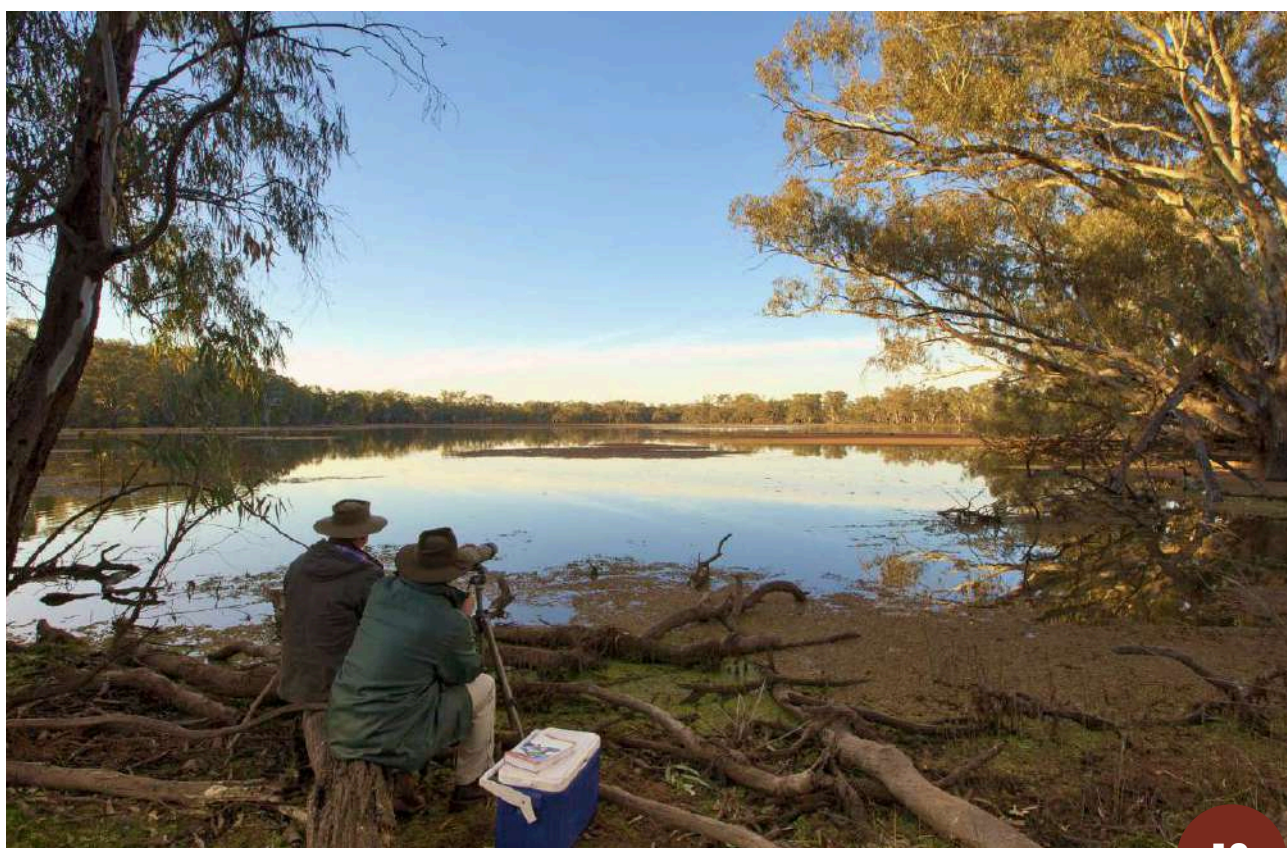
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b. Location & Access

1. Strategic Location

Balranald Shire is located in the far south-west of New South Wales within the Riverina-Murray destination region. The shire sits at the ecological and cultural crossroads of:

- **Five iconic river systems:** The Murrumbidgee, Murray, Wakool, Edward and Lachlan rivers
- **The semi-acrid outback and wetlands**
- **Major touring routes** connecting Western Victoria, South Australia, and Western NSW

Balranald shire's strategic location makes it an ideal stopover, touring base and cultural gateway for visitors and travellers seeking immersive outback experiences. This positioning makes the area a gateway to Mungo National Park, the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, and broader outback touring loops.

2. Road Access

Major Highways & Key Connectors

- **Sturt Highway:** A key east-west corridor connecting Balranald Shire to Sydney, Canberra, Griffith, Mildura, and Adelaide. It runs directly through Balranald and Euston, making both towns highly visible and accessible to pass-through traffic.
- **Murray Valley Highway:** Connects Euston to Robinvale and Swan Hill, linking the Shire to Victoria's river towns and agricultural hubs.
- **Silver City Highway:** Enables multi-day touring loops that include Balranald's wetlands and cultural sites, Wentworth's river heritage, and Broken Hill's outback art and mining history. Supports cross-border visitation from Victoria and South Australia into Far West NSW, with Balranald acting as a gateway to Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes Region.
- **Riverina Highway/Cobb Highway**: Forms part of the Riverina touring route linking agricultural towns, Murray River destinations and cultural hubs. Creates a natural east-west dispersal corridor from the Victorian border through to the Far West through Balranald and Euston.
- **Mid-Western Highway:** The linkage to Sturt Highway positions Balranald Shire as a natural extension point for travellers, freight, and touring routes originating from Central NSW
- **Wool Track Route:** A strategic freight and touring corridor connecting Balranald shire to Cobar, Broken Hill, and Western Queensland, enhancing regional mobility.

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Local Roads

- **Balranald–Ivanhoe Road, Euston–Prungle Road, Marma–Box Creek Road, and Turlee–Leaghur Road:** Provide access to remote communities, Mungo National Park & the Willandra Lakes Region and station country.
- **Mungo Loop Road:** A scenic touring route linking
- **Roads are regularly maintained and monitored**, with updates provided by the Balranald Visitor Information Centre and the Live Traffic NSW website

3. Bus Access

NSW Trainlink Coach Services

Balranald is connected to the **NSW TrainLink regional coach network**, providing vital public transport access across southern and western New South Wales. The Balranald Coach Stop is serviced by two key routes:

- Route 725: Cootamundra to Mildura
- Route 726: Mildura to Cootamundra

These services link Balranald to major regional centres including Hay, Griffith, Temora, and Cootamundra, where passengers can transfer to rail services bound for Sydney, Canberra, and other destinations. Westbound, the route continues through Euston, Buronga, and Mildura, connecting Balranald to Victoria's northwest and cross-border tourism flows

Local Transport

Moore's Bus Lines Pty Ltd, based in Balranald, NSW, offers a reliable mix of school bus services, charter options, and regional connectivity. They play a vital role in supporting community mobility across the Shire and surrounding areas.

4. Air Access

- **Balranald Airport** (BZD): Located just northeast of the township, the airport features:
  - One asphalt runway (1,185m) and one grass runway (650m)
  - Suitable for charter flights, emergency services, and light aircraft tourism
  - Strategic potential for tourism packages, aerial tours, and regional logistics

- **Nearby Airports:**
  - Mildura Airport (2 hours west): Offers commercial flights to Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide
  - Griffith Airport (3.5 hours east): Connects to Sydney and regional NSW

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5. Access to Nature & Parks

- **Yanga National Park**: Easily accessed via sealed roads from Balranald, this park features wetlands, red gum forests, and historic sites like Yanga Woolshed and Homestead.

- **Mungo National Park:** Reachable via the Mungo Loop (Marma–Box Creek Road and Prungle–Marma Road); conditions vary seasonally and are monitored by VIC and NPWS

- **Five Rivers Fishing Trail:** Balranald's unique location at the junction of five rivers makes it a prime destination for fishing, kayaking, and riverside camping.

- **Euston Regional Park:** A 3,274-hectare park along the Murray River offering shaded river red gum forests, birdwatching, fishing, and riverside camping. Dog-friendly and ideal for nature immersion

- **Lake Benanee:** A large freshwater lake just 13 km east of Euston, easily accessed from the Sturt Highway. It features a beach area, public toilets, and an information bay. Popular for swimming, kayaking, and sunset photography.

- **Euston Weir & Lock 15**: A scenic site for fishing, boating, and riverside walks, surrounded by native vegetation and citrus orchards.

- **Murray Regional Park & State Forests**: Near Kyalite, these areas offer secluded camping, fishing, and bushwalking along the Murray River. The forests are rich in birdlife and provide shaded retreats for self-contained travellers.

- **Wakool River Wetlands:** Accessible from Kyalite, this quieter river system supports waterbirds, native fish, and seasonal wildflowers—ideal for nature photography and peaceful reflection.

- **Willandra Lakes Region:** Beyond Mungo National Park, the broader lake system includes lesser-known lunettes and dry lakebeds that tell stories of climate change, Aboriginal habitation, and ecological adaptation.

- **Saltbush Plains & Semi-Arid Woodlands**: North of the Shire, the landscape transitions into red soil country dotted with mallee scrub, emus, and wedge-tailed eagles—perfect for stargazing and eco-touring.

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Location & Access - Strategic Implications

In reference to each of the key location and access features of Balranald Shire outlined above, here are the key strategic implications:

Strategic Location - Strategic Implications:

- Develop short-stay itineraries and signage to convert pass-through traffic into overnight stays.
- Position Balranald as a "gateway to nature and culture" within regional touring loops.
- Advocate for highway signage upgrades and VIC visibility.

Road Access - Strategic Implications:

- Prioritise roadside amenity upgrades (rest stops, toilets, shade).
- Promote Balranald as a base for multi-day nature and cultural touring.
- Develop themed trails and ensure clear wayfinding signs for current trails and other key attractions

Bus Access - Strategic Implications:

- Align event programming with bus timetables to support access.
- Promote bus-friendly itineraries and VIC services.
- Advocate for improved coach stop amenities and signage.

Air Access - Strategic Implications:

- Position Balranald as a fly-drive destination for niche markets (e.g. wellness retreats, cultural tours).
- Advocate for aerodrome upgrades to support tourism and emergency services.
- Explore partnerships with charter operators and regional air services.

Access to Nature & Parks - Strategic Implications:

- Develop seasonal nature calendars, birdwatching trails, and stargazing platforms.
- Promote Balranald as a nature-based wellness and eco-tourism destination.
- Embed environmental stewardship and cultural interpretation into all precincts.

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c. Balranald Shire Regional Tourism Potential

Balranald Shire Shire is a richly layered destination in the Riverina-Murray region of western New South Wales, offering a compelling mix of nature, culture, heritage, and community warmth. Its tourism potential lies in its diversity—across landscapes, stories, and visitor experiences—anchored by the townships of **Balranald, Euston, Kyalite,** and the **northern communities** of Penarie, Hatfield, Clare, and Oxley.

1. Balranald – *Gateway to Mungo & Yanga National Parks*

As the Shire's civic and cultural heart, Balranald is a gateway to World Heritage Mungo National Park & the Willandra Lakes region, Yanga National Park, the Five Rivers Fishing Trail, and the award-winning Discovery Centre precinct. The town blends pioneering history with creative placemaking, offering sculpture trails, heritage walks, and immersive storytelling. Its location on the Sturt Highway makes it a natural stopover for road-trippers and touring caravanners.

Tourism Potential:

- **Nature-based experiences**
  wetlands, birdwatching, stargazing, river walks
- **Heritage & Cultural tourism**
  Aboriginal cultural centre & trail, river trade, aviation, wool industry
- **Creative & cultural programming**
  Art Gallery exhibitions of local & regional artist, regional touring programs, cultural events, creative learning workshops

2. Euston – *Picturesque riverside Village on the Murray River*

Euston is a Murray River riverfront town known for its red gum forests, grape growing farms and fruit orchards, and proximity to Lake Benanee and Euston Regional Park. It's a peaceful destination for fishing, camping, and birdwatching, with growing appeal for eco-tourists and families. The town's creative identity is expressed through Reggie the Regent Parrot, a playful motif that celebrates the area's birdlifeand local biodiversity

Tourism Potential:

- **Riverside recreation** and nature walks
- **Riverfront activation,** riverfront events & on-water events
- **Eco-tourism** and birdlife interpretation
- Community-led **art and cultural storytelling**

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3. Kyalite – *Historic fishing & camping destination*

Located at the junction of the Wakool and Edward Rivers, Kyalite is a beloved retreat for anglers, campers, and nature seekers. Surrounded by State Forests and rich red soils, it is home to Australia's largest pistachio farm and the iconic Kyalite Pub. Steeped in history dating back to Burke and Wills, its quiet charm and river access make it ideal for immersive bush experiences.

Tourism Potential:

- **Fishing and camping** in pristine river systems
- **Heritage storytelling** and pub culture
- **Nature-based** accommodation and **forest & river trails**

4. Northern Communities – *Remote outback charm & cultural depth*

These remote communities (Penarie, Hatfield, Clare & Oxley) offer access to semi-arid woodlands, saltbush plains, and the broader Willandra Lakes Region, including Mungo National Park. They are rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage and station country history, with potential for niche tourism linked to on-Country experiences, stargazing, and station-based storytelling.

Tourism Potential:

- **Aboriginal-led cultural tourism** and ceremonial sites
- Remote **eco-tourism** and o**utback adventure loops**
- **Oral history**, station stays, and landscape interpretation

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d. Strategic Implications

Balranald Shire's regional identity is shaped by its ecological richness, cultural depth, pioneering legacy, and transport connectivity, offering a compelling foundation for sustainable growth and destination development.

Destination Branding: Position Balranald Shire as a gateway to nature, culture, heritage landscapes and outback adventure.

Themed Trails: Linking townships & cultural sites (e.g. the "Spirit of the West Loop regional trail currently in development)

Activation of riverfronts & parks with low-cost infrastructure, sculptures & events

Support Aboriginal-led tourism and storytelling across all communities

Creative & Community Expression: Amplify local identity through art, youth engagement, and partnerships (e.g., South West Arts).

Infrastructure Investment: Align housing, amenities, and digital access with tourism and workforce needs.

Promote slow travel & nature-based itineraries for caravanners and eco-tourists

Regional Collaboration: Strengthen ties with Destination Riverina Murray, Destination Country Outback, RAMJO, Murray Regional Tourism and neighbouring councils (NSW & Victoris) for joint campaigns and dispersal strategies.

Example of "Spirit of the West Loop" regional trail's "Welcome" signage currently in development. BSC is the lead council on this regional project.

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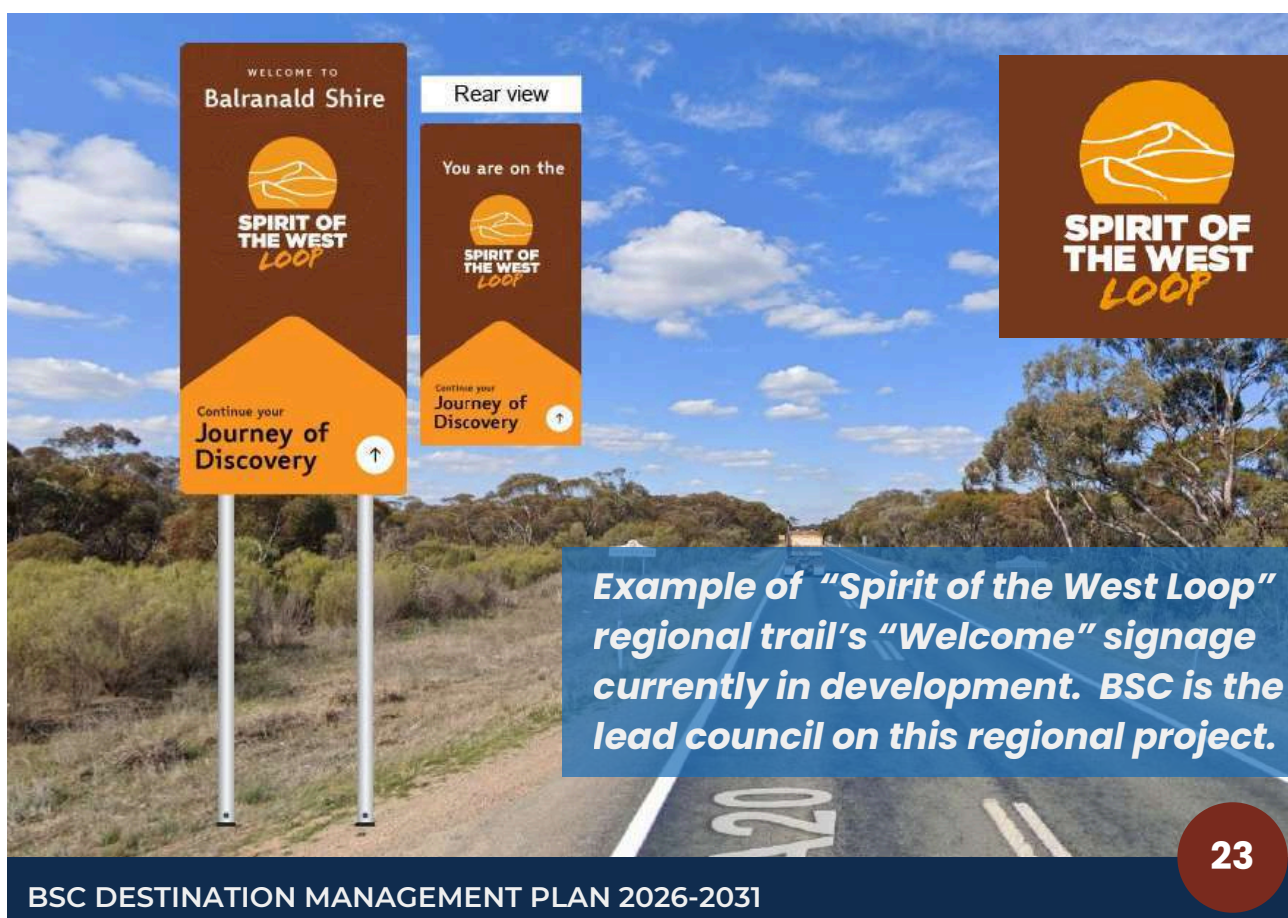
3. Visitor Profile

Balranald Shire attracts a diverse and growing mix of visitors, each drawn by the region's unique blend of nature, culture, history, and community warmth. From grey nomads and road-trippers exploring the Sturt Highway to eco-tourists and nature lovers immersing themselves in wetlands and river systems, the Shire offers layered experiences that speak to every kind of traveller.

Cultural explorers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitors engage deeply with the Shire's rich heritage and living cultural landscapes, while families and education groups find hands-on learning and playful discovery through art trails, nature walks, and creative workshops. Adventure seekers are drawn to the vast skies, remote trails, and outback touring loops, while event attendees and internal visitors (post-arrival)—including seasonal workers, contractors, and visiting friends and relatives—contribute to the vibrancy of local life.

This diversity presents a powerful opportunity: to co-design inclusive, values-driven tourism products that reflect the Shire's identity, foster connection, and ensure every visitor feels seen, welcomed, and inspired.

a. Visitor Segment Profiles

The following is a detailed description of each visitor segment relevant to Balranald Shire, tailored to our strategic goals around inclusive tourism, regional dispersal, and place-based experience development. Each profile reflects motivations, behaviours, and opportunities for engagement across the Shire's diverse landscapes and communities.

Grey Nomads

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Retired or semi-retired travellers aged 55+, often touring in caravans or motorhomes. They value comfort, community connection, and slow travel.	• Travel seasonally, often avoiding peak school holiday periods. • Spend extended time in regional towns, contributing to local economies. • Seek out heritage, nature, and social engagement.	• Activate caravan parks with storytelling nights, local produce markets, and hosted events. • Offer seniors-friendly trails, signage, and accessible amenities. • Promote Balranald as a welcoming base for multi-day exploration.

Education Groups

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
School groups, youth programs, and tertiary field studies seeking hands-on learning in nature, culture, and history	• Travel in structured formats with clear learning outcomes. • Require safety, supervision, and curriculum alignment. • Engage deeply with interactive and creative experiences.	• Co-design excursions with educators and Traditional Owners. • Develop youth-led interpretation, art projects, and nature kits. • Position Balranald as a regional leader in outdoor and cultural education.

Road Trippers

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Independent travellers, couples, and small groups exploring regional NSW by car. Often spontaneous and motivated by discovery	• Make short stops based on signage, curiosity, or word-of-mouth. • Use digital maps and travel apps to plan en route. • Seek quirky attractions, local food, and photo opportunities.	• Activate highway frontage with bold signage and "must-stop" installations. • Develop short-stay itineraries with nature, food, and art. • Use geo-targeted ads and roadside storytelling to convert pass-through traffic

Families

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Parents travelling with children, often seeking safe, educational, and entertaining experiences	• Plan around school holidays and weekends. • Prioritise ease of access, amenities, and inclusive activities. • Engage with nature play, wildlife, and creative workshops.	• Develop nature play zones, sculpture trails, and seasonal events. • Offer family discovery packs at VICs with maps, activity sheets, and local stories. • Promote Balranald as a safe and enriching destination for multi-generational travel.

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Cultural Explorers

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Visitors seeking authentic, respectful engagement with Aboriginal culture, heritage, and local identity.	• Value depth, storytelling, and cultural integrity. • Often travel with purpose—pilgrimage, learning, or reconnection. • Engage with museums, cultural tours, and creative expression.	• Support Aboriginal-led tourism and co-designed interpretation. • Embed cultural protocols in signage, programming, and staff training. • Promote Balranald Shire as a place of living heritage and cultural exchange.

Eco-Tourists & Nature Lovers

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Conscious travellers drawn to biodiversity, conservation, and immersive nature experiences	• Travel lightly and respectfully, often solo or in small groups. • Participate in citizen science, guided walks, and nature photography. • Seek out wetlands, birdlife, and stargazing opportunities.	• Protect and interpret ecological assets through low-impact infrastructure. • Develop seasonal nature calendars and birdwatching kits. • Link nature to culture through storytelling and Aboriginal ecological knowledge.

Adventure Seekers

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Active travellers seeking challenge, exploration, and off-grid experiences.	• Travel for ceremony, family, healing, or cultural exchange. • Prioritise cultural safety, visibility, and community connection. • Engage with Elders, cultural sites, and Aboriginal-led programming.	• Map and promote adventure routes with cultural overlays. • Partner with local operators and Traditional Owners for guided experiences. • Offer gear hire, challenge itineraries, and stargazing packages.

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Aboriginal & Torres Straight Islander Visitors

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Visitors reconnecting with Country, attending family events, or engaging in cultural practices.	• Travel in structured formats with clear learning outcomes. • Require safety, supervision, and curriculum alignment. • Engage deeply with interactive and creative experiences.	• Co-design ceremonial spaces, healing trails, and cultural precincts. • Ensure cultural safety in all visitor touchpoints. • Support Aboriginal-led tourism and governance.

Internal Visitors & Visiting Friends & Relatives

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Seasonal workers, contractors, new residents, and visiting friends and relatives.	• Discover local experiences after arrival, often informally. • Seek recreation, social integration, and community connection. • Engage with local events, walking tours, and VIC resources.	• Activate local pride through welcome packs and seasonal itineraries. • Foster belonging through informal programming and ambassador initiatives. • Position tourism precincts as community hubs.

Event Attendees

Profile	Behaviours	Opportunities
Visitors attending festivals, cultural gatherings, sports events, or civic celebrations.	• Travel for entertainment, shared experience, and novelty. • Often open to exploring surrounding attractions and staying longer. • Engage with food, art, music, and local hospitality	• Extend stays through linked itineraries and pop-up experiences. • Use events to showcase youth, Aboriginal culture, and local creativity. • Develop legacy programming that builds long-term community and economic outcomes.

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b. Visitor Segment Engagement Matrix

The following is a tailored breakdown of key visitor segments in Balranald Shire, matched with their appeals, drivers, and the most effective channels and communication styles to engage each one. This matrix is designed to support your destination marketing, precinct activation, and experience design strategies.

Visitor Segment	What appeals to them	Key Drivers	Best ways to reach them	Best ways to communicate
Grey Nomads	• Scenic drives, • Heritage trails, • Caravan parks, • Local stories, • Community connection • Art Galleries & History	• Comfort • Curiosity • Social interaction, • Value for money	• VIC brochures • Caravan park networks • Travel forums, • Regional radio	• Friendly, informative tone • printed guides; • face-to-face VIC engagement; • Storytelling signage
Education Groups	• Interactive learning • nature-based excursions, • cultural workshops, • creative activities • Creative Learning Centre • Library	• Curriculum alignment, • safety, • hands-on engagement, • Group logistics	• School networks, • education portals, • teacher associations, • excursion planners	• Clear, structured info; • downloadable packs • educator-focused messaging • visual aids
Road Trippers	• Unique stopovers • Quirky attractions, • Local food, • Photo opportunities • Funky Frog Trail	• Discovery • Spontaneity • Affordability • Regional touring loops	• Google Maps, • Travel apps, • Roadside signage, • Social media ads	• Bold visuals • Short-form content • Geo-targeted messaging • Humour and curiosity hooks
Families	• Nature play • Art trails • Wildlife • Safe and inclusive spaces • Seasonal events • Discovery Centre precinct	• Entertainment • Bonding, • Ease of access, • Educational value	• VIC displays • Parenting blogs • family travel sites, • school newsletters	• Warm, playful tone; • activity sheets; • multi-platform content (print + digital) • Inclusive language
Cultural Explorers	• Mungo National Park • Aboriginal heritage storytelling • Historical & cultural trails • Yanga Woolshed • Yanga Homestead	• Authenticity • Learning • Connection to place	• Cultural tourism platforms • DNSW • Heritage networks	• Rich narratives via video • Podcasts • Interpretive signage

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continued....

Visitor Segment	What appeals to them	Key Drivers	Best ways to reach them	Best ways to communicate
Eco-tourists & Nature Lovers	• Birdwatching • Wetlands • Stargazing • National Parks • Bird trail • Bird viewing hot spots	• Sustainability • Biodiversity • Solitude	• Nature-based travel sites • Eco-tourism blogs • Instagram	• Visual story-telling • Itinerary planners • Conservation messaging
Adventure Seekers	• Off-grid camping • Kayaking • Hiking • 4WD Trails	• Thrill • Exploration • Remote access	• Adventure travel platforms • YouTube • Outdoor gear retailers	• Maps • Gear guides • User-generated content
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Visitors	• Cultural connection • Community Events • Heritage sites • Mungo NP	• Identity • Healing • Shared experience	• Indigenous networks • Cultural organisations • Community radio	• Respectful co-designed messaging • Inclusive language
Internal Visitors & Visiting Friends & Relatives	• Local discovery and informal experiences • Community events, markets, and social gatherings • Nature escapes and weekend activities • Opportunities to connect with locals and feel part of the community • Affordable, accessible recreation and cultural experiences	• Belonging and social integration • Curiosity about local culture, nature, & history • Need for recreation and wellbeing • Guided by hosts, or community members • Access to practical information	• Welcome packs distributed via employers, caravan parks, and VIC • Posters and flyers in high-traffic local venues • Community noticeboards and newsletters • Word-of-mouth through local ambassadors • Social media groups	• Friendly, conversational tone that feels inclusive • Visual guides and maps with simple icons and short descriptions • Event calendars • Personal invitations via community leaders, VIC staff, or Council reps
Event Attendees	• Local festivals • Cultural celebrations • Nature-based events	• Social connection • Entertainment • Discovery	• Regional event calendars • Social media • local radio	• Countdown campaigns • Behind the scenes content • SMS alerts

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C. Strategic Implications by Visitor Segment

The following are the strategic implications for each visitor segment, tailored to Balranald Shire's unique assets, community values, and development goals. This expansion focuses on how each cohort can shape infrastructure, programming, marketing, and partnerships, while reinforcing your commitment to inclusive, place-based regional development.

Grey Nomads

Strategic Implications

- Prioritise accessible infrastructure (e.g. RV-friendly amenities, mobility-friendly trails).
- Develop hosted programsor storytelling evenings to foster social connection.
- Offer seasonal discounts or loyalty programs to encourage repeat visitation.
- Leverage VICs and caravan parks as hubs for community engagement and local promotion.

Education Groups

Strategic Implications

- Co-design curriculum-linked experiences with educators and Traditional Owners (e.g. wetlands ecology, Aboriginal astronomy).
- Ensure educator resources are embedded in all offerings.
- Position Balranald Shire as a regional leader in outdoor education through partnerships with schools and universities.
- Create youth-led interpretation and signage to foster intergenerational pride and learning.

Road Trippers

Strategic Implications

- Activate highway frontage with bold, quirky signage and "must-stop" attractions
- Develop short-stay itineraries that bundle food, nature, and culture into 2–4 hour experiences.
- Use geo-targeted digital ads and Google Maps integration to capture spontaneous decision-makers.
- Encourage local businesses to offer "road trip specials" or themed experiences30

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Families

Strategic Implications

- Design inclusive play spaces and nature-based activities that cater to all ages and abilities.
- Host seasonal events (e.g. nature treasure hunts, storytelling picnics) that build family memories.
- Promote safety, ease of access, and amenities in all marketing materials.
- Partner with parenting networks and schools to distribute family-friendly guides and activity sheets.

Cultural Explorers

Strategic Implications

- Invest in Aboriginal-led experiences, co-designed interpretation, and cultural infrastructure.
- Promote Balranald as a place of living heritage, not just historical record.
- Ensure cultural protocols are embedded in all programming, signage, and staff training.
- Collaborate with cultural institutions and niche travel media to reach values-driven explorers.

Eco-Tourists & Nature Lovers

Strategic Implications

- Protect and interpret ecological assets (e.g. Mungo, wetlands, stargazing sites) through low-impact infrastructure.
- Develop citizen science programs and conservation volunteering opportunities.
- Use seasonal campaigns to highlight biodiversity (e.g. bird migration, wildflower blooms).
- Partner with nature travel platforms and conservation NGOs to amplify reach.

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Adventure Seekers

Strategic Implications

- Map and promote adventure routes (e.g. kayaking trails, 4WD circuits, bush hikes) with safety and cultural overlays.
- Offer guided experiences in partnership with local operators and Traditional Owners.
- Ensure environmental stewardship is central to all adventure offerings.
- Use energetic, visual storytelling to attract thrill-seekers while reinforcing respect for Country.

Aboriginal & Torres Straight Islander Visitors

Strategic Implications

- Co-design ceremonial spaces, cultural infrastructure, and signage with Elders and community leaders.
- Ensure cultural safety and visibility in all precincts and programs.
- Support family reconnection and community-led events that foster belonging.
- Embed Aboriginal voice in governance, planning, and visitor experience development.

Internal Visitors & Visiting Friends & Relatives

Strategic Implications

- Activate local pride through informal programming (e.g. community walks, seasonal challenges).
- Use welcome packs and employer partnerships to introduce new residents to local experiences.
- Foster social integration through events that blend newcomers and long-time locals.
- Position tourism precincts as community hubs, not just visitor destinations.

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Event Attendees

Strategic Implications

- Extend visitor stays through linked itineraries, pop-up experiences, and local hospitality.
- Use events as platforms for showcasing youth, Aboriginal culture, and local creativity.
- Capture data and feedback to refine future programming and measure impact.
- Develop legacy strategies that ensure events contribute to long-term community and economic outcomes.

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4. Situation & Market Analysis

a. Latest Trends & Strategic Implications

The following overview of the latest tourism trends across the **Balranald Shire**, the **South West NSW** region, the **Riverina Murray** region and **across NSW**. Each trend includes recent statistics (where available) and strategic implications.

BALRANALD SHIRE

1. Visitor Spend - Year Ending 2025

- **Total Spend:** $16,129,000
- **Year-on-Year Growth:** +13%
- **Primary Spend Drivers:**
  - Accommodation: caravan parks, motels, short-stay rentals (32%)
  - Food & beverage: pubs, cafes, takeaway(28%)
  - Fuel & transport - road-trippers, grey nomads (18%)
  - Retail & local products (12%)
  - Nature, tours and cultural experiences: parks, trails, VIC (10%)
- **Average Spend Domestic overnight visitor:** $145/day
- **Average Spend Day Trip Visitor:** $65/day
- **Caravan/Camping Visitor Spend:** $110/day

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

Strengthen Experience Packaging

- With rising spend, there's an opportunity to bundle nature, culture, and wellness experiences into bookable itineraries.
- Develop themed trails (e.g. Funky Frog, Regent Parrot, Military Heritage) with signage, maps, and digital integration.

Accelerate Infrastructure Investment

- Use this growth to advocate for priority upgrades: caravan park masterplan, VIC enhancements, riverfront activation, and signage strategy.
- Align infrastructure with high-yield segments like grey nomads, families, and cultural explorers.

Expand Accommodation Diversity

- Invest in glamping, eco-lodges, and short-stay rentals—especially near nature assets and cultural precincts.
- Incentivise adaptive reuse and seasonal accommodation to meet peak demand.

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Promote Local Business Visibility

- Increased spend suggests strong visitor engagement with local operators. Support local businesses with marketing toolkits, digital training, and "Made in Balranald Shire" branding.
- Encourage extended trading hours and pop-up activations to capture evening and event-linked spend.
- Develop VIC retail displays and storytelling menus to boost local economic impact

Activate Night Economy & Dining

- Food and beverage spend is strong, but limited night-time options constrain growth.
- Encourage pop-up dining, food trucks, and extended trading hours to capture more evening spend.

Strengthen Marketing & Booking Pathways

- Increase digital visibility and booking integration for local operators.
- Use geo-targeted campaigns and VIC-led promotions to convert interest into spend.

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- Increase digital visibility and booking integration for local operators.
- Use geo-targeted campaigns and VIC-led promotions to convert interest into spend.

Advocate for Funding & Regional Collaboration

- A 13% growth rate positions Balranald Shire as a high-performing destination within Riverina-Murray
- Use this data to strengthen grant submissions, regional partnerships, and investment pitches

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2. Visitor Count & Growth - Year Ending 2025

- **Visitor Count:** 144,900
- **Year-on-Year Growth:** +13%
- **Estimated Average Stay:** 2.3 nights per visitor
- **Caravan and camping** accounted for over **60% of overnight stays**, reflecting strong appeal to grey nomads and road-trippers.
- **Day trip visitation** remains steady, particularly from Mildura, Swan Hill, and Griffith, with nature and heritage as key motivators.

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

Focus on Itinerary Extension

- A longer average stay signals growing interest in multi-day experiences.
- Develop layered itineraries that combine nature, culture, wellness, and local food, encouraging visitors to stay 3+ nights.

Enhance Accommodation Diversity

- With longer stays, visitors seek variety and comfort
- Accelerate development of glamping, eco-lodges, and short-stay rentals to meet evolving expectations and increase yield
- Bundle nature, culture, and wellness experiences into bookable itineraries to extend stays and increase yield.

Promote Multi-Day Events & Experiences

- Use seasonal programming (e.g. Youth Week, Seniors Festival, nature trails) to anchor multi-day visitation.
- Bundle events with accommodation and dining offers to drive extended stays.

Strengthen Regional Touring Connections

- Position Balranald Shire as a base for exploring Mungo, Yanga, Euston, and Riverina-Murray & South & Far West touring routes.
- Bundle events with accommodation and dining offers to drive extended stays.

Strengthen Infrastructure & Precinct Readiness

- Prioritise upgrades to high-traffic precincts like the Discovery Centre, VIC, caravan parks, and riverfront areas.
- Ensure amenities (e.g. toilets, shade, signage) are scaled to meet growing visitor volumes.

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Enhance Visitor Dispersal Across Townships

- Promote Euston, Kyalite, and northern communities through themed trails, signage, and seasonal programming.
- Use VIC and digital platforms to guide visitors beyond Balranald township.

Leverage Growth for Funding & Advocacy

- Use the 13% increase to strengthen grant submissions and advocate for tourism investment.
- Position Balranald Shire as a high-performing regional destination within the South West NSW and Riverina Murray regions.

Support Local Business Activation

- Encourage extended trading hours, pop-up activations, and "Made in Balranald Shire" branding
- Encourage extended trading hours, pop-up activations, and VIC-led promotions to capture visitor spend across multiple days.

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3. Nature-Based & Eco-Tourism

- Yanga National Park and Lake Benanee are top nature attractions, with birdwatching, wetlands, and river access driving visitation.
- Birdlife is a major draw, especially for niche markets like twitchers and citizen scientists.
- Night sky tourism is emerging, with low light pollution offering ideal stargazing conditions.

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

- Create seasonal nature calendars and birdwatching kits at VIC.
- Develop stargazing platforms and Aboriginal astronomy experiences.
- Position Balranald as a nature-based wellness and eco-tourism destination.

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4. Cultural & Aboriginal Tourism

- Yanga Interest in Aboriginal-led experiences is growing, especially among cultural explorers and education groups.
- Mungo National Park remains a globally significant draw-card, with Balranald positioned as a gateway.

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

- Co-design cultural precincts, signage, and tours with Traditional Owners.
- Embed cultural protocols and interpretation across all visitor touchpoints.
- Promote Balranald as a place of living heritage and cultural exchange.

5. Creative Tourism & Placemaking

- Community feedback highlights demand for more murals, sculptures, and creative installations.
- The Funky Frog Trail is popular with families and road-trippers

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

- Co-design Expand public art programs across Balranald, Euston, and Kyalite.
- Use creative placemaking to build visual identity and visitor engagement.
- Link art to ecology and heritage through sculpture trails and interpretive signage.
- Build on Reggie the Regent Parrot motif for public art and creative placemaking in Euston

6. Accommodation & Infrastructure

- Shortage of mid-range and group-friendly accommodation, especially during peak periods.
- Caravan parks are nearing capacity during holidays, with demand for glamping and eco-accommodation rising.

Strategic Implications for Balranald Shire:

- Accelerate implementation of the Caravan Park Masterplan.
- Incentivise development of glamping, safari huts, and adaptive reuse accommodation.
- Align accommodation growth with emerging visitor segments and touring routes.

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b. Community-Voiced SWOT Analysis

The following are the key shire tourism **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** provided by the community as part of our **community consultation**. Against each of these community insights are the **implications on strategy**.

STRENGTHS

Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Existing Tourism Groundwork and Development Activities	• Build on existing momentum by refining product offerings, improving signage, and aligning new initiatives with previously successful models. • Use this foundation to attract funding and partnerships, showcasing Balranald as a Shire with proven delivery capacity.
Rich in History and Culture	• Activate heritage assets through interpretive trails, storytelling signage, and youth-led oral history projects. • Position Balranald Shire as a living museum where past and present intersect, and embed cultural narratives into all visitor experiences.
Riverscapes (five rivers, wetlands) and Natural Landscapes	• Develop nature-based itineraries and eco-tourism packages that highlight river access, wetlands, and forest corridors. • Invest in low-impact infrastructure (e.g. boardwalks, bird hides) and promote seasonal experiences tied to water flow and landscape changes.
Wonderful Birdlife and Wildlife	• Create birdwatching trails, citizen science programs, and wildlife interpretation linked to conservation messaging. • Reinforce Balranald shire's identity as a birdwatching haven through branded trails, VIC resources, and seasonal campaigns. • Use mascots like the frog motifs (Balranald) and Reggie the Regent Parrot (Euston) to engage families and promote biodiversity through playful storytelling.
World Heritage Listed Mungo National Park & the Willandra Lakes region	• Position Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes region as a globally significant draw card, with Balranald as its cultural and logistical gateway. • Co-design Aboriginal-led experiences, interpretation, and transport links that honour the site's heritage and deepen visitor understanding.

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Yanga National Park	• Develop immersive nature experiences such as wetland walks, canoe trails, and seasonal ecology tours. • Partner with NPWS and Traditional Owners to enhance interpretation and promote Yanga as a model for conservation and cultural learning.
Cultural Attractions (Balranald Art Gallery, Southern Cross Exhibition)	• Integrate these assets into creative tourism trails and precinct programming. • Host rotating exhibitions, artist-in-residence programs, and cultural workshops that attract both visitors and locals. • Use them as anchors for storytelling and civic pride.
Geographic Location	• Promote Balranald's location as a natural junction for touring routes, eco-adventure, and cultural exploration. • Use mapping tools and signage to position the Shire as a gateway to Far West NSW and the Riverina-Murray corridor.
Award-winning Discovery Centre tourist precinct	• Use the precinct as a flagship for innovation, inclusion, and layered programming. • Expand its role as a community hub, event venue, and interpretive anchor, while showcasing it in regional marketing and funding bids
Award-winning Discovery Centre tourist precinct	• Use the precinct as a flagship for innovation, inclusion, and layered programming. • Expand its role as a community hub, event venue, and interpretive anchor, while showcasing it in regional marketing and funding bids
Balranald & Euston on the Sturt Highway	• Activate highway frontage with bold signage, sculpture installations, and "must-stop" attractions. • Develop short-stay itineraries and VIC promotions that convert pass-through traffic into overnight visitation.
Community Support for Tourism	• Harness local enthusiasm through co-designed programming, storytelling, and ambassador initiatives. • Ensure community voices shape tourism development, reinforcing pride and ownership.

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Excellent Local Shops although a few	• Promote quality over quantity, highlight unique retail experiences, local makers, and personalised service. • Develop "shop local" campaigns and visitor itineraries that celebrate Balranald's boutique charm.
Balranald Shire Library being open 5 days a week and centrally located	• Position the library as a cultural and educational anchor within the tourism precinct, especially for families, education groups, and internal visitors. • Develop interpretive partnerships with the library for heritage storytelling, youth-led projects, and visitor information overflow. • Host seasonal exhibitions, author talks, and creative workshops that link tourism with lifelong learning and civic pride.
Balranald & District Military Heritage Walk/Trail. A commemorative trail honours the contributions of Balranald Shire residents during times of international conflict.	• Promote the trail as a signature heritage experience for grey nomads, education groups, and cultural explorers. • Integrate the walk into guided tours, digital storytelling apps, and school excursion programming. • Use the trail to foster intergenerational engagement and community ownership, encouraging locals to contribute stories and maintain the legacy.
Excellent Visitor Information Centre	• Position the VIC as a storytelling hub, community connector, and experience curator • Invest in digital integration, staff training, and seasonal programming to maintain its reputation and expand its role.
Council supportive of Tourism	• Leverage Council backing to secure grants, attract investment, and embed tourism in broader strategic planning. • Use this alignment to deliver cross-departmental outcomes in housing, infrastructure, and community wellbeing.
Sporting Facilities	• Leverage sporting infrastructure for event-linked visitation, youth engagement, and regional tournaments. • Promote Balranald as a destination for active recreation and community wellbeing, with potential for sports tourism and inter-town competitions.

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WEAKNESSES

Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Existing activities are not utilised to their full potential	• Conduct an audit of current tourism products and programs to identify gaps in promotion, packaging, and accessibility. • Develop layered itineraries and cross-promotional campaigns to increase engagement and extend visitor stays.
A number of history and historical buildings have been lost	• Invest in digital storytelling, oral history projects, and interpretive signage to preserve intangible heritage. • Use creative placemaking (e.g. murals, augmented reality) to reimagine lost sites and honour community memory.
The Murrumbidgee River in Balranald is not utilised enough in building tourism products/assets/events	• Activate the riverfront with nature trails, kayak hire, seasonal festivals, and eco-interpretation. • Position the river as a central asset in branding and experience design, linking it to ecology, culture, and recreation.
Often lack of community support and buy-in	• Strengthen community engagement through co-design workshops, ambassador programs, and transparent communication. • Celebrate local contributions and ensure tourism benefits are visible and inclusive.
Lack of food venues for night-time entertainment	• Encourage pop-up dining, food trucks, and collaborative events with local producers. • Support extended trading hours through incentives and promote night-time experiences that blend food, music, and storytelling.
Lack of food venues for night-time entertainment	• Encourage pop-up dining, food trucks, and collaborative events with local producers. • Support extended trading hours through incentives and promote night-time experiences that blend food, music, and storytelling.
Shops not always opened due to staff shortage	• Explore shared staffing models, volunteer support, and flexible trading incentives. • Promote "shop local" campaigns and digital retail platforms to maintain visibility even when physical doors are closed.

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Limited connection with schools regarding development of youth arts and music	• Partner with schools to co-design youth-led arts programs, festivals, and public art projects. • Embed creative learning into tourism precincts and offer mentorship opportunities with local artists and musicians.
Limited shelter on the main street in Balranald	• Invest in shaded seating, artistic shelters, and weather-friendly infrastructure to improve visitor comfort and encourage longer dwell times. • Use shelter design as an opportunity for creative expression and interpretation.
Minimal night economy	• Develop a night-time activation strategy that includes events, lighting installations, guided walks, and extended venue hours. • Promote safe, inclusive experiences that appeal to families, youth, and older travellers.
Limited creative and artistic elements across the shire (e.g. sculptures, murals etc.)	• Launch a Shire-wide public art program in partnership with South West Arts, youth groups, and Traditional Owners. • Use art to reflect local identity, ecology, and culture—building pride and visual storytelling.
Balranald's Theatre Royal is not used enough for cultural events	• Reactivate the Theatre Royal as a multi-use cultural venue with seasonal programming, touring performances, and community showcases. • Promote it as a hub for arts, film, and intergenerational engagement.
Arts and creative not valued enough	• Embed arts and creativity into strategic planning, tourism branding, and community development. • Advocate for arts as a driver of economic resilience, youth engagement, and civic identity.
Lack of directional and informative signage across the shire	• Develop a Shire-wide signage strategy with consistent branding, cultural protocols, and multilingual options. • Include QR-linked interpretation and youth-led storytelling to enhance accessibility and engagement

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Lack of public transport	• Explore flexible transport models such as community shuttles, ride-share partnerships, and event-linked transit. • Advocate for regional transport investment and ensure tourism precincts are walkable and bike-friendly.
Lack of dining experiences	• Support food tourism development through producer partnerships, culinary events, and storytelling menus. • Encourage diversification of offerings (e.g. bush foods, multicultural cuisine) and promote local hospitality champions.
Limited workforce	• Invest in tourism workforce development through training, mentoring, and housing support. • Promote tourism careers to youth and seasonal workers, and explore shared staffing across precincts and events
Short-term accommodation shortage/housing shortage	• Align tourism growth with housing strategy by incentivising short-stay development, adaptive reuse, and worker accommodation. • Advocate for planning reforms and funding to address urgent needs.
Lack of seasonal events/activities	• Develop a year-round events calendar that reflects seasonal ecology, cultural milestones, and community creativity. • Use events to drive visitation, foster local pride, and activate underutilised spaces

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OPPORTUNITIES

Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Nature-Based & Riverfront Activation • Build more tourism products/events around the Murrumbidgee River • Develop river access • Euston Dinner River Cruise • Euston Houseboat Hire • Raising of the weir level in Balranald • Bike trail to Yanga Woolshed and Homestead • Development of a sculpture trail along the rivers • Night sky experiences • Public gardens, parks	• Position the river as a central tourism spine, linking ecology, recreation, and storytelling. • Invest in low-impact infrastructure, e.g. boardwalks, kayak launches, stargazing platforms • Activate seasonal programming, e.g. river festivals, guided night tours. • Promote Balranald and Euston as nature-based wellness destinations with immersive experiences.
Accommodation & Caravan Park Innovation • Implementation of the Caravan Park Masterplan • Glamping opportunities • Safari huts across the river • Short-term accommodation expansion	• Diversify accommodation to attract eco-tourists, families, and high-yield travellers. • Use glamping and safari huts to elevate the visitor experience while preserving natural assets. • Align upgrades with regional touring loops and emerging visitor segments, e.g. executive retreats, cultural explorers.
Arts, Culture & Heritage Activation • Executive retreats • Business Xchange • Business Incubator/Hub • Pop-up coffee van at Lions Park • Enhance Christmas shopping/event • Increased marketing of tourism-supportive businesses • Take more advantage of travellers • Emerging industries	• Strengthen the visitor economy by integrating tourism with business innovation and local enterprise. • Use events and pop-ups to activate under-utilised spaces and support small businesses. • Promote Balranald as a destination for regional retreats, networking, and creative entrepreneurship. • Align tourism growth with emerging industries (e.g. renewable energy, agritourism) to diversify economic impact.

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Arts, Culture & Heritage Activation • Expanding museum to promote local history • Engagement of a Museum and Gallery professional curator • More events/retreats at Theatre Royal • Reclaiming Mungo • Silo & Tower Art • Mural on Euston Water Tower • Painting of water towers (Balranald & Euston) • Street sculptures in Balranald and Euston • Expand Funky Frog Sculpture Trail • Reggie the Regent Parrot Sculpture Trail • Build on Regent Parrot theme in Euston • Signature dish/dishes • Made in Balranald Shire products and brand	• Develop a Shire-wide creative placemaking strategy that reflects local identity, ecology, and history. • Embed co-design with Traditional Owners, youth, and artists to ensure cultural integrity. • Use public art and food storytelling to create visual and sensory anchors across townships. • Position Balranald as a cultural corridor linking Mungo, museums, and creative trails.
Placemaking & Township Identity • Implementation of the Caravan Park Masterplan • Glamping opportunities • Safari huts across the river • Short-term accommodation expansion	• Invest in visual cohesion and placemaking to enhance visitor experience and civic pride. • Use playful and iconic installations (e.g. Big Grape, skate park) to attract families and youth. • Promote geocaching and interactive trails to encourage exploration and repeat visitation. • Ensure placemaking reflects community voice, ecology, and cultural narratives.
Grant Funding Opportunities	• Develop a grant-ready investment pipeline aligned with community priorities and tourism potential. • Advocate for funding that supports infrastructure, creative programming, and workforce development. • Develop shovel-ready Project Plans in readiness for grant funding opportunities

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⚠ THREATS

Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Lack of Support for Product Development Opportunities	• Establish a transparent and inclusive co-design framework that invites community input early in the development process. • Use pilot projects and quick wins to demonstrate value and build trust. • Create cross-sector partnerships (e.g. tourism + arts + environment) to broaden ownership and reduce silos. • Communicate the economic and social benefits of tourism initiatives through storytelling and data.
Apathy	• Shift from consultation to co-creation—empower locals to lead and shape tourism experiences. • Celebrate community champions and success stories to inspire engagement. • Use creative placemaking and youth-led projects to spark curiosity and pride. • Offer micro-grants or recognition programs to incentivise grassroots activation.
Burnout of Volunteers	• Formalise volunteer roles with clear boundaries, support systems, and succession planning. • Introduce rotating rosters, shared leadership models, and wellbeing check-ins. • Recognise and reward contributions through public acknowledgment, training opportunities, and social events. • Explore paid micro-contracts for high-demand roles to reduce reliance on unpaid labour.
Not Enough Resources to Drive Projects	• Prioritise scalable, low-cost initiatives with high community visibility and impact. • Bundle projects into grant-ready packages with shared infrastructure and staffing. • Advocate for regional funding through RAMJO and cross-LGA collaborations. • Leverage existing assets (e.g. VIC, Discovery Centre) as multi-use platforms to reduce duplication.

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Community Insights	Implication on Strategy
Lack of Younger Volunteers	• Co-design youth engagement pathways through schools, arts programs, and leadership initiatives. • Offer flexible, short-term volunteering roles that align with youth interests (e.g. digital content creation, event support). • Create intergenerational mentorship models that pair Elders with youth in storytelling, heritage, and creative placemaking. • Promote tourism as a career pathway through internships, training, and ambassador programs.
Local Vandalism at the Discovery Centre Precinct and Other Visitor Sites	• Strengthen community ownership through youth-led design, stewardship programs, and cultural interpretation. • Install creative deterrents (e.g. murals, lighting, community art) that foster pride and reduce anonymity. • Collaborate with schools and youth services to address underlying causes and promote positive engagement. • Enhance surveillance and maintenance protocols while ensuring spaces remain welcoming and inclusive.
Lack of Funding to Support Tourism Development Opportunities	• Develop a strategic funding roadmap aligned with community priorities and regional strengths. • Package projects for multi-source funding (e.g. government grants, philanthropy, private sponsorship). • Advocate for tourism as a driver of economic resilience, wellbeing, and youth opportunity. • Build capacity in grant writing, reporting, and partnership development across Council and community groups.
Maintenance of Visitor Facilities	• Embed maintenance planning into all new infrastructure proposals, with clear funding and staffing models. • Explore community stewardship programs (e.g. adopt-a-park, volunteer maintenance days). • Use digital tools to report issues and track repairs, increasing transparency and responsiveness. • Prioritise high-traffic and high-visibility sites for regular upkeep to protect reputation and visitor experience.

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c. Market-focused SWOT Analysis

The following is a **market-focused SWOT Analysis** of tourism in Balranald Shire, with each finding paired with clear strategic implications. This version zeroes in on market dynamics, visitor behaviour, competitive positioning, product appeal, and economic potential across Balranald, Euston, Kyalite, and the northern communities.

STRENGTHS - Market Advantages

Market Strength	Strategic Implication
Unique ecological assets: Five rivers, wetlands, Yanga & Mungo National Parks offer rare biodiversity and immersive nature experiences.	• Position Balranald Shire as a nature-based tourism leader. • Develop seasonal campaigns, eco-itineraries, and conservation-linked experiences.
Cultural depth and Aboriginal heritage: Living cultural landscapes and strong Traditional Owner leadership.	• Co-design cultural tourism products with Elders. • Promote authenticity and respectful engagement in all marketing.
Strategic location on touring routes: Sturt Highway, Cobb Highway, and proximity to Mildura and Swan Hill.	• Activate highway frontage with bold signage and "must-stop" attractions. • Develop short-stay itineraries to convert drive-through traffic.
Award-winning Discovery Centre precinct: Recognised for layered programming and inclusive engagement.	• Use as a flagship for visitor orientation, storytelling, and precinct activation. • Expand its role in regional marketing.
Strong VIC and tourism team: High visitor satisfaction and local knowledge.	• Use as a flagship for visitor orientation, storytelling, and precinct activation. • Expand its role in regional marketing.

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WEAKNESSES - Market Limitations

Market Weakness	Strategic Implication
Limited accommodation diversity: Shortage of mid-range, eco, and group-friendly options.	• Incentivise glamping, adaptive reuse, and short-stay development. • Align with emerging visitor segments like nature seekers and executive retreats.
Minimal night economy and dining options	• Encourage pop-up dining, food trucks, and evening events. • Support hospitality diversification and promote signature dishes.
Underutilised assets: Murrumbidgee River, Theatre Royal, water towers.	• Activate through events, interpretation, and creative placemaking. • Use pilot programs to test market appeal.
Fragmented infrastructure across townships	• Ensure equitable investment in Euston, Kyalite, and northern communities. • Use place-based planning to reflect local identity and visitor needs.
Low digital visibility and booking pathways	• Strengthen online presence, SEO, and integration with travel platforms. • Support operators with digital training and content creation.

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💡 OPPORTUNITIES - Market Growth Potential

Market Opportunities	Strategic Implication
Riverfront activation: Dinner cruises, houseboat hire, sculpture trails, kayak access.	• Develop immersive river-based experiences. • Position the rivers in Balranald, Euston & Kyalite as a central tourism spine linking nature, culture, and recreation.
Creative placemaking: Water tower murals, silo art, sculpture trails, Reggie the Regent Parrot branding.	• Launch a Shire-wide public art strategy. • Use art to reflect ecology, heritage, and community pride.
Business and event innovation: Executive retreats, business incubators, seasonal festivals.	• Integrate tourism with economic development. • Promote Balranald as a destination for creative enterprise and regional networking.
Made in Balranald Shire branding: Local products, food, and experiences.	• Develop storytelling menus, retail campaigns, and visitor packs. • Position local enterprise as part of the tourism experience.
Night Sky Tourism Stargazing, astrophotography, and Aboriginal astronomy experiences.	• Develop designated stargazing platforms and dark-sky viewing areas near Yanga National Park and riverfront precincts. • Partner with Traditional Owners to co-design Aboriginal night sky interpretation and seasonal storytelling. • Host night-time events such as guided astronomy walks, telescope nights, and celestial festivals. • Promote night sky tourism as a signature experience that complements nature-based and cultural tourism.
Wellness Tourism Nature-based wellness experiences including retreats, mindfulness, and healing on Country.	• Position Balranald Shire as a regional wellness destination by developing glamping, eco-accommodation, and retreat packages. • Co-design wellness experiences with Aboriginal leaders, incorporating bush medicine, cultural healing, and connection to Country. • Integrate wellness into existing tourism products (e.g. river walks, art workshops, birdwatching) with a focus on relaxation and renewal. • Collaborate with health and wellbeing practitioners to host seasonal retreats and wellness events.

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⊗ THREATS - Market Risks

Market Threat	Strategic Implication
Funding constraints and resource limitations	• Develop a grant-ready investment pipeline. • Bundle projects for multi-source funding and regional collaboration.
Volunteer burnout and ageing cohort	• Introduce intergenerational engagement, micro-contracts, and wellbeing support. • Recognise contributions and build capacity.
Local vandalism at visitor sites	• Strengthen community ownership through youth-led design and stewardship programs. • Enhance surveillance and maintenance protocols.
Climate variability and flooding risk	• Embed resilience planning into infrastructure and programming. • Promote seasonal flexibility and adaptive design.
Competition from larger regional centres	• Differentiate Balranald Shire through authenticity, ecological uniqueness, and co-designed experiences. • Focus on niche markets and storytelling.

Grant funding will be essential in delivering this plan

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d. Regional Competitor Benchmarking

The Balranald Shire holds a unique position among its regional peers, offering a compelling blend of nature, culture, and connectivity. Below is a comparative matrix of Balranald and seven neighbouring LGAs, followed by key insights and strategic leverage points.

LGA	Signature Assets	Tourism Strengths	Challenges
Balranald Shire	• The 5 Rivers • Mungo NP & World Heritage Willandra Lakes • Yanga NP • Lake Benanee • Discovery Centre • Mungo NP gateway • Townships of Balranald, Euston & Kyalite each with unique natural appeal • Northern communities gateway to Mungo NP & Willandra Lakes	• Nature-based tourism, • Aboriginal cultural tourism, • Caravan & camping • Dark sky & big sky • Creative placemaking • 3 Tourism Awards - 2 for the Discovery Centre & 1 for Destination Marketing	• Seasonal Visitation • Limited accommodation diversity • Underutilised riverfront • Digital marketing constraints • Workforce gaps
Mildura	• Murray River • Wineries, • Arts precinct • Mildura Arts Centre, • Pink Salt Lakes • Trail of Light	• Events-led tourism • Food & wine • Strong branding • Major airport • High visitor spend • Access & proximity to Mungo NP • Shopping & Accommodation	• Over-reliance on seasonal events • Competition with larger destinations • Campaign ROI concerns
Hay Shire	• Shear Outback Centre • Hay Gaol • Murrumbidgee River • WWII heritage	• Heritage tourism, • Strong caravan/camping market, • Central location on touring routes	• Ageing infrastructure, • Limited product diversity • Climate resilience challenges
Wentworth Shire	• Junction of Murray & Darling Rivers, • Perry Sandhills • New & impressive Visitor Centre • New caravan park • Upcoming Fibre Optic Symphonic Orchestra	• Heritage tourism, • Strong caravan/camping market, • Central location on touring routes • Close proximity to Mungo NP	• Need for immersive experiences • Limited cultural tourism • Fragmented branding

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LGA	Signature Assets	Tourism Strengths	Challenges
Broken Hill	• National Heritage City • Mining history • Strong Art & Creative scene • Mundi Mundi Bash • Line of Lode • Dessert Sculptures • Mutawintji National Park	• Outback heritage, • Film tourism, • Arts & culture, • Strong identity • Events calendar • Proximity to Silverton & the Mad Max museum	• Distance/remoteness, • Ageing infrastructure, • Reliance on mining narrative
Central Darling	• Menindee Lakes • Wilcannia heritage • The Baaka Cultural Center • Vast outback landscapes	• Aboriginal cultural tourism potential • Remote adventure • Dark sky • Far West collaboration	• Sparse infrastructure • limited tourism services • Access constraints
Swan Hill	• Pioneer Settlement • Murray River, • Heartbeat of the Murray Laser Spectacular • New Tourism & Cultural Hub	• Aboriginal cultural tourism potential, • Remote adventure • Dark sky • Far West collaboration	• Sparse infrastructure • limited tourism services • Access constraints
Murray River Shire	• Barham–Koondrook, riverfront trails, • Agri-tourism, • Heritage towns • Moama-Echuca tourism offerings	• Cross-border tourism (Moama-Echuca & Barham-Koondrook) • Food & wine, • nature-based experiences, • Murray River access,	• Dispersed visitor economy, • Workforce shortages, • Balancing growth with sustainability

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Key Insights for Balranald Shire

- **High-performing visitor economy**: With $16.13M in visitor spend and 144,900 visitors (YE May 2025), Balranald is outperforming several peers in yield and growth.

- **Strategic location:** Positioned at the crossroads of major touring routes, Balranald is a natural stopover with potential to convert pass-through traffic into extended stays.

- **Cultural leadership:** Balranald leads in Aboriginal tourism activation (4/5 index), with strong co-design practices and proximity to Mungo NP.

- **Nature & wellness edge:** Unique assets like Yanga NP, wetlands, and dark skies offer a competitive advantage in eco and wellness tourism.

Key Insights for Balranald Shire

- **Position as a Cultural & Nature Gateway:** Leverage proximity to Mungo NP and Yanga NP to brand Balranald as the "Gateway to Living Landscapes & Culture."

- **Activate Riverfront & Creative Precincts:** Invest in riverfront trails, public art, and seasonal events to match the immersive offerings of Swan Hill and Wentworth.

- **Expand Accommodation & Experience Packaging:** Compete with Mildura and Broken Hill by developing glamping, eco-lodges, and bundled itineraries (e.g. "River to Stars" or "Stories of Country").

- **Strengthen Digital & Regional Collaboration:** Rebuild digital marketing capacity (e.g. Facebook ads) and align with Murray Regional Tourism and Far West JO for cross-border campaigns.

- **Champion Inclusive, Values-Driven Tourism:** Differentiate through kindness-based leadership, Aboriginal co-design, and youth empowerment—positioning Balranald as a model for ethical regional tourism.

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5. Product Development & Experience Design

a. Product & Market Development by Market Segment

The following Product & Development Matrix provides a clear framework for aligning Balranald Shire's diverse visitor segments with tailored experiences and strategic actions. By mapping each market—ranging from grey nomads and road trippers to cultural explorers, families, education groups, and event attendees—the matrix highlights how existing assets can be activated and new products developed to extend stays, increase visitor spend, and strengthen community benefit. This structured approach ensures that Balranald's tourism offering remains inclusive, immersive, and strategically positioned within the regional visitor economy.

Market Segment	Tourism Product Focus	Development Actions
Grey Nomads	• Caravan parks, • Camping options • Riverfront trails • Heritage interpretation	• Upgrade caravan park amenities • Upgrade caravan park with riverfront design (refer to develop stages of Masterplan • Develop loyalty programs • Signage for themed trails & attractions • Host social events at the Discovery Centre • Develop RV-Friendly signage • Partner with RV Clubs for promotion
Road Trippers	• Highway stopovers • The VIC • Quirky attractions • Street Art & Murals • Local Food • Self-Drive itineraries	• Enhance highway signage • Create "Stop, Shop Stay, Explore" packages • Create downloadable maps & guides • Promote local produce • Create quirky photo spots

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Market Segment	Tourism Product Focus	Development Actions
Cultural Explorers	• Aboriginal cultural immersion Aboriginal-led heritage tours • Interpretive trails • Cultural heritage trail signage & storytelling • Heritage sites • Creative precincts	• Co-design experiences with Traditional Owners • Invest in interpretive and story-telling infrastructure • Trail local guides • Create immersive audio/visual content • Expand Discovery Centre exhibitions
Eco-tourists & Nature Lovers	• Yanga National Park • Wetlands • Birdwatching • Stargazing packages • Wetland walks & conservation tours	• Create seasonal nature calendars • Guided eco-tours • Dark sky & star gazing platforms • Citizen science programs • Enhance trails and viewing platforms • Partner with ecologists and guides • Promote low-impact travel options • Promote conservation
Families	• Discovery Centre • Playgrounds • Funky Frog trail • Family friendly events	• Develop interactive trails • Expand VIC explorer kits; • Family packages with accommodation + activities; • School holiday programs • Create activity packs
Education Groups	• Aboriginal Culture • Ecology • Heritage • Astronomy • Ranger programs • School Excursions	• Develop Curriculum-linked tours • school excursion packages • partnerships with universities • STEM + cultural immersion modules • Create activity packs

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Market Segment	Tourism Product Focus	Development Actions
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Visitors	• Cultural precincts • Community events • Heritage connections • Cultural festivals • Healing spaces • Heritage sites	• Strengthen Aboriginal-led tourism enterprises; • host cultural festivals; • embed protocols in precinct design • Support Aboriginal enterprises • Co-design messaging
Internal Visitors & Visiting Friends & Relatives	• Local events • Community hubs • Food and retail	• Promote "Bring a friend" campaigns • Activate the Discovery Centre for locals • Encourage residents as tourism ambassadors

Key Strategic Takeaways

1. Grey Nomads & Road Trippers – Backbone of the Visitor Economy

- **Why it matters:** These segments represent consistent, high-volume visitation, often with longer stays and strong spend in caravan parks, fuel, and local retail.
- **Strategic Actions:**
    - Upgrade caravan park amenities (powered sites, accessible facilities, Wi-Fi).
    - Develop themed touring trails (heritage, wetlands, Funky Frog) with clear signage.
    - Create loyalty programs and "Stay 3, Pay 2" packages to extend stays.
    - Position Balranald as a friendly, safe, and welcoming stopover with VIC-led activations.

2. Cultural Explorers & Aboriginal Visitors – Leadership in Cultural Integrity

- **Why it matters:** Balranald Shire is uniquely placed as a gateway to Mungo NP and has strong Aboriginal co-design practices. This differentiates it from competitors.
- **Strategic Actions:**
    - Expand Aboriginal-led tourism products (bush tucker walks, art workshops, storytelling).
    - Embed cultural protocols in signage, precinct design, and events.

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  - Develop partnerships with schools, universities, and reconciliation organisations.
  - Market Balranald as a "Cultural Gateway" to the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.

3. Eco-Tourists & Adventure Seekers - Growth Niches for Yield & Stay Extension

- **Why it matters:** Nature-based and wellness tourism are among the fastest-growing global segments. Balranald's wetlands, dark skies, and river assets are under-utilised.
- **Strategic Actions:**
  - Develop seasonal nature calendars (bird migrations, wildflower blooms, stargazing events).
  - Package canoeing, kayaking, and cycling with accommodation and dining.
  - Create eco-certification pathways for local operators.
  - Position Balranald as a "Dark Sky & Wetlands Destination" to attract niche markets.

4. Families & Education Groups - Building Intergenerational Engagement

- **Why it matters:** Families and schools drive repeat visitation and community pride. Interactive, curriculum-linked programming builds long-term loyalty.
- **Strategic Actions:**
  - Expand the Funky Frog Trail with AR features, explorer kits, and VIC-led activities.
  - Develop curriculum-linked tours (astronomy, ecology, Aboriginal culture).
  - Partner with schools for excursions and Duke of Edinburgh programs.
  - Create family packages with accommodation, meals, and activities bundled.

5. Event Attendees & VFR (Visiting Friends & Relatives) – Catalysts for Spend

- **Why it matters:** Events generate spikes in visitation and spending, while VFR is often overlooked but represents a large share of regional travel.
- **Strategic Actions:**
  - Align events with accommodation and retail offers (e.g. Seniors Week, Youth Week).
  - Promote "Bring a Friend" campaigns to activate VFR markets.
  - Develop night economy activations (markets, live music, food trucks) around events.
  - Package events with cultural and nature experiences to extend stays.

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Strategic Positioning

› **Gateway Identity:** Position Balranald as the Gateway to Nature, Culture, and Community — leveraging its crossroads location and proximity to Mungo NP.

› **Inclusive Leadership:** Differentiate through Aboriginal co-design, youth empowerment, and kindness-based governance.

› **Experience Packaging:** Bundle accommodation, food, and experiences to compete with Mildura and Broken Hill in yield.

› **Digital Activation:** Restore and strengthen digital marketing channels to amplify reach and storytelling.

› **Sustainability & Resilience:** Embed environmental stewardship and cultural integrity into all product development to future-proof growth.

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b. Experiences Development

The following are a series of proposed curated suite of immersive, engaging, and packaged experiences designed to reflect our strategic priorities, cultural integrity, and environmental stewardship. The proposed experiences have been presented under the following categories:

1. Nature & Culture based Experiences
2. Signature Local Identity Experiences
3. Aboriginal Cultural Experiences
4. Creative & Community Experiences
5. Nature, Eco-Tourism & Wildlife Experiences
6. Agri-Tourism Experiences

1. Nature & Culture based Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
"Yanga Secrets: Stories by the River"	Self-drive or guided itinerary linking the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Wakool, and Edward Rivers.	3-hour guided tour with optional sunset paddle or overnight eco-accommodation.	• Cultural explorers • eco-tourists • Education groups
"Five Rivers Flow Touring Loop"	Guided walk through Yanga National Park's historic homestead and wetlands, blending ecological interpretation with Aboriginal storytelling.	Passport-style trail with stampable stops, local business discounts, digital "passport app, and VIC pickup.	• Grey Nomads, • Families, • Road trippers.
"River Recharge Retreat"	Wellness-focused escape with yoga, journaling, bush meditation, and river walks.	2-night stay with meals, guided sessions, optional creative journaling workshops, wellness cuisine and nature immersion.	• Solo travellers • Wellness seekers • Remote workers
"Wetlands & Outback Fusion Journey"	Immersive 2 day tour linking wetlands, birdwatching with outback stargazing & Mungo NP lunette tour	2-night stay with meals, guided sessions, twilight astronomy, and storytelling.	• Eco-tourists • Adventure seekers • Couples

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2. Signature Local Identity Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Funky Frog Sculpture Trail – Enhanced Experience	Enhance the current Funky Frog Sculpture Trail from a fun family activity into a signature, layered experience that deepens engagement, educates about the Southern Bell Frog's ecosystem extends dwell time, and builds Balranald's playful identity.	**1. Digital & Interactive Layer** • AR Frog Encounters: Families use a mobile app to see animated frogs "come alive" at each sculpture, sharing fun facts about wetlands and conservation. • Trail Passport App: Digital stamp collection with badges, trivia unlocks, and a leaderboard for repeat visitors. • Audio Storytelling: QR codes at each sculpture link to short stories narrated by local children or Elders, blending fun with cultural depth. **2. Creative & Educational Layer** • Citizen Science Tie-In: Add frog call listening stations or mini wetland ecology challenges along the trail. • Art-in-Action: Seasonal live painting or sculpture workshops where families can watch artists create new frog pieces. • Frog Fact Cards: Collectible cards at each stop with conservation tips, Aboriginal language words, or quirky frog trivia.	• Families • School Groups • Day trippers • Eco-tourists,. • Regional explorers, • VFR visitors.

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Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Funky Frog Sculpture Trail - Enhanced Experience **(cont.)**	Enhance the current Funky Frog Sculpture Trail from a fun family activity into a signature, layered experience that deepens engagement, educates about the Southern Bell Frog's ecosystem extends dwell time, and builds Balranald's playful identity.	**3. Gamification & Rewards** • Frog Quest Challenges: Families complete mini tasks (e.g. "Hop like a frog," "Spot the hidden symbol") for bonus points. • Tiered Certificates: Bronze, Silver, Gold levels based on how many sculptures/questions are completed. **4. Seasonal & Event Integration** • Twilight Frog Trail Nights: Lantern-lit evening walks with frog call recordings and glow-in-the-dark trail markers. • Festival Activation: Link the trail to Youth Week or Seniors Week with special frog-themed activities. • Wetlands Week Collaboration: Tie the trail into broader conservation events, reinforcing Balranald's positioning. **5. Community & Cultural Layer** • Local Voices: Invite schools to co-create questions or design frog art for temporary installations. • Aboriginal Language Integration: Include Muthi Muthi words for frogs, water, and wetlands at each stop.	• Families • School Groups • Day trippers • Eco-tourists,. • Regional explorers, • VFR visitors.

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Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Southern Bell Frog Conservation Tour	Wetland walk with ecologists and Traditional Owners, frog call listening, and habitat restoration.	90-minute guided tour with citizen science activity	• Nature lovers • students • eco-tourists
Reggie the Regent Parrot – Euston's Colourful Icon	A vibrant, family-friendly trail and activation centred on "Reggie" the Regent Parrot, celebrating Euston's unique biodiversity and community pride. Visitors follow a series of parrot sculptures, murals, and interactive stations that highlight the Regent Parrot's story — from its striking plumage to its habitat along the Murray River.	• Trail Map & Passport: Families collect stamps or QR codes at each parrot stop. • Interactive Learning: Audio stories and AR features bring Reggie to life, sharing fun facts about conservation. • Creative Engagement: Children complete a "Parrot Protector" quiz and return it to the Euston VIC for a certificate and badge. • Merchandise Tie-In: Regent Parrot plush toys, colouring books, and themed souvenirs available at VIC and local businesses. • Seasonal Activation: "Reggie's Spring Festival" — art workshops, birdwatching tours, and parrot-themed food stalls.	• Families • School groups • eco-tourists • regional explorers • VFR visitors.

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3. Aboriginal Cultural Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Willandra Dreaming Camp	Multi-day immersive camp led by Muthi Muthi Elders as well as Barkandji, and Ngiyampaa Elders.	2–3 day retreat with storytelling, weaving, bush medicine, and dance.	• Education groups, • Cultural travellers, • Youth programs.
"Voices of Country – Aboriginal Astronomy Nights"	Elders share sky stories alongside telescopes and astronomy experts.	2–3 day retreat with storytelling, weaving, bush medicine, youth leadership programs, reconciliation workshops and dance.	• Cultural explorers, • Education groups • international visitors.
Ngatji (Rainbow Serpent) Water Story Experience	Guided storytelling and art workshop centred on the Rainbow Serpent and its connection to rivers and wetlands. Elders share creation stories, followed by collaborative painting or weaving sessions inspired by water and life	• 90-minute guided storytelling circle • Optional art workshop (painting, weaving, or sand art) • Take-home cultural art piece or photo certificate	• Families • Reconciliation groups • Cultural travellers • Schools
Sky Country – Aboriginal Astronomy & Night Camp	Immersive evening experience where Elders share sky stories, constellations, and cultural interpretations of the stars. Visitors learn how Aboriginal astronomy guided navigation, ceremony, and seasonal knowledge.	• Evening campfire storytelling with bush tucker supper • Stargazing with telescopes and cultural interpretation • Optional overnight camping with dawn reflection walk	• Cultural explorers • Education groups • International visitors, • Youth programs
Bush Medicine & Healing Walk	Guided walk through wetlands and bushland with Elders explaining traditional plant uses for medicine, food, and ceremony. Includes hands-on demonstrations of bush remedies and cultural healing practices	• 2-hour guided walk with plant identification • Bush medicine preparation demonstration • Optional workshop on sustainable harvesting and cultural protocols	• Wellness seekers • Eco-tourists • educators • Reconciliation groups

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Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Cultural Canoe Journeys	Guided canoe trips along the Murray or Murrumbidgee Rivers with Elders sharing water stories, fishing practices, and cultural protocols.	Half-day paddle with bush tucker lunch and storytelling circles.	• Adventure seekers • Cultural travellers • Education groups.
Songline & Dance Fires	Evening gathering with traditional dance, music, and storytelling around the fire. Elders explain the meaning of songlines and their connection to Country	2-hour performance with optional participatory dance workshop	• Families • Reconciliation groups • International visitors
Cultural Craft & Weaving Hub	Hands-on workshops in weaving, carving, and painting led by Aboriginal artists, with stories about the cultural significance of each craft.	90-minute workshop with take-home craft piece.	• Families, • Reconciliation groups • international visitors
Seasonal Food & Fire Gatherings	Bush tucker cooking demonstrations and shared meals around the fire, highlighting seasonal foods and their cultural uses.	Dining experience with storytelling, seasonal menu, and cultural protocols.	• Foodies • Couples • Cultural travellers
Wetlands Spirit Walk	Guided walk through wetlands with Elders explaining spiritual connections, animal totems, and ecological knowledge.	2-hour walk with interpretive signage and optional citizen science activity.	• Eco-tourists, • Reconciliation groups • Schools.

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4. Creative & Community Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Outback Canvas Art Trail	Public art installations, live mural painting and gallery pop-ups	Self-guided trail with map, artist bios, and QR-linked audio and "paint-outs" with visiting artists	• Art lovers • Weekenders, • Regional explorers.
Taste Trail - From River to Table	Culinary journey featuring bush-inspired dishes, local produce, and frog-themed treats. This could also be a seasonal festival with cooking classes	Dining passport, market vouchers, and chef-led tastings.	• Foodies, • Event attendees, • Couples
Makers & Market Days	Regular artisan market showcasing crafts, produce, and performances.	Market passport with discounts and loyalty rewards.	• Families • Foodies • Regional day-trippers
Riverfront Mural & Story Wall	A collaborative mural project along the Balranald riverfront where local artists, schools, and community groups paint panels that tell layered stories of wetlands, outback life, and cultural heritage.	• Seasonal "Paint the Town" weekends where families and visitors contribute.; • QR codes linking each mural to oral histories or youth-created digital stories. • Take-home postcard prints of mural sections available at the VIC.	• Families, • Schools, • Art lovers, • Visitors seeking authentic community engagement.
Community Theatre & Story Circles	Pop-up theatre performances and storytelling circles in public spaces, blending local history, Aboriginal narratives, and contemporary community voices.	• Youth theatre groups perform short plays inspired by wetlands and outback identity. • Intergenerational storytelling evenings with Elders, farmers, and creative voices. • Optional workshops for visitors to learn performance or storytelling techniques	• Families • Foodies • Regional day-trippers

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Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Music on the Murrumbidgee and/or Music on the Murray	Outdoor concerts and soundscape installations along the Murrumbidgee/ Murray River, featuring local musicians, Aboriginal performers, and youth bands.	• Seasonal twilight concerts with food stalls and art markets. • Permanent soundscape installations (frog calls, bird songs, river sounds) curated with community input. • Visitor participation through "jam sessions" or open mic evenings	• Music lovers • Families, • Youth • Cultural explorers • Regional visitors

5. Nature, Eco-Tourism & Wildlife Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Balranald To Euston Bird Trail Experience **(currently in development)**	A signature birdwatching journey linking Balranald and Euston, showcasing the Shire's wetlands, rivers, and outback habitats. Visitors follow a curated trail that includes the Ben Scott Memorial Bird Trail, Yanga National Park, bird signage and bird viewing infrastructure along the Murrumbidgee River at Balranald, Lake Bananee and the Murray River at Euston. The trail highlights diverse birdlife — from Regent Parrots and waterbirds to migratory species — while offering interpretive insights into ecology, conservation, and Aboriginal cultural connections to Country.	• Brid Species Checklist • Trail Map: Printed and digital maps indicating location of signage and birdwatching infrastructure. • Bird Hides & Viewing Platforms: Enhanced infrastructure at key sites for immersive birdwatching. • Guided Tours: Optional half-day or full-day tours led by local bird experts and Traditional Owners. • Citizen Science Integration: Visitors encouraged to log sightings via apps like eBird or FrogID (for frogs along wetlands). • Family Engagement: Junior Birdwatcher certificates for children who complete the trail checklist. • Seasonal Activations: Spring migration events, twilight birdwatching walks, and photography workshops	• Eco-tourists • Birdwatchers • Families • Schools • Photographers & Nature enthusiasts • Regional explorers • Cultural travellers

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Experience	Description	Package	Audience
Ben Scott Bird Trail Discovery Pack	Guided birdwatching with binocular hire, ID cards, and audio soundscape. Could also be a seasonal festival with photography competitions	2-hour tour or self-guided pack with VIC pickup	• Birders • Photographers • Nature tourists
Twilight Frogs & Fireflies Walk	Evening guided tour with lanterns with acoustic storytelling and frog call listening, fireflies and nocturnal wetland life	• 90-minute guided walk with lanterns provided. • Aboriginal storytelling layer about wetlands as living Country. • Optional hot chocolate or bush tea at the end.	• Families • Couples • Eco-tourists • Cultural travellers
Wetlands Wonders – Citizen Science Safari	Guided tours where families and visitors collect frog calls (linked to FrogID), bird sightings, and water quality data.	• 2-hour guided safari with ecologists and Traditional Owners. • Citizen science kits (binoculars, recording devices, field notes). • Certificate of participation as "Junior Wetland Scientist."	• Families • Couples • Eco-tourists
Dark Sky & River Reflection Nights	Stargazing platforms with Aboriginal astronomy interpretation and ecological storytelling about rivers and wetlands.	• Evening stargazing with telescopes and guided interpretation. • Campfire supper with bush tucker tastings. • Optional overnight camping package.	• Cultural travelers • Couples • Astronomy enthusiasts • Schools
Eco-Kayak & Canoe Journeys	Low-impact paddling tours through wetlands and river systems, guided by ecologists and Traditional Owners.	• Half-day guided paddle with birdwatching and ecology insights. • Bush tucker tastings along the riverbank. • Optional photography package.	• Adventure seekers • Eco-tourists • Families • Cultural Travellers

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6. Agri-Tourism Experiences

Experience	Description	Package	Audience
From River to Table Taste Trail	Farm-to-fork experiences showcasing local produce and bush foods.	• Guided tastings at farms, wineries, and local eateries. • Seasonal menus tied to campaign calendar (Autumn harvest, Summer edition). • Recipe cards and produce hampers available for purchase.	• Art lovers • Weekenders, • Regional explorers.
Harvest & Heritage Farm Days	Hands-on farm visits where families can pick produce, learn about irrigation, and explore heritage machinery	• Half-day farm tour with produce picking. • Machinery demonstrations and storytelling about farming traditions. • Picnic lunch with local produce.	• Families • Schools • Heritage enthusiasts • Eco-tourists
Sheering Shed Stories	Immersive tours of working sheds with demonstrations of shearing, wool handling, and pastoral heritage.	• 2-hour guided tour with live shearing demonstration. • Storytelling about pastoral life and heritage. • Optional evening "Shearing Shed Supper" with music and local food	• Families • Schools • Cultural travellers • Heritage enthusiasts
Riverfront Agri-Food Festival	Annual event celebrating local & regional produce, and bush foods.	• Cooking demonstrations, tastings, and family activities. • Food stalls, live music, and art markets. • Seasonal tie-in with Taste Trail branding.	• Families • Foodies • Cultural travellers • Regional visitors

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c. Events & Festivals Development

Events and festivals are central to Balranald Shire's vision of creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable visitor economy. They provide opportunities to showcase the region's unique natural landscapes, rich Aboriginal culture, creative talent, agricultural heritage, and strong community spirit. By curating a diverse calendar across the Shire can deliver experiences that attract visitors, foster local pride, and strengthen regional identity. Each event is designed not only to entertain but to educate, connect, and leave a lasting legacy for residents and visitors alike. The proposed events are presented under the following categories:

1. Nature & Environment
2. Culture & Heritage
3. Arts & Creativity
4. Adventure & Wellness
5. Food & Community

1. Nature & Environment Events & Festivals

Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Wetlands & Wildlife Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (aligns with bird migration and frog activity)	A celebration of Balranald's wetlands, featuring guided birdwatching, frog call surveys, and ecology talks	• Guided tours at bird hides and wetlands. • Citizen science activities (FrogID, bird counts). • Family-friendly workshops on conservation and sustainability.	• Families • Eco-Tourists • Schools • Birdwatchers
Dark Sky & River Nights Festival **Recommended Season:** Winter (clear skies, cooler evenings)	Stargazing festival highlighting Aboriginal astronomy and ecological storytelling along the rivers.	• Night sky tours with telescopes. • Campfire storytelling and bush tucker tastings. • Photography workshops.	• Couples • Cultural travellers • Astronomy enthusiasts
Starlight over Mungo Festival **Recommended Season:** Winter (clear skies, cooler evenings)	A night-sky celebration at Mungo National Park, blending Aboriginal astronomy, stargazing, and ecological storytelling.	• Guided stargazing with telescopes. • Aboriginal sky stories and cultural performances. • Photography workshops and night walks.	• Couples • Cultural travellers • Astronomy enthusiasts • Schools

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Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
River Rhythms Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (river activity and outdoor events)	A festival celebrating the life of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers through music, ecology, and community.	• Riverfront concerts and soundscape installations. • Guided ecology walks and citizen science activities. • Food stalls and art markets along the riverbank.	• Families • Eco-Tourists • Music lovers • Regional visitors
Outback Bloom Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (peak wildflower season)	A celebration of wildflowers and native plants across the outback landscapes	• Guided wildflower walks and photography tours. • Bush medicine workshops and Aboriginal plant knowledge sessions. • Art and craft markets inspired by blooms.	• Families • Eco-Tourists • Wellness seekers • Photographers

2. Culture & Heritage Events & Festivals

Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Ngatji Water Story Gathering **Recommended Season:** Autumn (aligns with river flows and cultural gatherings)	Aboriginal-led storytelling festival centred on the Rainbow Serpent and water's cultural significance.	• Story circles with Elders. • Art and weaving workshops. • Cultural performances and food stalls.	• Families • Cultural travellers • Reconciliation groups
Living History Weekend **Recommended Season:** Winter (cooler weather suits heritage tours)	Heritage festival showcasing Balranald's and Euston's colonial, pastoral, and Aboriginal histories.	• Re-enactments, heritage machinery displays, and storytelling. • Guided tours of historic sites. • School programs and family activities.	• Heritage enthusiasts • Schools • Families • Regional visitors

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Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Echoes of Country Festival **Recommended Season:** Autumn (aligns with cultural gatherings)	Aboriginal-led festival celebrating songlines, dance, and storytelling across Country.	• Performances by Aboriginal dancers and musicians. • Story circles with Elders. • Cultural workshops (weaving, painting, language).	• Families • Reconciliation groups • Cultural travellers visitors
Pioneer & Pastoral Pathways Festival **Recommended Season:** Winter (cooler weather suits heritage tours)	A heritage festival showcasing Balranald and Euston's colonial and pastoral history.	• Heritage machinery displays and re-enactments. • Guided tours of historic sites. • Family activities and storytelling sessions.	• Heritage enthusiasts • Schools • Families • Regional visitors
Mungo Mosaic Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (pleasant weather for outdoor art and tours).	A creative heritage festival at Mungo National Park, blending archaeology, Aboriginal culture, and art.	• Guided tours of Mungo's World Heritage landscapes. • Mosaic art workshops inspired by ancient footprints and stories. • Cultural performances and exhibitions.	• Cultural travellers • Art Lovers • Schools • Eco-tourists
Wool, Wood & Water Revival **Recommended Season:** Autumn — aligns with harvest rhythms, cooler weather for outdoor demonstrations, and river gatherings	A take on the previous 5 Rivers Outback Festival,. A heritage festival celebrating the industries and traditions that shaped Balranald Shire — wool production, timber heritage, and the life-giving rivers. This event honours the resilience of pastoralists, woodworkers, and river communities, blending demonstrations, storytelling, and cultural performances into a vibrant revival of local identity.	• Live shearing, wool handling, woodworking, and river craft displays. • Storytelling & Performances: Elders, farmers, and craftspeople share stories of pastoral life, timber traditions, and river culture. • Interactive Workshops: Hands-on weaving, carving, and wool craft sessions for families and schools. • Community Market: heritage-inspired food stalls. • Evening Gathering: With music, dance, and shared meals celebrating community spirit.	• Heritage enthusiasts • Families • Schools • Regional visitors

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3. Arts & Creative Events & Festivals

Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Riverfront Arts Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring Spring (outdoor art and music activations)	A multi-day arts festival featuring murals, sculpture, live music, and creative workshops.	• Community mural painting and art markets. • Live performances by local musicians and youth groups. • Interactive workshops (painting, weaving, photography).	• Cultural travellers • Art Lovers • Families
Creative Outback Residency Showcase **Recommended Season:** Summer (aligns with creative residencies and tourism peak)	Residency program culminating in a festival where artists present works inspired by Balranald's landscapes	• Artist talks and exhibitions. • Pop-up performances in unique locations (shearing sheds, wetlands). • Collaborative workshops with schools and community groups.	• Cultural travellers • Art Lovers • Families
Creative Currents Festival **Recommended Season:** Summer (aligns with creative residencies and tourism peak)	A festival showcasing contemporary art inspired by rivers and wetlands	• Exhibitions of visual art, sculpture, and installations. • Artist talks and residencies. • Interactive workshops for schools and families.	• Art enthusiasts • Cultural travellers • Schools • Familities
Storylines & Skylines Festival **Recommended Season:** Summer (aligns with creative residencies and tourism peak)	A literary and storytelling festival celebrating local voices, landscapes, and Aboriginal narratives.	• Author talks, poetry readings, and storytelling circles. • Writing workshops for youth and adults. • Outdoor performances against river and outback backdrops.	• Writers • Readers • Families • Cultural travellers

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Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Bush Beats & Brushes Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (outdoor art and music activations)	A creative fusion of live music and art workshops in outdoor settings.	• Concerts featuring local musicians. • Painting and craft workshops inspired by wetlands and outback. • Art markets and food stalls.	• Families • Youth • Art Lovers • Music enthusiasts

4. Adventure & Wellness Events & Festivals

Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Murrumbidgee Adventure Challenge **Recommended Season:** Autumn (mild weather ideal for outdoor activity)	Outdoor adventure festival with kayaking, cycling, trail running, and family-friendly obstacle courses.	• Competitive and recreational events. • Wellness workshops (yoga by the river, mindfulness walks). • Family adventure zones with mini challenges.	• Adventure seekers • Families • Wellness travellers
Wellness on Country Retreat **Recommended Season:** Spring (renewal and growth season).	Aboriginal-led wellness festival combining bush medicine, cultural healing, and mindfulness practices.	• Guided bush medicine walks. • Meditation and yoga sessions. • Cultural healing workshops and storytelling.	• Wellness seekers • Meditation and yoga sessions • Cultural healing workshops & storytelling
River Recharge Retreat Festival **Recommended Season:** Spring (renewal and growth season)	A wellness festival along the river, combining yoga, meditation, and Aboriginal healing practices.	• Yoga and mindfulness sessions by the river. • Bush medicine walks and cultural healing workshops. • Wellness markets with local produce and crafts.	• Wellness seekers • Couples • Cultural travellers

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Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Bush Balance Festival **Recommended Season:** Autumn (mild weather for outdoor activity)	A holistic wellness event blending outdoor adventure with cultural balance.	• Guided bush walks and mindfulness activities. • Aboriginal storytelling and cultural protocols. • Family-friendly wellness workshops.	• Families • Wellness travellers • Couples
Kayak & Camp Quest **Recommended Season:** Summer (long days and river activity)	Adventure festival combining kayaking, camping, and river exploration	• Guided kayak journeys with ecology interpretation. • Overnight camping with storytelling and music. • Family adventure challenges and photography tours.	• Adventure seekers • Families • Eco-tourists • Youth

5. Food & Community Events & Festivals

Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
River to Table Festival **Recommended Season:** Autumn (harvest season)	Celebration of local produce, wine, and bush foods along the Murray and Murrumbidgee.	• Cooking demonstrations and tastings. • Food stalls and wine pairings. • Family activities and live music	• Foodies • Couples • Families • Regional visitors
Shearing Shed Supper & Stories **Recommended Season:** Winter (indoor warmth and storytelling focus)	Community supper event in heritage shearing sheds with local food, music, and storytelling.	• Shared meals featuring regional produce. • Live music and storytelling about pastoral heritage. • Optional guided shed tours.	• Families • Heritage enthusiasts • Cultural travellers

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Description & Season	Description	Package	Audience
Riverbank Picnic & Produce Festival **Recommended Season:** Autumn (harvest season)	A community picnic festival showcasing local produce along the riverbanks	• Shared picnic spaces with local food hampers. • Produce stalls and tastings. • Family games and live music.	• Families • Foodies • Regional visitors
Campfire Cookout Festival **Recommended Season:** Winter (warmth of campfires)	A festival of outdoor cooking traditions, blending Aboriginal bush foods and local produce.	• Cooking demonstrations around campfires. • Shared meals and storytelling. • Family-friendly cooking workshops.	• Families • Foodies • Cultural travellers

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d. Enhancing & Supporting Current Experiences, Festivals & Events

Balranald Shire already hosts a diverse range of experiences and events that reflect its landscapes, heritage, creativity, and community spirit. Strengthening these existing offerings is essential to building visitor loyalty, increasing dwell time, and positioning the Shire as a vibrant destination along the Sturt Highway. The following strategies outline how each current experience and event can be enhanced to attract more visitors and deliver greater economic and social impact.

Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Outback Geo Adventures 	**Seasonal & Themed Tour Calendar** • Work with Outback Geo Adventure to develop a structured calendar of monthly, quarterly, and seasonal tours to create anticipation and repeat visitation. *(Seperate to experiences already being offered)* • Rotate themes to highlight different attractions and experiences, ensuring variety and freshness. • Example Calendar: **Summer:** Lake Benanee water-based tours (kayaking, birdwatching, sunset picnics). **Autumn:** Murray River at Euston heritage cruises, fishing experiences, and riverside storytelling. **Winter:** Dark Sky tours with astronomy experts, campfire storytelling, and astrophotography workshops. **Spring:** Wildflower and wetlands ecology walks, Aboriginal cultural tours, and geo-heritage explorations. **Geo-Link Extensions to Other Attractions** • Position Outback Geo Adventures as a gateway to wider Shire attractions. • Bundle tours with visits to Lake Benanee, Murray River at Euston, and heritage precincts. • Create multi-day itineraries linking geo-heritage with cultural, creative, and nature-based experiences. **Dark Sky & Astronomy Experiences** • Establish regular stargazing nights with telescopes, guided interpretation, and Aboriginal sky stories. • Offer quarterly "Astro Weekends" combining astronomy, photography, and camping. • Partner with schools and universities for STEM-linked programs that attract youth and education networks.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Outback Geo Adventures cont..	**Community & Cultural Integration** • Collaborate with the Balranald Local Aboriginal Land Council to co-design tours that integrate cultural narratives with geo-heritage. • Include local storytellers, artists, and musicians to enrich seasonal experiences. • Encourage community participation through volunteer guides, youth ambassadors, and local produce showcases. **Marketing & Promotion Alignment** • Promote tours via social media campaigns, seasonal flyers, and influencer partnerships. • Use geo-branding to position Balranald as a hub for outback adventure and discovery. • Offer early-bird packages and loyalty discounts to encourage repeat visitation.
Balranald Art Gallery Experiences	**Proposed Activities per Cohorts** **Families & Children** • Art Play Days: Monthly creative sessions with hands-on activities (painting, collage, clay) for children. • Story-time in the Gallery: Pair exhibitions with storytelling sessions that connect art to local heritage. • School Holiday Programs: Themed workshops (eco-art, Aboriginal art, recycled materials) to engage families during breaks. **Youth & Students** • Youth Curator Program: Invite young people to co-curate exhibitions, giving them leadership and creative voice. • Digital Art & Media Workshops: Training in photography, video, and digital illustration to connect with tech-savvy audiences. • Art & Music Fusion Nights: Youth-led events combining live music, spoken word, and visual art. **Aboriginal & Cultural Communities** • Cultural Residency Program: Host Aboriginal artists for residencies, with open studios and community workshops. • Art & Story Circles: Regular gatherings where Elders share cultural narratives alongside visual art. • Seasonal Cultural Exhibitions: Align exhibitions with NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, or local cultural milestones.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Art Gallery Experiences cont..	**Professionals & Visitors** • Art After Hours: Evening gallery openings with wine tastings, live music, and networking opportunities. • Corporate Creativity Workshops: Team-building sessions for local businesses using art as a tool for collaboration. • Tourism Packages: Bundle gallery visits with Discovery Centre, Lake Benanee, and Murray River experiences. **Seniors & Community Groups** • Memory & Art Sessions: Programs linking art with reminiscence therapy, encouraging seniors to share stories. • Accessible Art Tours: Guided tours tailored for seniors and people with disabilities, with tactile and audio elements. • Community Art Quilt/Collaborative Projects: Large-scale collaborative works that foster social connection. **Wider Audiences (Regional & Online)** • Virtual Exhibitions: Online showcases of local artists to reach regional and global audiences. • Artist Talks & Podcasts: Recorded interviews with artists, streamed online to expand reach. • Travelling Exhibitions: Partner with nearby towns to tour Balranald artists' work, strengthening regional identity. **Gallery Involvement in Public Art & Placemaking** **Sculpture Trails & Installations** • Curatorial Leadership: Act as the curator for a rotating sculpture trail, selecting works from local and regional artists. • Artist Residencies: Host sculptors in residence who create site-specific works for public spaces. • Community Co-Design: Facilitate workshops where residents contribute ideas or collaborate on large-scale installations. • Seasonal Rotations: Refresh sculptures quarterly to encourage repeat visitation and evolving streetscapes. **Streetscape Enhancements** • Art in Everyday Spaces: Commission murals, mosaics, and creative seating designed by local artists. • Youth Engagement: Partner with schools for student-led street art projects, fostering ownership and pride. • Cultural Storytelling: Integrate Aboriginal motifs, language, and narratives into streetscape designs, co-designed with Traditional Owners. • Pop-Up Art Activations: Temporary installations in shop-fronts, laneways, and parks to animate underused spaces.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Art Gallery Experiences cont.. 	**Gallery Involvement in Public Art & Placemaking (cont.)** **Sculpture Trails & Installations** • Curatorial Leadership: Act as the curator for a rotating sculpture trail, selecting works from local and regional artists. • Artist Residencies: Host sculptors in residence who create site-specific works for public spaces. • Community Co-Design: Facilitate workshops where residents contribute ideas or collaborate on large-scale installations. • Seasonal Rotations: Refresh sculptures quarterly to encourage repeat visitation and evolving streetscapes. **Streetscape Enhancements** • Art in Everyday Spaces: Commission murals, mosaics, and creative seating designed by local artists. • Youth Engagement: Partner with schools for student-led street art projects, fostering ownership and pride. • Cultural Storytelling: Integrate Aboriginal motifs, language, and narratives into streetscape designs, co-designed with Traditional Owners. • Pop-Up Art Activations: Temporary installations in shop-fronts, laneways, and parks to animate underused spaces. **Public Art Programming** • Annual Public Art Festival: Showcase new installations, guided tours, and artist talks across town. • Interactive Art: Introduce digital/augmented reality layers to public art, allowing visitors to scan QR codes for stories. • Community Art Projects: Large collaborative works (e.g., mosaics, quilts, murals) created by diverse groups. • Art & Heritage Integration: Link public art with heritage trails, military trail, and cultural precincts. **Partnerships & Capacity Building** • Council Collaboration: Work with Council on streetscape planning to embed art into infrastructure upgrades. • Regional Networks: Partner with South West Arts and neighbouring galleries to co-fund and co-curate public art. • Business Engagement: Encourage local businesses to sponsor installations or host art in their premises. • Tourism Integration: Bundle sculpture trails and streetscape tours into visitor itineraries with Discovery Centre and Outback Geo Adventures.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Market	• Add themed children's activities (crafts, storytelling, face painting). • Expand market stalls to include regional produce and artisan crafts. • Partner with schools for student-led performances and art displays • Introduce live entertainment and food trucks for families. • Package with caravan park stays and Discovery Centre visits. • Add creative craft corners (egg decorating, Easter bonnet making). • Offer storytelling sessions with local authors or Aboriginal Elders sharing seasonal narratives. • Create a "Golden Egg Challenge" with prizes sponsored by local businesses. • Introduce artisan demonstrations (wood carving, weaving, painting) to animate the market • Bundle the event with other activities • Invite youth groups to run volunteer stations (games etc.) • Launch an Easter Parade with decorated bikes, prams and floats • Launch an Easter Bonnet or Easter costume competition • Re-introduce the Easter Letter-box decoration competition • Host a petting zoo or animal encounters
Balranald Stop Shop Stay Market Day Event	• Collaborate with the Balranald Art Gallery and local schools to create a Christmas-themed streetscape trail of murals, sculptures etc. • Enhance with more street decorations and live carols • Partner with businesses for Christmas bundles (accommodation + dining + shopping vouchers) to encourage overnight stays • Encourage businesses to decorate shop windows and a window decoration competition • Create family zones with Santa's workshop and youth performances • Introduce a Youth Makers Market where young entrepreneurs sell handmade gifts, encouraging youth participation and pride.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Southern Cross Exhibition Experience	**Leverage the New Audio-Visual Self-Guided Tour** • Immersive Storytelling: Use the AV tour to bring Charles Kingsford Smith's story to life with archival footage, pilot interviews, and Aboriginal perspectives on sky and travel. • Multi-Language Options: Offer translations (e.g., Mandarin, French, German) to attract international visitors. • Accessibility Features: Include captions, audio descriptions, and easy navigation for seniors and visitors with disabilities. **Youth & School Engagement** • STEM Learning Modules: Partner with schools to create aviation-themed STEM excursions (flight physics, navigation, engineering). • Junior Aviator Program: Interactive activities like paper plane competitions, flight simulators, or "pilot logbooks" for kids. • Curriculum Links: Align with history and science curricula to encourage regular school visits. **Volunteer Sustainability & Support** • Digital Docents: Reduce reliance on aging volunteers by using tablets or kiosks with recorded stories from volunteers themselves. • Youth Volunteer Pathways: Partner with Duke of Edinburgh Award, Scouts, or local schools to bring in younger volunteers. • Recognition Program: Celebrate existing volunteers with annual awards, storytelling sessions, and recorded oral histories. **Events & Seasonal Programming** • Aviation Heritage Week: Annual event with guest speakers, fly-ins, and community celebrations. • Anniversary Activations: Mark milestones of Kingsford Smith flights with special exhibitions or commemorative events. • Family Days: Combine aviation displays with food stalls, music, and children's activities to broaden appeal. **Partnerships & Tourism Integration** • Regional Aviation Networks: Collaborate with Temora Aviation Museum or other aviation heritage sites for cross-promotion. • Tourism Bundles: Package the exhibition with Discovery Centre, Outback Geo Adventures, and Murray River experiences. • Local Business Sponsorships: Engage motels, caravan parks, and cafes to sponsor events or offer discounts for exhibition visitors.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Southern Cross Exhibition Experience cont..	**Interactive & Digital Enhancements** • Flight Simulators: Simple VR or digital cockpit experiences to let visitors "fly" the Southern Cross. • Augmented Reality (AR): Use AR apps to overlay stories or technical details onto the replica planes. • Digital Archive Access: Allow visitors to browse digitised memorabilia, photos, and oral histories on touchscreens. **Marketing & Promotion** • Hero Storytelling: Position Kingsford Smith's legacy as a national icon, linking Balranald to Australia's aviation story. • Social Media Campaigns: Share "Did you know?" aviation facts, volunteer stories, and behind-the-scenes content. • Travel Influencers: Invite aviation enthusiasts and history bloggers to experience and promote the exhibition.
The Great Murray River Salami Festival	**Signature Culinary Experiences** • Salami & Wine Pairing Dinners: Partner with local wineries to host evening events, encouraging visitors to stay overnight. • Chef Showcases: Invite celebrity chefs or regional culinary ambassadors to run demonstrations and masterclasses. • "Salami Trail" Packages: Bundle festival entry with visits to local producers, vineyards, and eateries. **Extended Festival Programming** • Weekend Format: Expand to a two-day festival with evening concerts, night markets, and cultural storytelling. • Pre-Festival Workshops: Offer salami-making classes in the weeks leading up to the event, drawing repeat visitors. • Seasonal Mini-Events: Host smaller salami-themed pop-ups throughout the year to maintain momentum.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Great Murray River Salami Festival cont..	**Tourism Integration** • Overnight Packages: Collaborate with caravan parks, motels, and B&Bs to create accommodation + festival bundles. • Regional Itineraries: Promote packages linking the festival with Murray River cruises, Lake Benanee, and Balranald Discovery Centre. • Transport Solutions: Offer shuttle buses from nearby towns to make access easier and encourage overnight stays. **Youth & Family Engagement** • Junior Salami Competition: Encourage children and youth to create fun, non-traditional salami recipes. • Family Cooking Challenges: Parent-child teams compete in friendly cook-offs. • Interactive Kids Zone: Expand entertainment with cooking games, craft stalls, and food-themed play activities. **Cultural & Community Integration** • Aboriginal Food & Culture Showcase: Partner with Traditional Owners to highlight bush foods, cultural performances, and storytelling. • Local History Displays: Celebrate Euston's heritage with exhibitions on food traditions and river life. • Community Parade: A festive procession featuring schools, community groups, and creative floats. **Marketing & Promotion** • Festival Branding: Develop a strong identity (logo, mascot, hashtag) to build recognition. • Influencer Partnerships: Invite food bloggers and regional tourism influencers to cover the event. • Visitor Loyalty Program: Offer discounts or perks for repeat attendees. • Regional Media Campaigns: Promote through radio, TV, and print across Victoria and NSW. **Night-Time Activations** • Lantern River Walk: Evening riverside walk with lanterns, music, and food stalls. • Salami & Jazz Night: Pair gourmet tastings with live jazz or folk music. • Outdoor Cinema: Screen food-themed films under the stars to extend the evening experience.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Balranald & District Military Heritage Walk Experience 	• Expand interpretive signage and interactive digital apps with augmented reality. • Host annual commemorative events and guided tours. • Package with heritage festivals • Partner with schools and veteran groups for educational programming • Develop guided trail tours with the interpretive signs and storytelling • Introduce commemorative events linked to ANZAC Day & Remembrance Day **Immersive Visitor Experiences** • Living History Days: Re-enactments with actors in period uniforms, showcasing military drills, music, and storytelling. • Night Tours: Torch-lit or lantern walks with atmospheric soundscapes and narration to create a unique experience. • Interactive Installations: QR-code linked audio recordings of veterans' oral histories at key trail points. **Community & Cultural Integration** • Aboriginal Perspectives: Incorporate stories of Aboriginal servicemen and women, and cultural contributions to wartime efforts. • Family Memory Walls: Invite community members to contribute photos, letters, or memorabilia to a rotating "memory wall" along the trail. • Intergenerational Projects: Pair youth with veterans to co-create interpretive content, fostering dialogue and respect. **Tourism & Regional Packaging** • Trail + River Packages: Link the military trail with other experiences • Weekend Heritage Itineraries: Bundle the trail with other events • Cycling & Walking Integration: Promote the trail as part of regional cycling/walking routes, encouraging longer stays.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Balranald & District Military Heritage Walk Experience cont..	**Events & Programming Beyond Commemorations** • Military Film Nights: Screen documentaries or films linked to local military history. • Veteran Storytelling Circles: Regular informal gatherings where veterans share experiences with the community. • Creative Arts Integration: Commission local artists to create sculptures, murals, or installations inspired by military heritage. **Education & Youth Engagement** • Digital Learning Modules: Develop online resources for schools to use before/after visiting the trail. • Youth Ambassador Program: Train young guides to lead tours, building leadership and pride. • STEM Links: Connect military technology history with science and engineering learning activities. **Marketing & Promotion** • Hero Campaigns: Position the trail as a unique regional military heritage attraction in tourism marketing. • Social Media Storytelling: Share weekly "On This Day" military facts tied to Balranald's history. • Regional Collaboration: Partner with other military heritage sites (e.g., Mildura, Swan Hill) for cross-promotion.
Lake Benanee Experience	**Nature & Adventure Experiences** • Eco-Adventure Trails: Develop walking and cycling paths around the lake with interpretive signage on flora, fauna, and Aboriginal heritage. • Water-Based Activities: Expand kayaking, paddle-boarding, and fishing experiences with hire facilities and guided tours. • Stargazing Nights: Host astronomy evenings, leveraging the lake's dark skies for storytelling and science. • Birdwatching: Introduce monthly birdwatching mornings

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Lake Benanee Experience cont..	**Cultural & Heritage Integration** • Aboriginal Storytelling Circles: Partner with Traditional Owners to share cultural narratives about water, land, and sky. • Art Installations: Commission local artists to create sculptures or murals inspired by the lake's ecology and heritage. • Seasonal Cultural Events: Align programming with NAIDOC Week or local heritage festivals to draw diverse audiences. **Family & Youth Engagement** • Adventure Playground Expansion: Add nature-play elements (logs, climbing nets, water play) themed around the lake. • Youth Camps: Partner with schools and Scouts for camping programs that combine outdoor skills with cultural learning. • Junior Ranger Program: Interactive activities where children learn about conservation and earn badges. **Tourism & Overnight Stays** • Lakeside Glamping: Introduce eco-friendly glamping pods or cabins to encourage overnight stays. • Camping Packages: Bundle camping with guided tours, fishing permits, and local produce hampers. • Regional Itineraries: Promote Lake Benanee as part of a "Rivers & Lakes Trail" linking Murray River, Yanga National Park, Murrumbidgee River and Balranald Discovery Centre. **Events & Festivals** • Lake Benanee Summer Festival: Music, food stalls, water sports, and family activities to animate the lake precinct. • Wellness Retreats: Yoga, meditation, and wellness weekends by the water. • Eco-Education Days: Community events focused on sustainability, birdwatching, and conservation.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Euston & Murray River Experience	**Riverfront Activation & Infrastructure** • Riverside Promenade: Develop shaded walkways, seating, and art installations to encourage strolling and lingering. • Viewing Platforms: Scenic decks for photography, birdwatching, and sunset experiences. • Eco-friendly Lighting: Solar lanterns along pathways to enable safe evening use and create ambience. **Water-Based Tourism & Adventure** • Cruises & Tours: Expand paddle steamer or pontoon boat cruises with themed experiences (wine tastings, Aboriginal storytelling, sunset dinners). • Adventure Sports: Introduce kayaking, paddle-boarding, and fishing tours with local guides. • Houseboats & Glamping: Eco-friendly accommodation options on or near the river to encourage overnight stays. • Riverside Weekends: With fishing competitions, markets and live music • Regular guided walks along river trails **Food & Wine Integration** • Riverside Tastings: Partner with local wineries and producers for riverside food and wine events. • Culinary Trails: Position Euston as the gateway to a "Murray River Food & Wine Trail" linking regional producers. • Signature Dining: Encourage pop-up restaurants or food trucks along the river during peak seasons. **Cultural & Heritage Programming** • Aboriginal Cultural Experiences: Guided walks, storytelling circles, and bush food tastings led by Traditional Owners. • River Heritage Exhibits: Interpretive signage and mini-museums highlighting river trade, fishing traditions, and colonial history. • Living History Days: Re-enactments of river trade, music, and community life along the Murray.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Euston & Murray River Experience cont..	**Events & Festivals** • River Lights Festival: Boats, lanterns, and illuminated art installations to create a signature night-time event. • Music by the Murray: Seasonal concerts staged on floating platforms or riverfront lawns. • Expansion of Salami Festival: Add river-based activities (boat parades, riverside tastings) to broaden its appeal. **Family & Youth Engagement** • Adventure Playgrounds: River-themed play spaces with climbing nets, water play, and interactive installations. • Youth Camps: Outdoor education programs combining river ecology, Aboriginal culture, and adventure sports. • Junior Angler Program: Fishing workshops and competitions for children and families. **7. Tourism Packaging & Promotion** • Weekend Getaway Packages: Accommodation + river cruise + food and wine experiences. • Regional Trails: Position Euston as part of a "Three Rivers Experience" linking Murray, Murrumbidgee, and Wakool/Edward rivers. • Hero Campaigns: Market Euston as "The Murray River Gateway" in Balranald Shire branding. **8. Sustainability & Stewardship** • Eco-Education Programs: Guided tours focused on river ecology, birdlife, and conservation. • Green Infrastructure: Recycling stations, solar lighting, and water-sensitive landscaping. • Citizen Science Projects: Invite visitors to participate in bird counts or water quality monitoring.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Murrumbidgee Experience at Balranald	**Nature & Adventure Experiences** • Eco-Trails & Boardwalks: Create accessible walking paths with bird hides, viewing platforms, and interpretive signage on wetlands ecology. • Guided Canoe Safaris: Offer half-day and sunset tours highlighting birdlife, Aboriginal water stories, and conservation. • Riverfront Camping & Glamping: Develop eco-friendly accommodation options to encourage overnight stays. • Stargazing by the River: Astronomy nights with Aboriginal sky stories and scientific interpretation. **Cultural & Heritage Programming** • Aboriginal Storytelling Circles: Partner with Traditional Owners to share cultural narratives about water, land, and sky. • Living History Days: Re-enactments of river trade, fishing traditions, and colonial exploration. • Interpretive Installations: Sculptures or murals inspired by river life, created by local artists. • Heritage Cruises: Small boat tours with narration on Balranald's river trade and settlement history. **3. Community & Family Engagement** • Family Adventure Zone: Picnic areas, interactive playgrounds, and nature-play features themed around the river. • Community Fishing Competitions: Annual events with prizes, food stalls, and live music. • Youth Camps: Outdoor education programs combining ecology, Aboriginal culture, and adventure skills. • Junior Ranger Program: Activities where children learn about conservation and earn badges.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Murrumbidgee Experience at Balranald cont..	**Events & Festivals** • Riverfront Markets: Seasonal markets showcasing local produce, crafts, and live entertainment. • Wellness Retreats: Yoga, meditation, and wellness weekends by the river. • Eco-Education Days: Community events focused on sustainability, birdwatching, and citizen science. • Night at the Murrumbidgee: Evening activations with lantern walks, storytelling, and food stalls. **Tourism Packaging & Promotion** • Discovery Centre Linkages: Bundle river experiences with precinct tours, museum visits, and Old Gaol storytelling. • Regional Trails: Position Balranald as part of a "Three Rivers Experience" linking Murray, Murrumbidgee, and Wakool/Edward rivers. • Weekend Getaway Packages: Accommodation + river tour + local produce hampers. • Hero Campaigns: Market the Murrumbidgee as "Balranald's Living River" in tourism branding. **6. Sustainability & Stewardship** • Eco-Education Programs: Guided tours focused on wetlands ecology, birdlife, and conservation. • Green Infrastructure: Solar lighting, recycling stations, and water-sensitive landscaping. • Citizen Science Projects: Invite visitors to participate in bird counts or water quality monitoring. • Partnerships with Schools & Universities: Use the river as a living classroom for ecology and heritage studies.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Wakool/Edwards River at Kyalite Experience	**Adventure & Recreation** - Fishing Capital Branding: Position Kyalite as the "Fishing Heart of the Shire," building on the annual competition. - Guided Fishing Tours: Local experts offering half-day or weekend packages, including gear hire and river ecology storytelling. - Boating & Kayaking Trails: Develop mapped routes with signage and rest stops along the rivers. - Cycling & Walking Loops: Create trails linking the rivers, bushland, and caravan park to encourage active exploration. **Heritage & Storytelling** - Bourke & Wills Interpretive Trail: Expand signage into a mini-trail with QR codes linking to immersive digital content. - Living History Events: Re-enactments or storytelling evenings at the pub, connecting visitors to exploration history. - Community Memory Wall: Invite locals to contribute fishing stories, photos, and memorabilia for rotating displays. - Heritage Cruises: Small boat tours with narration on exploration, settlement, and Aboriginal river stories. **Iconic Pub & Caravan Park Activation** - Pub as Cultural Hub: Host live music, trivia nights, and storytelling sessions themed around river life. - Food & Produce Showcases: Feature local lamb, fish, and native foods in pub menus and caravan park BBQs. - Riverside Dining: Develop outdoor dining spaces overlooking the river to enhance the visitor experience. - Caravan Park Packages: Bundle accommodation with fishing tours, pub meals, and heritage walks.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Wakool/Edwards River at Kyalite Experience cont..	**Events & Festivals** • Fishing Competition Expansion: Add family categories, youth workshops, and evening riverside entertainment. • River Lights Night: Lanterns, illuminated boats, and live music to animate the rivers. • Seasonal Markets: Local produce, crafts, and Aboriginal art showcased at the caravan park or pub grounds. • Eco-Education Days: Birdwatching, conservation workshops, and citizen science projects. **Community & Youth Engagement** • Junior Angler Program: Fishing clinics for children, with badges and certificates. • Youth Camps: Outdoor education programs combining fishing, ecology, and Aboriginal culture. • Intergenerational Projects: Pair seniors with youth to share fishing skills and river stories. • School Excursions: Develop curriculum-linked programs around Bourke & Wills and river ecology. **Tourism Packaging & Promotion** • Weekend Getaway Packages: Accommodation + fishing tour + pub dining + heritage walk. • Cross-Shire Trails: Position Kyalite as part of the "Three Rivers Experience" alongside Euston and Balranald. • Hero Campaigns: Market Kyalite as "Where Rivers Meet Adventure" in Shire branding. • Influencer Partnerships: Invite fishing and travel bloggers to cover the competition and pub culture. **Sustainability & Stewardship** • Eco-friendly Infrastructure: Solar lighting, recycling stations, and water-sensitive landscaping at caravan park and riverfront. • Conservation Partnerships: Work with local groups to protect fish stocks and river health. • Citizen Science: Engage visitors in bird counts, water monitoring, and habitat restoration. • Aboriginal Cultural Protocols: Ensure respectful co-design of interpretive content and events.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Balranald Discovery Centre Precinct Experience 	**Visitor Centre (Balranald Shire Visitor Centre)** • Signature Welcome Experience: Create a "Balranald Shire Welcome Wall" with interactive maps, local stories, and itineraries. • Digital Concierge: Install touchscreens with trip planners, experience bookings, and event calendars. • Shire Showcase: Curated displays highlighting attractions across Balranald towns, refreshed seasonally. **Interpretive Centre, Discovery Pavilion & Museum** • Layered Storytelling: Expand exhibits with augmented reality overlays (e.g., historic scenes, Aboriginal sky stories). • Hands-On Heritage: Introduce "object handling" sessions where visitors can interact with replicas of historic tools or artefacts. • Rotating Mini-Exhibitions: Quarterly themed showcases (e.g., river life, wool industry, aviation heritage). • Establish guided precinct tours highlighting museum collections, heritage buildings and story-telling of history & heritage • Develop seasonal family activations - school holiday programs, interactive workshops, story telling sessions **Old Gaol (Lock-Up)** • Immersive Tours: Torch-lit evening tours with storytelling about justice, resilience, and community history. • Escape Room Experience: Family-friendly puzzle challenges themed around historical stories of the gaol. • Heritage Theatre: Small performances or re-enactments staged in the gaol courtyard. **4. Discovery Café** • Local Produce Menu: Feature seasonal dishes using Balranald produce (honey, lamb, native foods). • Food & Story Pairings: Host "Taste & Tell" sessions where producers share stories alongside tastings. • Café + Culture Nights: Evening events combining food, music, and art exhibitions.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Balranald Discovery Centre Precinct Experience cont..	**Playground & Skate Park** • Youth Festivals: Skate competitions, art jams, and live music to attract younger audiences. • Family Adventure Zone: Add interactive play features (climbing walls, water play) linked to local themes. • Youth Co-Design: Engage young people in designing murals or installations for the skate park. **Men's Shed** • Community Demonstrations: Showcase woodworking, metalwork, and craft skills during festivals. • Intergenerational Workshops: Pair seniors with youth for skill-sharing projects. • Heritage Makers Market: Sell handcrafted items as part of precinct events. **Discovery Pavilion (New Build)** • Exhibition Hub: Host rotating exhibitions on themes like Aboriginal culture, aviation, river heritage, and local art. • Workshop Space: Deliver creative workshops (painting, cooking, storytelling) for locals and visitors. • Cultural Events: Stage performances, film nights, and talks to animate the Pavilion year-round. • Tourism Gateway: Use Pavilion displays to promote itineraries across Balranald towns and attractions. **Events & Festivals** • Seasonal Signature Events: Expand Easter Egg Hunt & Market into a precinct-wide festival with art, food, and heritage tours. • Night at the Discovery Centre: Evening activations with lantern walks, live music, and food stalls. • Annual Discovery Festival: Celebrate the precinct's award-winning status with a multi-day event showcasing all facilities. **Marketing & Recognition** • Award Storytelling: Promote the precinct's Crown Land Management Excellence Award and tourism accolades in all marketing. • Hero Campaigns: Position the Discovery Centre as "The Heart of Balranald Shire" and "Start of your Discovery Experience" in regional tourism branding. • Visitor Loyalty Program: Offer discounts or perks for repeat visits and bundled experiences.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
The Balranald Discovery Centre Precinct Experience cont..	**Comfort & Amenity Upgrades** • Seating & Rest Areas: Install shaded seating throughout the precinct, including near playgrounds, skate park, and walking paths. • Shade Structures: Provide covered areas with solar-powered lighting to encourage longer stays in all weather. • Water Stations: Accessible drinking fountains and refill points for bottles, including wheelchair-friendly designs. • Restroom Upgrades: Modern, accessible facilities with family change rooms and gender-neutral options. **Accessibility & Inclusion** • Pathway Improvements: Smooth, wide, and well-lit paths with tactile paving for vision-impaired visitors. • Mobility Access: Ramps and handrails at all key entry points, including the Pavilion, Old Gaol, and museum. • Inclusive Play Spaces: Upgrade playground with sensory play equipment and accessible swings. • Hearing & Vision Support: Install hearing loops in the Pavilion and provide large-print/QR-code accessible signage. **Visitor Flow & Wayfinding** • Clear Signage: Consistent, multilingual, and icon-based signage across the precinct. • Wayfinding Maps: Large, easy-to-read maps at entry points and digital kiosks for trip planning. • Lighting & Safety: Solar lighting along pathways, car parks, and gathering spaces to improve safety at night. • Parking Enhancements: Expanded accessible parking bays close to key facilities, with EV charging stations. **Sustainability & Innovation** • Green Infrastructure: Solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and recycling stations to reinforce eco-leadership. • Smart Benches: Seating with phone charging ports powered by solar energy. • Eco-friendly Landscaping: Native plantings for shade, biodiversity, and reduced water use. • Climate Resilience: Design shade and seating to withstand heatwaves and provide cooling zones.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Mungo National Park Experiences 	**Current Experiences** • Walls of China Guided Tours: Aboriginal-led tours of the lunette formations. • Visitor Centre & Mungo Woolshed: Exhibits on pastoral and Aboriginal heritage. • Zanci Pastoral Loop & Mungo Track: Walking and 4WD circuits. • Camping & Picnicking: Lake Mungo foreshore and campgrounds. • Outback Geo Adventures: Sunset tours, Mungo Day tours, full moon tours and small-group geotourism experiences. **Enhanced Experiences** • Cultural Immersion Camps: Multi-day Aboriginal-led programs with storytelling, art, and bush food. • Archaeology & Heritage Workshops: Hands-on learning about Mungo Lady and Mungo Man discoveries. • Night Sky Experiences: Astronomy tours linking Aboriginal sky stories with scientific interpretation. • Creative Arts Integration: Artist residencies producing works inspired by Mungo's landscapes. • Virtual Access: Livestreamed Walls of China tours for schools and international audiences. **Collaboration Pathways** • National Parks NSW: Jointly manage tour scheduling, infrastructure upgrades, and interpretive content. • Willandra Lakes Committee: Ensure cultural integrity and Aboriginal leadership in programming. • Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council: Collaborate on cultural immersion camps, heritage interpretation, and Aboriginal-led tourism. • Outback Geo Adventures: Expand geotourism packages to include multi-day itineraries and cross-promotion with Yanga. • Academic Partnerships: Work with universities for archaeology, ecology, and cultural research programs.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Yanga National Park Experiences 	**Current Experiences** • Fishing & Camping: Riverside campgrounds along the Murrumbidgee River. • Birdwatching: Over 150 species in wetlands and Yanga Lake. • Historic Woolshed & Homestead: Tours of pastoral heritage buildings. • Interpretive Signage: Aboriginal sites and colonial history. • Outback Geo Adventures: Guided geotourism tours of Yanga Wildlife & Wetlands, Yanga Sunset & Heritage & Photography Tours & Workshops **Enhanced Experiences** • Immersive Wetland Safaris: Canoe or pontoon boat tours with Aboriginal ecological storytelling. • Living Heritage Programs: Interactive shearing demonstrations or "pastoral life" re-enactments at the Woolshed. • Citizen Science Tourism: Bird counts, water monitoring, and conservation volunteering. • Seasonal Events: Wetland festivals with art, food, and guided nature walks. • Digital Integration: Augmented reality overlays of pastoral and Aboriginal life at key sites. • Develop Birdwatching experiences and additional birdwatching infrastructure **Collaboration Pathways** • National Parks NSW: Co-develop interpretive content, infrastructure upgrades (boardwalks, signage, accessibility), and joint marketing. • Murray River Shire: Partner on cross-boundary planning, shared events, and regional branding to highlight Yanga's dual identity. • Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council: Lead Aboriginal cultural protocols, storytelling, and co-design of experiences to ensure authenticity. • Outback Geo Adventures: Expand geotourism tours to include hands-on conservation and cultural immersion. • Community Groups & Schools: Youth-led storytelling, eco-education, and citizen science projects.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Races 	**Event Atmosphere & Programming** • Extended Race Day Program: Add novelty races (e.g., pony rides for kids, charity sprints, or "community dash" involving local groups). • Fashion on the Field Evolution: Introduce themed categories (eco-fashion, youth fashion, heritage-inspired) to broaden participation. • Evening Activation: Expand live music into a mini-festival atmosphere with food trucks, fire pits, and local craft stalls. • Family Zone: Dedicated area with shaded seating, children's activities, and interactive games to encourage family attendance. **Transport & Accessibility** • Expanded Shuttle Services: Secure sponsorships or grants to guarantee buses from Swan Hill, Euston, and possibly Mildura. • Park-and-Ride Options: Partner with local businesses to provide secure parking and shuttle transfers. • Accessibility Enhancements: Shaded seating, accessible pathways, and mobility-friendly viewing areas. • Visitor Flow: Clear signage and wayfinding to guide travellers who stop in Balranald on race day. **Food, Drink & Hospitality** • Local Produce Showcase: Feature Balranald lamb, native bush foods, and regional wines in marquee packages. • Pop-Up Dining: Food trucks and stalls offering diverse cuisines to cater for increased capacity. • Premium Packages: VIP marquee with curated menus, wine pairings, and meet-the-trainer sessions. • Community BBQs: Affordable options to ensure inclusivity alongside premium offerings. **Tourism & Visitor Attraction** • Drive-Through Appeal: Promote the races as a "must-stop" event for travellers on the Sturt Highway. • Weekend Packages: Bundle race tickets with Discovery Centre tours, accommodation, and river experiences. • Cross-Promotion: Collaborate with Swan Hill and Euston tourism bodies to market the races as part of regional itineraries. • Digital Campaigns: Use social media and roadside advertising to target spontaneous travellers.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Races cont.. 	**Branding & Positioning** • Signature Identity: Position the event as "The Heart of Racing on the Sturt Highway" — a must-stop experience for travellers. • Community + Tourism Blend: Highlight the dual nature of the races: local pride + visitor attraction. • Visual Branding: Develop a consistent logo, colour palette, and imagery for use across all platforms. **Digital Campaigns** • Social Media Activation: Use Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for countdowns, behind-the-scenes content, and live race-day updates. • Geo-Targeted Ads: Target travellers within a 200km radius (Swan Hill, Mildura, Griffith) with event promotions. • Influencer Partnerships: Invite regional lifestyle and travel bloggers to cover the event. • Event Hashtag: Create a branded hashtag (e.g., #BalranaldRaces) to encourage user-generated content. **Visitor Attraction Strategies** • Drive-Through Campaigns: Roadside banners and highway billboards promoting the races as a "must-stop" event. • Cross-Promotion: Collaborate with Swan Hill, Euston, and Balranald tourism operators to package race tickets with accommodation and tours. • Regional Media: Secure coverage in local radio, newspapers, and regional TV to broaden awareness. • Tourism Partnerships: Work with Visit NSW and Murray Regional Tourism to feature the races in seasonal campaigns. **Community Engagement** • Local Business Activation: Encourage shops and cafes to decorate windows with race themes and offer discounts to ticket holders. • School Involvement: Promote student art competitions or youth commentary segments to build family attendance. • Aboriginal Cultural Integration: Partner with Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council for Welcome to Country and cultural performances, promoted as a unique drawcard.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Murrumbidgee Fishing Classic Competiton Event Balranald MURRUMBIDGEE CLASSIC	**Sustainability of the Competition** • Catch & Release Protocols: Strengthen conservation messaging by highlighting sustainable fishing practices and monitoring fish stocks. • Eco-Education: Partner with National Parks NSW and local schools to run workshops on river ecology and conservation. • Green Infrastructure: Provide recycling stations, solar lighting, and water refill points at the Caravan Park and event sites. • Citizen Science: Engage competitors and visitors in water quality testing or bird counts to connect recreation with stewardship. • Aboriginal Cultural Protocols: Collaborate with Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council to embed cultural respect in river use and storytelling. **Growth of the Visitor Economy** • Accommodation Packages: Bundle stays with competition entry, meals, and local tours. • Regional Transport Links: Secure sponsorships to expand shuttle services from Swan Hill, Euston, and Mildura. • Cross-Promotion: Market the Classic as part of a "Three Rivers Experience" alongside Wakool/Edward and Murray attractions. • Local Business Activation: Encourage cafes, pubs, and shops to offer discounts or themed specials during the event. • Tourism Campaigns: Use geo-targeted ads and roadside signage to attract drive-through travellers. **Value-Added Events & Activities** • Friday Night Welcome: Informal BBQ or riverfront gathering to build anticipation and encourage early arrivals. • Saturday Night Expansion: Broaden the dinner + live music into a riverside festival atmosphere with food trucks, craft stalls, and cultural performances. • Sunday Family Festival: Extend the closing lunch into a community day with kids' fishing clinics, Aboriginal storytelling, and local produce markets. • Youth Engagement: Junior Angler Program with badges, certificates, and mentoring by experienced fishers. • Wellness & Nature Activities: Morning yoga by the river, birdwatching walks, or canoe tours for non-competitors. • Heritage Integration: Pop-up displays on Bourke & Wills and Balranald's river history to connect visitors to local identity.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Murrumbidgee Fishing Classic Competiton Event cont.. 	**Marketing & Promotion** • Signature Branding: Position the Classic as "Australia's Premier Sustainable River Fishing Event." • Digital Campaigns: Use social media countdowns, live updates, and influencer partnerships with fishing and travel bloggers. • Visitor Packages: Promote weekend itineraries combining competition, Discovery Centre visits, and river experiences. • Regional Media: Secure coverage in Swan Hill, Mildura, and Griffith outlets to broaden reach. **5. Infrastructure & Accessibility** • Expanded Seating & Shade: Temporary marquees and shaded rest areas to cater for larger crowds. • Mobility Access: Ensure accessible pathways and viewing areas at Caravan Park and riverfront. • Technology Integration: Digital race guides, live streaming of weigh-ins • Capacity Growth: Incrementally expand to 500 competitors over time, supported by infrastructure upgrades. **Fallen Trees & River Safety** • Pre-Event River Audit: Work with National Parks NSW, Fisheries NSW, and local boating/fishing clubs to identify hazards (fallen trees, debris, snags). • Collaborative Clean-Up: Organise joint working bees with Council, agencies, and community volunteers to clear or mark dangerous areas. • Safety Mapping: Provide competitors with updated river maps highlighting safe zones, hazards, and emergency access points. • Adaptive Course Design: Adjust competition zones annually based on river conditions to ensure safety and sustainability. **Water Height & Flow Management** • Agency Liaison: Establish a formal pre-event consultation with WaterNSW, Murray–Darling Basin Authority, and National Parks NSW to monitor expected water levels. • Contingency Planning: Develop alternative competition formats (shore-based, restricted zones) if water levels are too low or high. • Real-Time Updates: Use digital channels (apps, SMS alerts, social media) to inform competitors of water conditions during the event. • Infrastructure Adaptation: Install flexible pontoons or adjustable access ramps at the Caravan Park to accommodate fluctuating water heights.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Homebush Rodeo Event 	**Friday Night Pre-Event at the Homebush Pub** • Themed Kick-Off Party: Western dress-up night with prizes, line dancing lessons, and rodeo trivia. • Local Talent Showcase: Feature Balranald youth musicians or Aboriginal performers alongside the headline band. • Food & Drink Pairings: Pub collaborates with local producers (Balranald lamb, regional wines, craft beer). • Visitor Welcome Packs: Distribute itineraries highlighting Saturday rodeo and Sunday Balranald activities. **Saturday Rodeo Enhancements** • Expanded Entertainment: Add novelty events (junior rodeo skills, whip-cracking demos, sheep races for kids). • Cultural Integration: Partner with Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council for Welcome to Country and storytelling. • Food & Market Village: Showcase local produce, crafts, and tourism operators alongside food trucks. • Family Zone: Shaded seating, kids' play area, and interactive cowboy/cowgirl photo booths. • Technology Integration: social media walls, and digital programs.. **Saturday Night Festival Atmosphere** • Dance Expansion: Broaden the live band into a mini-festival with multiple genres (country, rock, Indigenous music). • Local Industry Showcase: Pop-up displays from Balranald businesses and sponsors. • Community BBQ & Fire Pits: Affordable food options to complement premium packages. • Youth Engagement: DJ sets or open-mic slots for younger audiences after the main band. **Sunday Extensions in Balranald** • Riverside Recovery Brunch: Partner with Caravan Park and Discovery Centre to host a relaxed brunch with live acoustic music. • Heritage & Culture Tours: Guided walks of the Old Gaol, Discovery Centre, and Aboriginal cultural sites for visitors driving through. • Family Activities: Fishing clinics, canoe tours, or birdwatching at Yanga National Park. • Local Markets: Sunday pop-up showcasing Balranald artisans, produce, and tourism operators. • Youth & Sport Tie-In: Junior sports matches or skate park demos to engage families. • Cross-Promotion: Package rodeo tickets with Sunday experiences to encourage overnight stays.

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Current Experience/Event	Enhancing & Supporting Strategies
Balranald Shire Library Experience 	**Current Offerings** • Book clubs & reading groups for adults and seniors. • Craft and social groups such as "Knit and Natter," sewing, puzzles, and games. • Technology help sessions for phones, computers, and tablets. • Community engagement activities highlighted in Council Annual Reports, including literacy programs, school partnerships, and support for seniors. • After-school activities • School Holidays activities • Extended opening hours (Mon–Fri, 9:30am–5:30pm) to increase accessibility. **Tourism & Main Street Activation** • Visitor Welcome Hub: Position the library as a stop for tourists with maps, heritage guides, and local stories. • Heritage Displays: Rotating exhibitions on Balranald's history, Aboriginal culture, and river heritage. • Discovery Centre Linkages: Cross-promote library events with the Discovery Centre precinct to create a cultural circuit. **2. Expanded Programs & Events** • Youth & Family Focus: Expand on Storytime, coding clubs, and school holiday workshops. • Intergenerational Activities: Expand on Seniors mentoring youth in crafts, storytelling, or oral history projects. • Cultural Celebrations: Expand on Themed weeks (e.g., NAIDOC Week, Multicultural Week, Kindness Week etc) with performances and talks. • Author & Artist Talks: Partner with regional writers and artists for monthly sessions. **Community Enhancement Initiatives** • Digital Literacy Expansion: Regular workshops on online safety, e-government services, and social media use. • Health & Wellbeing Programs: Collaborate with local health services for talks on nutrition, mental wellbeing, and active ageing. • Aboriginal Partnerships: Work with Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council to co-design cultural programming and language workshops. • Youth Engagement: Homework clubs, Duke of Edinburgh support, and creative writing competitions. **4. Marketing & Promotion** • Social Media Campaigns: Use the Library's Facebook page for event countdowns, "book of the week," and community spotlights. • Street Activation: Window displays, outdoor seating, and pop-up book carts to draw in passers-by. • Cross-Promotion: Collaborate with local businesses (cafes, shops) for "library perks" — discounts for library members. • Regional Media: Promote library events in Swan Hill and Mildura outlets to attract visitors from nearby towns.

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e. Highway Activation Development Strategies

The Sturt Highway is one of Australia's most significant east–west transport corridors, carrying thousands of travellers between Sydney and Adelaide every year. For Balranald Shire, this presents a powerful opportunity to transform "drive-through traffic" into meaningful visitation.

Highway activation strategies are designed to capture attention, spark curiosity, and convert passing motorists into engaged visitors who stop, stay longer, and spend more. By combining highway-facing attractions, interactive passports, co-branded local business initiatives, and vibrant streetscapes, Balranald can position itself as a must-stop destination along the route — offering travellers not just a rest break, but a memorable experience that connects them to the Shire's nature, culture, and community.

Area of Focus	Development Strategies
Gateway & Wayfinding Enhancements	**Highway Signage & Branding:** • Install clear, attractive signage on the Sturt Highway highlighting Balranald as "Where the wetlands meet the outback." • Use icons (frogs, Regent Parrot, rivers) to create instant recognition. **Visitor Gateway Infrastructure:** • Develop highway pull-off points with shaded rest areas, interpretive panels, and "teaser" experiences (bird sculptures, frog soundscapes). **Digital Wayfinding:** • QR-linked signage directing travellers to nearby attractions, events, and food stops.
Accommodation & Infrastructure	**Caravan & RV Friendly Facilities:** • Expand caravan park upgrades with shaded sites, dump points, and family amenities. **Unique Stays:** • Promote eco-cabins, farm stays, and riverside camping as "worth the detour." **Traveller Packages:** • Overnight bundles combining accommodation, meals, and short experiences (e.g. "Stay & Stargaze").

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Area of Focus	Development Strategies
Highway-Facing Attractions Strategies	**Iconic Highway Installations:** • Large-scale sculptures or creative landmarks (e.g. frog, Regent Parrot, river icon) visible from the highway. • Acts as a "photo stop" and teaser for deeper experiences in town. **Interpretive Rest Stops:** • Highway pull-offs with shaded seating, interpretive panels, and mini-exhibits showcasing Balranald's wetlands and heritage. **Seasonal Pop-Ups:** • Highway-adjacent markets or food stalls during peak travel periods. **Lighting & Night Appeal:** • Illuminated art installations or "starlight gateways" encouraging travellers to stop even after dark.
Streetscape Enhancement Strategies	**Themed Streetscapes:** • Frog and bird motifs integrated into benches, murals, and signage. • Seasonal floral displays tied to Outback Bloom Festival. **Interactive Elements:** • QR-linked art installations telling stories of wetlands, Aboriginal culture, and heritage. **Night Activation:** • Creative lighting along main streets to encourage evening strolls and dining. **Gateway Appeal:** • Highway entry points landscaped with native plants, sculptures, and "Welcome" identity markers. **Walkability & Comfort:** • Shaded seating, water refill stations, and accessible pathways to make stopping easy and pleasant.

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Area of Focus	Development Strategies
Highway Passport Strategies	**Balranald–Euston Explorer Passport:** • A collectible booklet or digital app where travellers collect stamps at attractions (Discovery Centre, bird hides, murals, caravan park, Yanga NP). **Rewards & Incentives:** • Complete the passport to earn discounts at local businesses, free coffee, or entry into prize draws. **Family Engagement:** • Junior Explorer version with wildlife checklists and badges. **Cross-Promotion:** • Partner with neighbouring councils to extend the passport across the Sydney–Adelaide corridor, positioning Balranald as a key stop.
Local Business Co-Branding	**Unified Branding:** • Encourage businesses to adopt "Where the wetlands meet the outback" branding in signage, menus, and packaging. **Co-Branded Products:** • Local cafes and shops offer "Balranald & Euston Signature" items (frog-themed pastries, Regent Parrot coffee blends, wetlands-inspired food & beverages). **Visitor Packages:** • Accommodation + meal + experience bundles co-branded across businesses. **Training & Ambassadors:** • Local staff trained as "Balranald Ambassadors" to share stories and encourage visitors to explore more.
Food & Agri-Tourism Development	**River to Table Trail:** • Curated food experiences showcasing local produce, and bush foods. **Highway Food Hubs:** • Develop visible, easy-access eateries near the highway offering regional menus and quick service. **Signature Products:** • Promote Balranald-branded hampers, bush brews, and produce packs for travellers to take away.

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Area of Focus	Development Strategies
Events & Festivals as Stopover Magnets 	**Seasonal Festivals:** • Align events (e.g. River Rhythms, Outback Bloom, Wool, Wood & Water Revival) with peak travel periods. **Highway Traveller Packages:** • Promote "drop-in" festival passes for those en route to Adelaide or Sydney. **Pop-Up Activations:** • Highway rest stops transformed into mini-markets or performance spaces during peak holiday traffic.
Adventure & Wellness Packages 	**Short-Stay Adventure:** • Half-day kayak tours, cycling loops, or bush balance walks designed for highway travellers. **Wellness Retreats:** • Promote "River Recharge Retreat" packages for couples seeking overnight relaxation. **Family Adventure Stops:** • Mini obstacle courses, playgrounds, and interactive ecology zones near highway entry points.
Signature Nature & Wildlife Products 	**Balranald–Euston Bird Trail:** • Promote as a flagship stopover experience with bird hides, signage, and citizen science activities. **Wetlands & Riverfront Activations:** • Short "bite-sized" experiences (30–60 minutes) like frog walks, riverfront art installations, or twilight soundscapes. **Dark Sky & Astronomy Stops:** • Highway travellers enticed by "Starlight over Mungo" festival and stargazing packages.

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f. Infrastructure Development & Investment

Strategic infrastructure and targeted investment are the foundations of Balranald Shire's long-term growth, resilience, and community wellbeing. By aligning projects with the Shire's vision for inclusive regional development, these initiatives will strengthen the visitor economy, enhance liveability, and preserve cultural integrity. Investment priorities span cultural and community assets, nature-based tourism infrastructure, accommodation and transport upgrades, housing solutions, and placemaking initiatives that create vibrant, welcoming townscapes.

Together, these infrastructure and investment strategies provide a roadmap for sustainable growth, ensuring Balranald Shire is positioned as a model for innovative, inclusive, and place-based regional development.

Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Development Strategies
Cultural & Community Infrastructure	Strengthen cultural identity, inclusivity, and community pride through spaces that celebrate heritage and empower local voices.	**Aboriginal Cultural Centre (Flagship Project):** • Develop a purpose-built centre co-designed with Traditional Owners. • Include exhibition spaces, performance areas, cultural education rooms, and retail for Aboriginal art and crafts. • Position as a regional hub for reconciliation, cultural tourism, and youth engagement. **Community Hubs & Precincts:** • Upgrade Discovery Centre precinct with layered programming and interactive exhibitions. • Expand multi-use community spaces for seniors, youth, and cultural groups. **Heritage Infrastructure:** • Restoration of historic sites and interpretation signage across Balranald and Euston. • Integration of heritage trails with digital storytelling platforms.
Housing & Regional Growth Infrastructure	Address urgent accommodation needs driven by mining, energy, and population growth while ensuring equity and sustainability.	**Housing Strategy Implementation:** • Develop affordable housing projects in partnership with state and federal programs. • Incentivise mixed-use developments that integrate housing with community facilities. **Infrastructure for Growth:** • Expand water, sewerage, and energy capacity to support population increases. • Plan for sustainable expansion aligned with environmental stewardship.

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Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Development Strategies
Visitor Economy & Accommodation	Increase dwell time and visitor spend by diversifying accommodation and hospitality offerings.	**Caravan Park Upgrades:** • Expand capacity with powered sites, cabins, and family-friendly amenities. • Add shaded communal areas and modern facilities. **Unique Stays:** • Develop eco-cabins, farm stays, and riverside glamping to attract niche markets. **Hospitality Infrastructure:** • Support local businesses to expand dining options, food hubs, and highway-facing eateries.
Nature & Tourism Infrastructure	Enhance visitor experiences by investing in eco-tourism assets that showcase wetlands, rivers, and outback landscapes.	**Birdwatching Infrastructure:** • Expand bird hides, viewing platforms, and interpretive signage along the Ben Scott Memorial Bird Trail, Lake Benanee, Murray River (Euston), and Yanga National Park. **Riverfront Activation:** • Develop accessible pathways, seating, lighting, and interpretive nodes along the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers. **Dark Sky & Astronomy Facilities:** • Install stargazing platforms and infrastructure to support "Starlight over Mungo" and astronomy tourism. **Eco-Camping & Trails:** • Upgrade camping facilities with eco-toilets, solar lighting, and interpretive trails.
Transport & Access Infrastructure	Improve connectivity and accessibility for residents, visitors, and industry	**Aerodrome Upgrades:** • Extend runway capacity and modernise facilities to support regional aviation and tourism charters. **Highway Activation Infrastructure:** • Install highway-facing attractions, rest stops, and signage to capture Sturt Highway traffic. **Wayfinding & Digital Integration:** • Smart signage with QR codes linking to maps, events, and visitor information.

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Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Development Strategies
Placemaking & Streetscape Infrastructure	Create vibrant, welcoming townscapes that encourage visitors to stop, explore, and spend.	**Streetscape Enhancements:** • Themed landscaping, public art, painting of water towers & other infrastructure, and creative lighting in Balranald and Euston. • Shaded seating, water refill stations, and accessible pathways. **Gateway Installations:** • Sculptures and signage at highway entry points reflecting local identity (frogs, Regent Parrot, rivers). **Interactive Elements:** • QR-linked murals and installations telling stories of wetlands, Aboriginal culture, and heritage.
Community Halls, Spaces & Recreation areas	To maximise the value of existing infrastructure, Balranald Shire will invest in upgrades and enhancements that improve accessibility, visitor comfort, and community use. By modernising current facilities, the Shire can extend their lifespan, increase capacity, and ensure they remain aligned with contemporary tourism and community expectations.	• Modernise facilities with upgraded kitchens, AV equipment, and flexible layouts. • Improve accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities. • Position halls as venues for workshops, festivals, and cultural events. • Introduce energy-efficient upgrades (solar, insulation, water systems). • Activate underutilised recreation areas by developing picnic shelters, BBQ and interpretive signage & panels • Create family-friendly zones • Where possible install tactile signage and accessible pathways for inclusive design
Investment & Partnership Strategies	Secure funding and partnerships to deliver infrastructure sustainably and strategically.	**Grant Acquisition & Advocacy:** • Pursue federal, state, and philanthropic funding for flagship projects (Aboriginal Cultural Centre, aerodrome, housing). **Public–Private Partnerships:** • Engage local businesses in co-investment for accommodation, food hubs, and cultural programming. **Regional Collaboration:** • Partner with neighbouring councils to create corridor-wide tourism and infrastructure initiatives.

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6. Marketing & Promotions

Marketing and promotion are central to the success of the Destination Management Plan. They provide the voice through which Balranald Shire communicates its identity, shares its stories, and connects with visitors, partners, and communities. A strong marketing framework ensures that the Shire's unique assets — from its wetlands and outback landscapes to its Aboriginal culture, creative industries, and community spirit — are recognised, celebrated, and experienced by diverse audiences. This strategy is designed to:

- **Build awareness** and recognition of Balranald Shire as an authentic, inclusive destination.
- **Engage and inspire** visitors through compelling storytelling, digital innovation, and creative campaigns.
- **Support local businesses** and operators by providing tools, partnerships, and platforms to reach new markets.
- **Strengthen community pride** and participation by embedding local voices and values in promotional activities.
- **Ensure sustainability and resilience** by aligning marketing with environmental stewardship and cultural integrity.

a. Core Pillars – Objectives & Strategies

The Marketing & Promotion Strategy has been structured it around nine core pillars with strategic objectives and specific strategies.

Core Pillar	Objective	Strategies
Brand Identity & Development	**Establish a cohesive, recognisable brand that reflects Balranald Shire's landscapes, culture, and community spirit**	• Develop a unified destination brand suite (logo, tagline, visual identity). • Embed Aboriginal cultural integrity and wetlands/outback imagery in branding. • Roll out brand across signage, collateral, merchandise, and digital platforms. • Commission local artists for gateway murals and creative placemaking projects. • Refresh branding every 3 years to maintain relevance.

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Core Pillar	Objective	Strategies
Digital Marketing & Online Presence	**Maximise reach and engagement through digital channels**	• Relaunch Discover Balranald & Surrounds digital advertising capacity. • Develop a destination website with itineraries, booking links, and interactive maps. • Launch a visitor app with QR-linked storytelling and event calendars. • Expand social media presence with influencer partnerships and user-generated content. • Use targeted Google Ads and SEO to capture highway travellers and niche markets.
Social Media	**To leverage social media platforms as dynamic storytelling and engagement tools that build Balranald Shire's brand identity, inspire visitation, foster community pride, and amplify partnerships across local, regional, and global audiences**	• Platform Diversification: Maintain active presence on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, tailored to audience demographics. • Content Calendar: Deliver consistent, themed content aligned with seasonal campaigns, events, and community milestones. • Authentic Storytelling: Showcase Aboriginal culture, youth voices, creative industries, and local experiences through short-form video, reels, and live streams. • Community Engagement: Encourage user-generated content via hashtags, competitions, and "visitor takeover" campaigns. • Influencer Partnerships: Collaborate with micro- and macro-influencers to extend reach and credibility. • Paid Campaigns: Use targeted advertising to drive visitation, event attendance, and app downloads. • Analytics & Adaptation: Monitor engagement, reach, and conversion metrics to refine content and campaigns

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Core Pillar	Objective	Strategies
Print Media & Broadcasting Media	**Maintain visibility across traditional media to reach regional and national audiences**	• Produce seasonal brochures and visitor guides distributed through VICs and tourism hubs. • Partner with regional newspapers and magazines for feature stories. • Secure radio and TV coverage for signature events and festivals. • Develop advertorials highlighting Aboriginal tourism and creative experiences. • Maintain strong presence in tourism directories and regional travel publications
Content & Storytelling	**Share authentic stories that connect visitors with Balranald Shire's identity**	• Create layered storytelling content (heritage, Aboriginal culture, wetlands ecology). • Develop podcasts, blogs, and video series featuring local voices. • Train operators and community groups in digital storytelling. • Package stories into itineraries • Showcase youth and intergenerational storytelling projects.
Events Experience & Activation	**Use events as marketing anchors to attract and retain visitors**	• Promote existing events (Salami Festival, Rodeo, Races) with expanded campaigns. • Select, develop and launch new signature festivals • Align event promotion with seasonal marketing campaigns. • Create "event passports" linking multiple experiences. • Use live streaming and digital promotion to extend reach beyond attendees.

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Core Pillar	Objective	Strategies
Visitor Information Services	**Ensure visitors have easy access to accurate, engaging information**	• Upgrade Visitor Information Centre with interactive displays and digital kiosks. • Train staff and volunteers in storytelling and customer service. • Distribute branded collateral across VICs in NSW, Victoria, and highway hubs. • Integrate QR-linked signage at key sites for self-guided experiences • Develop multilingual materials to broaden accessibility
Partnership & Distribution	**Strengthen distribution networks and collaborative marketing**	• Partner with regional tourism organisations„ agencies & destination networks • Develop co-branding initiatives (shop local passports, highway promotions). • Secure distribution through online travel agencies • Collaborate with neighbouring councils for cross-regional campaigns. • Establish joint promotions with accommodation providers and tour operators
Industry Engagement & Capacity Building	**Build local business and operator capacity to sustain marketing efforts**	• Deliver training in digital marketing, branding, and customer service. • Establish mentoring networks for youth and emerging entrepreneurs. • Support operators to achieve eco-certification and quality standards. • Facilitate quarterly industry forums for collaboration and knowledge sharing. • Provide toolkits and templates for businesses to align with destination branding

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b. Key Measures by Core Pillar

The following are key measures (KPIs) aligned to each of the nine core pillars. These measures will help Council and partners track progress and demonstrate impact across 2026–2031.

Note: *These measures will be workshopped to establish the measuring criteria*

Brand Identity & Development

- Brand recognition by **X%** via visitor surveys **by ....**
- **X amount** of brand refreshes or creative campaigns delivered across 5 years
- **X amount** of gateway murals/placemaking installations **by ....**
- ≥80% of tourism operators using brand assets in promotions.

Digital Marketing & Online Presence

- **X% increase** in website traffic **annually**.
- **X% growth** in social media followers annually.
- **X amount** of influencer partnerships activated **by.....................**
- **X% increase** in online bookings and enquiries **by........................**

Social Media Strategy

- **X% annual growth** in followers across all platforms.
- **X% inrease of** engagement on average paid posts (likes, shares, comments).
- **X% increase** in traffic to tourism website via social media referrals.
- **X amount** of major hashtag campaigns launched **by..................**
- **X% positive** sentiment in social media monitoring.
- **X% of attendees** at events attended due to social media promotions (surveyed at event entry)

Print Media & Broadcasting Media

- **X amount** of seasonal flyers produced annually.
- **X amount** regional/national media features secured per year.
- **X amount** of broadcast campaigns (radio/TV) delivered annually.

Content & Storytelling

- **X amount** of podcasts/blogs/videos produced annually.
- **X amount** of engagements with digital storytelling content per year.
- **X amount** of itineraries developed and promoted by....................
- **X% visitor satisfaction** with interpretive content.

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Events Experience & Activation

- **X number** of new signature festivals/events established **by.......................**
- **X% increase** in visitor spend during event periods
- **X amount** event passports or bundled experiences launched **by........................**
- **X% satisfaction** ratings for event experiences.

Visitor Information Services

- **X% visitor satisfaction** with VIC services measured quarterly
- **X% distribution** of branded collateral across regional VICs.
- **X amount** of QR coded material annually.

Partnership & Distribution

- **X amount** of co-branding initiatives launched **by........................**
- **X amount** of regional/national partnerships established.
- **X amount** of cross-regional campaigns delivered.
- **X % increase** in distribution through OTAs and booking platforms.
- **X% of local businesses** engaged in collaborative promotions per promotion

Industry Engagement & Capacity Building

- **X number** of businesses trained in digital marketing, branding and promotions
- **X number** of business/industry forums hosted annually.
- **X number** of one-on-one visitation of local operators per quater
- X number **of** youth entrepreneurs mentored.
- **X% of operators** reporting improved marketing capacity

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7. Stakeholder Comms & Engagement

Purpose: To engage all stakeholder groups in the delivery of the Destination Management Plan by fostering awareness, collaboration, and pride, ensuring that tourism development is inclusive, transparent, and community-led.

a. Stakeholder Groups & Communication Framework

Stakeholder Group	Best Ways to Reach Them	Best Ways to Communicate	Key Targeted Messages
Local Residents	Community newsletters, social media, local radio, town hall meetings, VIC displays	Plain language, visual storytelling, community forums, pop-up activations	"Tourism benefits you — through jobs, pride, and better infrastructure." "Your stories and ideas shape our visitor experience."
Council Staff, Councillors & Advisory Committees	Internal briefings, strategic planning sessions, intranet, email, committee meetings	Strategic updates, dashboards, reporting templates, leadership workshops	"This plan delivers community outcomes and regional growth." "Your leadership ensures transparency, equity, and legacy."
Visitors & Travellers	Highway signage, VICs, social media, tourism website, brochures	Visual content, itineraries, QR-linked storytelling, influencer campaigns	"Discover Balranald — where culture, nature, and creativity meet." "Stop, shop, stay and experience something unforgettable."
Local Businesses & Operators	Chamber of Commerce, email newsletters, training sessions, VIC outreach	Practical toolkits, mentoring, co-branding campaigns, business forums	"Tourism grows your business — let's build together." "We'll support you with training, marketing, and partnerships."

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Stakeholder Group	Best Ways to Reach Them	Best Ways to Communicate	Key Targeted Messages
Regional Partners & Neighbouring Councils	Joint forums, newsletters, regional tourism networks, direct communications, meetings & visitations	Collaborative planning, shared campaigns, cross-promotion	"Together we grow — through shared stories and regional experiences." "Let's align our strategies for greater impact."
State & Federal Agencies	Grant submissions, formal reports, advocacy meetings	Strategic briefs, KPI dashboards, impact case studies	"Balranald is delivering measurable outcomes aligned with state priorities." "Support us to scale inclusive, sustainable tourism."
NSW Destination Networks	Regional tourism forums, strategic planning sessions, newsletters	KPI dashboards, joint campaigns, collaborative reports	"Balranald aligns with NSW priorities and strengthens the Murray/Outback visitor economy."
NSW National Parks	Joint conservation projects, ranger networks, NPWS newsletters	Co-design meetings, interpretive planning, shared signage	"Tourism supports conservation and education." "Together we protect and promote the wetlands and outback landscapes."
Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Advisory Committee	Formal committee meetings, heritage forums, reports, Balranald Shire Council representation	Strategic briefs, heritage interpretation workshops, cultural protocols	"Balranald Shire contributes to the protection and promotion of World Heritage values." "Tourism must reinforce conservation and cultural integrity."

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Stakeholder Group	Best Ways to Reach Them	Best Ways to Communicate	Key Targeted Messages
Balranald Local Aboriginal Land Council	Direct engagement, co-design workshops, cultural governance meetings	Respectful dialogue, protocol-informed communication, joint planning	"Your leadership is central to Aboriginal tourism and cultural identity." "We honour your role in shaping Balranald's visitor economy."
State & Federal Agencies	Grant submissions, formal reports, advocacy meetings	Strategic briefs, KPI dashboards, impact case studies	"Balranald Shire is delivering measurable outcomes aligned with state priorities." "Support us to scale inclusive, sustainable tourism."
South West Arts	Regional arts networks, newsletters, cultural forums, joint project meetings	Collaborative planning sessions, artist residencies, co-branding campaigns, visual showcases	"Balranald Shire's creative identity is strengthened through regional arts collaboration." "Together we can amplify local artists, exhibitions, and cultural tourism."
Creative & Cultural Sector	Arts networks, gallery events, meetings, social media, newsletters	Visual showcases, artist residencies, co-design sessions	"Your creativity is central to our visitor experience." "Let's co-create public art, exhibitions, and cultural programming."
Media & Influencers	Press releases, media kits, hosted visits, social media	Story pitches, visual assets, behind-the-scenes access, Familiarisation tours	"Balranald Shire is a hidden gem — ready to be discovered." "Help us share stories of culture, nature, and community."

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Stakeholder Group	Best Ways to Reach Them	Best Ways to Communicate	Key Targeted Messages
Travel Bus/Coach Lines	Transport industry networks, direct operator engagement, highway partnerships	Co-branding campaigns, stopover incentives, bundled itineraries	"Balranald Shire is the perfect stopover, with experiences that convert short breaks into overnight stays."
Schools & Education Networks	School newsletters, assemblies, youth programs, partnerships with principals	Interactive workshops, curriculum-linked projects, youth-led campaigns	"Tourism is a pathway for learning, creativity, and future careers." "Students are ambassadors for Balranald Shire's identity."
Inbound Tour Operators	Trade shows, industry newsletters, direct outreach via Tourism Australia channels	Familiarisation tours, packaged itineraries, digital trade kits	"Balranald Shire offers authentic Aboriginal, nature, and creative experiences." "We provide unique products for international markets."

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b. Importance of Stakeholder Communications & Engagement

The following is a comprehensive outline of the importance of Stakeholder Communications & Engagement in delivering the Destination Management Plan.

Governance & Transparency

- Ensures decisions are open, accountable, and inclusive, building trust across Council, community, and partners.
- Provides a clear framework for reporting progress, sharing outcomes, and demonstrating alignment with strategic priorities.

Community Ownership & Pride

- Engages residents, youth, and Traditional Owners so they feel part of the journey, not just recipients of outcomes.
- Builds civic pride by celebrating local stories, achievements, and milestones.
- Encourages grassroots participation, which strengthens the authenticity of tourism experiences.

Partnership Development

- Strengthens collaboration with businesses, Aboriginal organisations, schools, arts networks, and regional/state agencies.
- Creates opportunities for co-funding, joint campaigns, and shared infrastructure projects.
- Ensures that tourism development is integrated with broader regional growth strategies.

Effective Delivery & Adaptation

- Provides real-time feedback loops to adjust strategies based on community needs and visitor trends.
- Helps identify risks early and co-design solutions that are practical and supported.
- Ensures resources are directed to initiatives with the strongest stakeholder backing.

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Cultural Integrity & Sustainability

- Embeds Aboriginal protocols and cultural leadership into tourism identity.
- Ensures environmental stewardship is co-owned by stakeholders, reinforcing resilience and sustainability.
- Builds long-term legacy by aligning tourism with community values and heritage protection.

Marketing Reach & Amplication

- Stakeholders act as ambassadors and storytellers, extending the reach of campaigns through their own networks.
- Creates consistent messaging across Visitor Information Centres, schools, businesses, and regional partners.
- Strengthens Balranald's brand by ensuring it is shared, understood, and lived by all groups

Legacy & Resilience

- Engagement ensures the DMP is not just a Council document, but a community-owned roadmap.
- Builds resilience by diversifying voices, perspectives, and contributions.
- Leaves a legacy of collaboration, equity, and pride that extends beyond the life of the plan.

Stakeholder communications and engagement are the engine of delivery: they transform the DMP from a strategic framework into a living, community-driven movement. Without them, implementation risks being fragmented or misunderstood; with them, Balranald Shire can achieve alignment, pride, and measurable impact.

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8. Implementation & Action Plan

The **Implementation & Action Plan** translates the vision, objectives, and strategies of the Balranald Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP) into a clear roadmap for delivery. It provides Council, partners, and the community with a practical guide to ensure that the aspirations outlined in the DMP are realised through measurable, staged, and accountable actions.

This section is designed to:

- **Bridge vision and delivery:** Moving from strategic intent to tangible projects, programs, and initiatives.

- **Provide clarity and accountability:** Each Action Theme is broken down into specific activities, numbered for ease of tracking, with clear responsibilities and timelines.

- **Enable adaptive management:** Actions are staged across short, medium, and long-term horizons, allowing Council to respond to emerging opportunities, funding streams, and community feedback.

- **Embed inclusivity and stewardship:** Implementation reflects the guiding principles of cultural respect, sustainability, creativity, and community-led governance.

The Implementation & Action Plan is structured around **10 Action Themes** each representing a critical pillar of destination development:

1. Place Identity & Storytelling
2. Visitor Infrastructure
3. Cultural Leadership & Aboriginal Tourism
4. Events & Activation
5. Business Capacity & Collaboration
6. Creative, Art & Culture
7. Highway & Gateway Activation
8. Sustainability & Stewardship
9. Marketing, Promotion & Digital Engagement
10. Governance & Community Engagement

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Timeframe Definitions

To help in prioritising actions and allocating timelines. the Implementation & Action Plan will be delivered under the following timeframe definitions:

Short-term (2026–2027)

- The first two years of delivery.
- Focus on foundational actions that build momentum quickly, such as branding, signage, caravan park upgrades, governance frameworks, and enhancing existing events.
- These are "quick wins" that demonstrate visible progress and community benefit early in the plan.

Medium-term (2028–2029)

- The middle two years.
- Focus on expansion and consolidation, such as opening the Aboriginal Cultural Centre, launching new signature festivals, aerodrome upgrades, and rolling out conservation initiatives.
- These actions deepen impact, strengthen partnerships, and build on the foundations laid in the short term.

Long-term (2030–2031)

- The final two years of the plan.
- Focus on legacy projects and transformative outcomes, such as stargazing platforms, shuttle services, large-scale creative placemaking, and embedding sustainability across all infrastructure.
- These initiatives position Balranald Shire as a model for inclusive, place-based regional development and ensure lasting community and visitor economy benefits.

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Action Theme 1: Place Identity & Storytelling

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
1.1 Launch Destination branding suite	1.1.1 Enhance current logo to be inclusive of all communities within the shire 1.1.2 Confirm positioning name and positioning statement 1.1.3 Roll out branding and positioning statement across signage, digital platforms, and collateral		
1.2 Identify Signage program & Gateway signage & Murals	1.2.1 Establish and implement a signage audit across the shire 1.2.2 Install branded wayfinding and directional signage where required across Balranald, Euston and Kyalite and other location where required within the Shire 1.2.3 Commission local and Aboriginal artists for murals. 1.2.4 Develop & install gateway and/or town entry murals in Balranald, Euston & Kyalite 1.2.5 Install themed sculptures at highway entry points (e.g. Frog theme in Balranald & the Regent Parrot in Euston)		
1.3 Rollout interpretive signage & QR storytelling nodes	1.3.1 Design signage with layered heritage and ecological stories. 1.3.2 Integrate QR codes linking to digital storytelling (to website, video channels etc.)		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
1.4 Develop digital storytelling platforms	1.4.1 Launch mobile app with audio tours. 1.4.2 Create podcasts and online maps.		
1.5 Establish Riverfront murals & story walls	1.5.1 Co-design panels for Balranald, Euston & Kyalite riverfronts with schools, Elders and local artists. Establish a process where these can be refreshed periodically 1.5.2 Establish story walls at allocated locations. 1.5.3 Install postcard stations in eateries, accommodation venues, retail shops and other nominated locations across the Shire		
1.6 Expand Heritage & Cultural Trails	1.6.1 Integrate the Spirit of the West Loop regional trail with Balranald Shire branding & positioning 1.6.2 Add/expand upon military, pioneering, rivertrade, aviation/ transport and Aboriginal interpretation nodes across the shire 1.6.3 Produce geo-narrated walks 1.6.4 Package trails with guided tours		
1.7 Made in Balranald Shire Toolkit	1.7.1 Work with local businesses to establish a series of visual assets to promote the shire. e.g. labels, menu headers, merchandise, business entry signs etc.		

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Action Theme 2: Visitor Infrastructure & Experience Design

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
2.1 Review Section 5a-5f "Product Development & Experience Design" of the Destination Management Plan	2.1.1. Organise a workshop to review all product & experience development suggested in Section 5a-5f and identify which will be selected for development and establish timeframes 2.1.2 Once all product & experiences development suggestion have been selected for development, identify what visitor infrastructure required for each selection and establish timeframes		
2.2 Balranad Caravan Park Upgrades	2.2.1 Upgrade cabins & powered sites 2.2.2 Upgrade amenities, gates and pool area 2.2.3 Review capabilities and where possible add other accommodation options such as glamping pods, dark sky pods & eco-cabins 2.2.4 Establish Rest & Recharge Zone with EV charging stations, shaded seating and coffee kiosks 2.2.5 Review current Caravan Park Masterplan (developed by Maddison Architects) and identify any new build or stage referred to in the Masterplan that Council may consider for development. For example: Community Hall, poolside precinct, river access pontoon, pedestrian river walk, etc.		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
2.3 Riverfront pathways & seating	2.3.1 Install lighting and shaded seating where possible along the Balranald & Euston riverfront pathways 2.3.2 Add interpretive signage along pathways at both Balranald and Euston 2.3.3 Establish a shaded seating network plan to include main streets, all riverfronts and promenades, the Discovery Centre, Lake Benanee and all parks across the shire		
2.4 Balranald Aerodrome upgrade	2.4.1 Review current plans and documents in reference to extending the runway and upgrading the aerodrome precinct and identify upgrade requirements, upgrade stages and timeframes 2.4.2 Negotiate purchase or lease of land with landowner 2.3.3 Seek and secure funding		
2.5 Bird hides & viewing platforms & Bird trail infrastructure	2.5.1 Construct hides/bird viewing infrastructure as part of the Balranald Shire bird trail project 2.5.2 Develop interpretive panels and signage on the shire's birdlife across the trail 2.5.3 Investigate the purchase of binoculars for hire at the Visitor information Centre 2.3.4 Develop Bird Trail brochure		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
2.6 Stargazing, sunset gazing & dark sky gazing viewing platforms	2.6.1 Investigate and identify best locations within the shire for the viewing platforms 2.6.2 Build the viewing platforms with seating and interpretive/information boards 2.6.3 Package astronomy tours with local operators 2.6.4 Develop brochure guide re best viewing locations across the shire		
2.7 Kayak/canoe access points	2.7.1 Establish low-impact launches at Balranald, Euston, Kyalite and Lake Benanee and include safety signage 2.7.2 Develop brochure about kayaking/canoeing hotspots and access points across the shire		
2.8. Balranald Discovery Centre precinct infrastructure upgrades	2.8.1 Develop infrastructure upgrade plan for the Discovery Centre precinct to include: • Shaded seating • Water Stations • Upgraded directional and wayfinding signage • Digital kiosk • Welcome Wall • Illuminating coloured lighting on key buildings, sculptures and trees 2.8.2 Develop and install planned displays at newly build Discovery Pavilion		

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Action Theme 3: Cultural Leadership & Aboriginal Tourism

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
3.1 Establish Cultural Governance Group	3.1.1 Formalise an Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Group comprising of representative/s of the Balranald Aboriginal Land Council, Elders, youth, and artists 3.1.2 Establish Terms of Reference, purpose and frequency of meetings		
3.2 Aboriginal Cultural Centre scoping and planning	3.2.1 Work with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Group and Council staff in determining the best site location 3.2.2 Develop concept brief and co-design with Traditional Owners 3.2.3 Develop business case & project plan 3.2.4 Seek and secure funding 3.2.5 Commence site development		
3.3 Review suggested Aboriginal cultural Experiences & Events Development in Section 5 of the DMP	3.3.1. Organise a workshop with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to review all Aboriginal cultural experiences and events suggested in Section 5 of this plan and identify which will be selected for development and establish timeframes 3.3.2 Identify what visitor infrastructure and activities are required for each selection and establish timeframes		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
3.4 Aboriginal-led tours and workshops	3.4.1 Work with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to establish Aboriginal-Led Tours and workshops across the shire 3.4.2 Develop an Aboriginal Cultural trail across the shire to include interpretive signage and story-telling tour guide 3.4.3 Develop and run a series of workshops across the shire led by Traditional Owners on dance, language, food, painting, weaving etc. Market and promote as immersive visitor experiences		
3.5 Integrate Aboriginal Sky Stories	3.5.1 Collaborate with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee on astronomy programming 3.5.2 Develop interpretive material for stargazing experiences 3.5.3 Develop and promote Aboriginal-led stargazing experiences		
3.6 Aboriginal Art, merchandise and displays at the Discovery Pavilion	3.6.1 Establish artwork and displays at the newly built Discovery Pavilion 3.6.2 Seek and establish local and regional Aboriginal artists and craftspeople for artwork and crafts to be sold 3.6.3 Establish a story wall and show Aboriginal cultural videos at the Discovery Pavilion		

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Action Theme 4: Events & Activation

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
4.1 Review Section 5c – "Events & Festivals Development" section of the DMP	4.1.1. Organise a workshop to review all Events & Festivals suggested in Section 5c of this plan and identify which will be selected for development and establish timeframes 4.1.2 Identify what visitor infrastructure and activities are required for each selection and establish timeframes		
4.2 Enhance Existing Events	4.2.1. Review suggested enhancements to existing events in Section 5d of this plan and develop enhancement plan and timeframes for each one. 4.2.3 Implement enhancement strategies in collaboration with each event organiser/s		
4.3 Seasonal Activation Calendar	4.3.1 Develop and map event across seasons to avoid overlap 4.3.2 Promote calendar through digital and social campaigns 4.3.3 Promote calendar through direct media, print media and broadcast media		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
4.4 Establish new signature events & festivals	4.4.1. Organise a workshop to review all new signature Events & Festivals suggested in Section 5c of this plan and identify which will be selected for development and establish timeframes 4.4.2 Identify what visitor infrastructure and activities are required for each selection and establish timeframes		
4.5 Youth & Seniors Inclusion Protocol	4.5.1 Establish dedicated program streams for youth and seniors 4.5.2 Ensure that all event venues are accessible to all 4.5.3 Establish quiet spaces in event planning 4.5.4 Introduce intergenerational storytelling sessions 4.5.5 Establish youth-led ideas and activities in event planning		
4.6 Event Passports & Bundles	4.6.1 Work with local businesses and operators to develop event passports and bundling of services to promote longer stay and spend during events		
4.7 Pop Up Night time economy during events	4.7.1 Host night time pop-up markets and pop-up activities during events 4.7.2 Include lantern walks & illuminated art		

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Action Theme 5: Business Capacity & Collaboration

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
5.1 Training Programs	5.1.1 Survey businesses and operators to identify training needs and support required 5.1.2 Deliver a series of training workshops aligned with needs and requests and at suitable times		
5.2 Co-branding initiatives	5.2.1 Work with businesses and operators to establish and launch a "Shop Local" Passport 5.2.2 Develop highway traveller promotions		
5.3 Parnerships	5.3.1 Facilitate collaborations with local farmers, producers and cultural groups 5.3.2 Create joint tourism packages		
5.4 Business Xchange Forums	5.4.1 Reintroduce the Business Xchange catch-ups and work with businesses & operators in developing a Business Xchange Calendar of dates and venues. To be held across the shire 5.4.2 Survey businesses & operators to identify themes for the Business Xchange catch-ups 5.4.3 Utilise the Business Xchange forum to discuss and develop event bundling and cross-promotional deals		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
5.5 Mentoring networks	5.5..1 Establish youth entrepreneur mentoring 5.5.2 Pair emerging operators with experience mentors		
5.6 Marketing & Promotional support	5.6.1 Establish a dedicated page on the new tourism website to promote local business and operators and seasonal, occasional and event promotions 5.6.2 Work with media outlets to establish jointly funded marketing campaigns to take advantage of economies of scale pricing 5.6.3 Establish monthly "Business of Balranald Shire" feature on the tourism website, tourism socials and tourism video channels, highlighting interest stories about each business		
5.7 Business Excellence Program & Awards	5.7.1 Establish a shire-wide Business Excellence Program & Awards concept brief 5.7.2 Engage and consult with businesses and operators in establishing the program's purpose, objectives and framework and awards categories and criteria 5.7.3 Develop a project plan to identify costings and capabilities & required resources		

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Action Theme 6: Creative, Art & Culture

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
6.1 Art Gallery & Creative Learning Centre	6.1.1. Organise a workshop with the Gallery committee to review Section 5d of this plan in reference to suggested enhancement strategies for the Gallery and select desired enhancements and establish timeframes

6.1.2 Identify what activities and tasks are required for each selection and establish timeframes | | |
| **6.2 Creative Public space activation & placemaking projects** | 6.2.1 Work with the Gallery, SW Arts and other creative community stakeholders in developing a plan to transform the main streets and riverfronts of Balranald Shire into creative precincts with murals, sculptures, pop-up galleries and love performances

6.2.2 Commission murals and public art

6.2.3 Install interactive installations in town centres

6.2.4 Progress with developing a project plan, and submitting an RFQ for painting of the water towers in both Balranald & Euston

6.2.5 Secure design options and pricing for the painting of the water towers in both Balranald & Euston and consult with all community stakeholders

6.2.6 Seek funding for painting of the water towers | | |

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
6.3 Community Arts residencies	6.3.1 Work collaboratively with the Gallery to offer residencies for artists to collaborate with schools, seniors and youth. Invite national, regional and Aboriginal artists 6.3.2 Showcase outputs at the Gallery, Discover Pavilion and the Library 6.3.3 Host community engagement sessions		
6.4 Arts programming in festivals	6.4.1 Integrate gallery exhibition into event calendars 6.4.2 Host twilight art openings		
6.5 Creative Enterprise Support	6.5.1 Work with the Gallery to identify opportunities for shared studio spaces and retail pathways for local makers 6..5.2 Launch "Made in Balranald Shire" artisan brand 6.5.3 Mentor emerging artists in business skills		
6.6 Regional Arts Partnership	6.6.1 Strengthen collaboration with South West Arts for touring exhibitions and creative program for the Theatre Royal 6.6.2 Develop joint festivals across neighbouring LGAs		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
6.7 Heritage & Aviation Storytelling	6.7.1 Expand Southern Cross expedition programming with creative installations 6.7.2 Commission interpretive art pieces linking aviation history to modern innovation		
6.8 Funky Frog & Reggie Parrot Creative trail enhancements	6.8.1 Commission new frog sculptures aligned with themes across the town. Work with the Gallery & TED committee members in ideas for new frog sculptures and locations 6.8.2 Establish a similar frog sculpture trail in Euston using Reggie the Regent Parrot motif. Work with EPAC, TED, the Gallery and other creative stakeholders in establishing potential Reggie sculpture themes and locations 6.8.3 Seek funding to expand on the Balranald frog sculpture trail and to establish the Euston Reggie Parrot sculpture trail		
6.9 Annual "Balranald Creative Festival"	6.9.1 Establish a multi-dat celebration of arts, music and culture 6.9.2 Include youth showcases, Aboriginal art, food, crafts and Aboriginal performances 6.9.3 Co-design weaving, language and storytelling workshops with Aboriginal Elders		

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Action Theme 7: Highway & Gateway Activation

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
7.1 Highway-facing attractions	7.1 Install interactive rest stop features. 7.2 Add themed landscaping at gateways 7.3 Fabricate and install Balranald Frog and Euston Parrot landmarks with lights and QR stories 7.4 Establish rest stop "micro-experience" pods including shade, soundscape, panel series and next-stop teaser and align with passport campaign		
7.2 "Stop Shop Stay" Passport	7.2.1 Work with business and operators in designing a passport of local business offers (shire-wide) 7.2.2 Promote passport via highway signage		
7.3 Highway promotions	7.3.1 Partner with businesses and operators for traveller deals 7.3.2 Launch digital highway campaigns		
7.4 Highway food hubs	7.4.1 Work with businesses and operators in offering quick service kiosks, this could be seasonal and/or during periods of heavy traffic and or during events		

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Action Theme 8: Sustainability & Stewardship

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
8.1 Renewable energy upgrades	8.1.1 Where possible install solar panels on community facilities and venues 8.1.2 Opt for native landscaping at precincts, parks and venues 8.1.3 Install heat-resilient shade nodes		
8.2 Visitor Stewardship messaging	8.2 1 Establish "Care for Country" prompts on signs, maps, passports, guides and event programs		
8.3 Low impact trail standards	8.3.1 Consider low impact standards when developing trails. Consider materials, drainage, shade, erosion control specs, maintenance schedules & accessible grades		
8.4 Climate adaption for events	8..4.1 Consider shade, hydration, timing adjustments, contingency site and river level protocols with event planning		
8.5 Conservation initiatives	8..5.1 Launch wetlands restoration & river health projects 8.5.2 Develop riverbank protection programs 8.5.3 Install signage on Council roads re protection and care of wildlife		

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Action Theme 9: Marketing, Promotion & Digital Engagement

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
9.1 New Website & Social & Digital platforms	9.1 Finalise development and launch new tourism website 9.2 Establish new video channels and other digital platforms 9.3 Establish new Instagram Page and update Facebook page		
9.2 Destination marketing campaigns	9.2.1 Roll out "Where the wetlands meet the outback" destination multi-media campaigns regionally and nationally 9.2.2 Target highway travellers with tailored promotions 9.2.3 Create and launch seasonal themed campaigns		
9.3 Restore digital advertising capacity	9.3.1 Reactivate Discover Balranald & Surrounds Ad account on Facebook 9.3.2 Establish and launch a "We're back better than ever" campaign		
9.4 Social Media Activation & Influencer partnerships	9.4.1 Post weekly Discover Balranald Shire posts - events, happenings, trails, local stories, attractions and experiences 9.4.2 Partner with influencers for storytelling content 9.4.3 Create branded hashtags 9.4 Expand on Council's social media presence		

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Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
9.5 Geo-Targeted Advertising	9.5.1 Deliver real-time promotions via Google Maps, Waze etc. 9.5.2 Target travellers within 200km radius (Swan Hill, Mildura, Griffith) 2.5.3 Target audiences & communities within a 3-5hr travel radius who can make a relatively short drive to Balranald Shire for weekend-getaways and Easter holidays		
9.6 Content Creation & Storytelling	9.6.1 Produce short videos highlighting events, Aboriginal culture, and eco-tourism. 9.6.2 Develop podcasts featuring local voices and stories. 9.6.3 Build a photo/media bank for operators and media outlets.		
9.7 Regional Media Partnerships	9.7.1 Secure regular coverage in Swan Hill, Mildura, Hay & Griffith outlets 9.7.2 Collaborate with Destination NSW for inclusion in state campaigns.		
9.8 Visitor Loyalty Programs	9.8.1 Launch "Balranald Explorer Passport" with rewards for attending multiple events. 9.8.2 Offer discounts at local businesses for library members and event participants.		

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Action Theme 10: Governance & Community Engagement

Action	Activities	Timeframe (Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term)	Measures
10.1 Reporting frameworks	10.1.1 Develop annual DMP progress report. 10.1.2 Publish outcomes via various mediums - socials, newsletter, websites, direct mail		
10.2 Youth & Aboriginal co-desig	10.2.1 Establish youth advisory group Formalise Aboriginal Advisory/Co-Design Committee		
10.3 Stakeholder Forums	10.3.1 Host quarterly forums 10.3.2 Facilitate cross-sector collaboration workshops		
10.4 Onboarding Packs	10.4.1 Create volunteer and partner packs 10.4.2 Deliver induction sessions		
10.5 Governance alignment	10.5.1 Review Council process for equity 10.5.2 Embed accountability measures		

GOOD GOVERNANCE

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9. Enablers to the successful delivery of the DMP

The successful delivery of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) depends not only on the strength of its vision and strategies, but on the effectiveness of its implementation. This section outlines the critical considerations that will guide Balranald Shire in turning ambition into action. It recognises that tourism development is complex, requiring alignment across governance, community, business, and cultural partners, as well as careful management of resources, risks, and opportunities.

Implementation must be inclusive, transparent, and adaptive. It requires clear governance structures, strong stakeholder engagement, and the capacity to respond to changing visitor trends, funding environments, and community needs. Delivery must also balance short-term wins with long-term legacy, ensuring that infrastructure, events, and experiences are sustainable and culturally respectful.

Governance & Leadership

- Clear governance structures with defined roles and responsibilities across Council, community, and partners.
- Transparent reporting frameworks to track progress against Action Themes and KPIs.
- Embedding Aboriginal and youth co-design in decision-making processes.
- Regular stakeholder forums to maintain accountability and collaboration.

Funding & Resource Allocation

- Securing multi-year funding streams (grants, Council budgets, partnerships).
- Prioritising investment according to short-, medium-, and long-term timelines.
- Leveraging co-funding opportunities with state, federal, and private partners.
- Ensuring resources are allocated equitably across community and tourism priorities.

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Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Ongoing consultation with residents, businesses, Traditional Owners, and youth.
- Building community pride and ownership of tourism initiatives.
- Providing accessible communication channels for feedback and participation.
- Celebrating milestones to reinforce community confidence and support.

Partnerships & Collaboration

- Strengthening partnerships with regional tourism organisations, neighbouring councils, and industry bodies.
- Formalising collaboration with Aboriginal groups, creative industries, and event organisers.
- Engaging local businesses in co-branding, distribution, and promotional campaigns.
- Establishing cross-regional initiatives to broaden reach and impact.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

- Establishing clear KPIs for each Action Theme and marketing pillar.
- Annual reporting to Council and community on progress and outcomes.
- Using visitor surveys, digital analytics, and event attendance data to measure impact.
- Adjusting strategies based on evidence and emerging trends.

Sustainability & Risk Management

- Embedding environmental stewardship in all infrastructure and event planning.
- Managing risks related to funding, climate, and market fluctuations.
- Ensuring resilience by diversifying visitor markets and experiences.
- Aligning with state and national sustainability frameworks.

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Marketing & Communication

- Coordinated campaigns to promote milestones and achievements.
- Consistent brand messaging across digital, print, and broadcast media.
- Leveraging storytelling to build awareness and emotional connection.
- Ensuring communication is inclusive, accessible, and culturally respectful.

Industry Capacity & Workforce Development

- Training and mentoring programs for operators, youth, and emerging entrepreneurs.
- Building skills in digital marketing, customer service, and sustainability.
- Supporting businesses to achieve eco-certification and quality standards.
- Encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing through industry forums.

Phased Implementation & Flexibility

- Staging actions into short-, medium-, and long-term priorities (2026–2031).
- Identifying "quick wins" to build momentum early.
- Allowing flexibility to adapt to new opportunities, technologies, and visitor trends.
- Ensuring legacy projects are positioned for long-term impact.

Legacy & Identity

- Ensuring all initiatives reinforce Balranald's identity as a creative, inclusive, and resilient destination.
- Positioning the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and signature festivals as flagship projects.
- Embedding community pride and cultural integrity into every outcome.
- Leaving a lasting legacy of sustainable tourism and regional development.

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10. Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensuring that the Destination Management Plan (DMP) delivers on its vision and commitments. They provide the framework for measuring progress, demonstrating accountability, and adapting strategies in response to changing circumstances. By embedding clear indicators, reporting mechanisms, and feedback loops, Balranald Shire can track achievements, identify challenges early, and celebrate successes with the community and partners.

Effective monitoring and evaluation serve multiple purposes:

- **Transparency:** Demonstrating to Council, community, and funding bodies that resources are being used responsibly.
- **Learning & Adaptation:** Using data and feedback to refine initiatives, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful.
- **Community Confidence:** Sharing results openly to build trust, pride, and continued engagement.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensuring delivery remains consistent with local values, regional priorities, and state/federal frameworks.
- **Legacy Building:** Capturing outcomes that contribute to long-term resilience, cultural integrity, and sustainable growth.

Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Key Strategies
Establish Clear Performance Indicators	Define measurable outcomes across infrastructure, visitation, community engagement, and cultural integrity.	**Develop a Destination Scorecard** - Include KPIs for visitation numbers, dwell time, visitor satisfaction, event attendance, and economic impact - Track cultural engagement metrics (e.g. Aboriginal-led tours, co-designed programs delivered) **Align indicators with Council's Operational Plan** - Map tourism actions to Delivery Program outcomes and budget allocations - Ensure consistency with Balranald Shire 2027 strategic pillars **Include qualitative indicators** - Monitor community sentiment, youth participation, and stakeholder satisfaction - Use storytelling and case studies to capture impact beyond numbers

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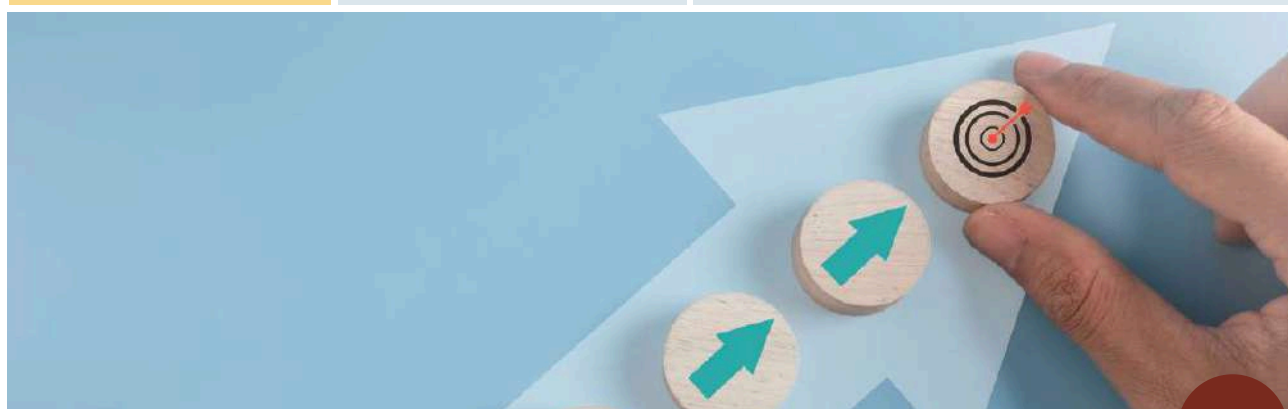| Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Key Strategies
Implement Regular Reporting Cycles	Maintain transparency and responsiveness through structured reporting.	**Six-monthly progress reports** • Assess delivery against the Destination Management Plan and Operational Plan • Include updates from tourism operators, Traditional Owners, and youth groups **Annual Visitor Economy Report** • Publish insights on visitation trends, campaign performance, and infrastructure usage • Include audited financials and grant acquittals where relevant **Quarterly dashboard updates** • Share real-time data on website traffic, bookings, and social media engagement • Use visual formats for Council briefings and community newsletters
Strengthen Data Collection and Analyis	Build an evidence base for decision-making and advocacy.	**Partner with DNSW and Destination Riverina Murray** • Access regional visitor data and sentiment analysis • Participate in collaborative research projects (e.g. drive market profiling) **Conduct annual visitor surveys** • Capture feedback on facilities, signage, cultural experiences, and accessibility • Include youth and Aboriginal perspectives through targeted engagement **Use digital tools for tracking** • Install QR codes at key sites to monitor engagement • Use CRM systems at the Discovery Centre to track visitor origin and interests

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Area of Focus	Strategic Focus	Key Strategies
Embed Adaptive Management	Ensure the plan remains responsive to changing conditions and community needs.	**Hold annual stakeholder review forums** • Invite operators, Advisory Committee members, Elders, youth reps, and Council staff to reflect on progress • Use feedback to refine priorities and delivery methods **Update the Destination Management Plan every 4–5 years** • Align with Council election cycle and strategic reviews • Include community consultation and co-design principles **Pilot and iterate new initiatives** • Trial small-scale programs (e.g. pop-up cultural events, youth-led tours) • Evaluate outcomes and scale successful models
Foster Community Ownership and Transparency	Position monitoring as a shared responsibility and opportunity for learning.	**Create a public-facing tourism dashboard** • Share key metrics and stories via Council website and social media • Celebrate milestones and acknowledge contributors **Empower youth and Aboriginal monitors** • Train local ambassadors to collect feedback and share insights • Include their voices in reporting and evaluation processes **Integrate with broader Council reporting** • Ensure tourism outcomes are visible in Annual Reports and Budget Reviews • Advocate for tourism's role in community wellbeing and economic resilience

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