Balranald Shire Council's
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2025 - 2030

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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

>>> 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.

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

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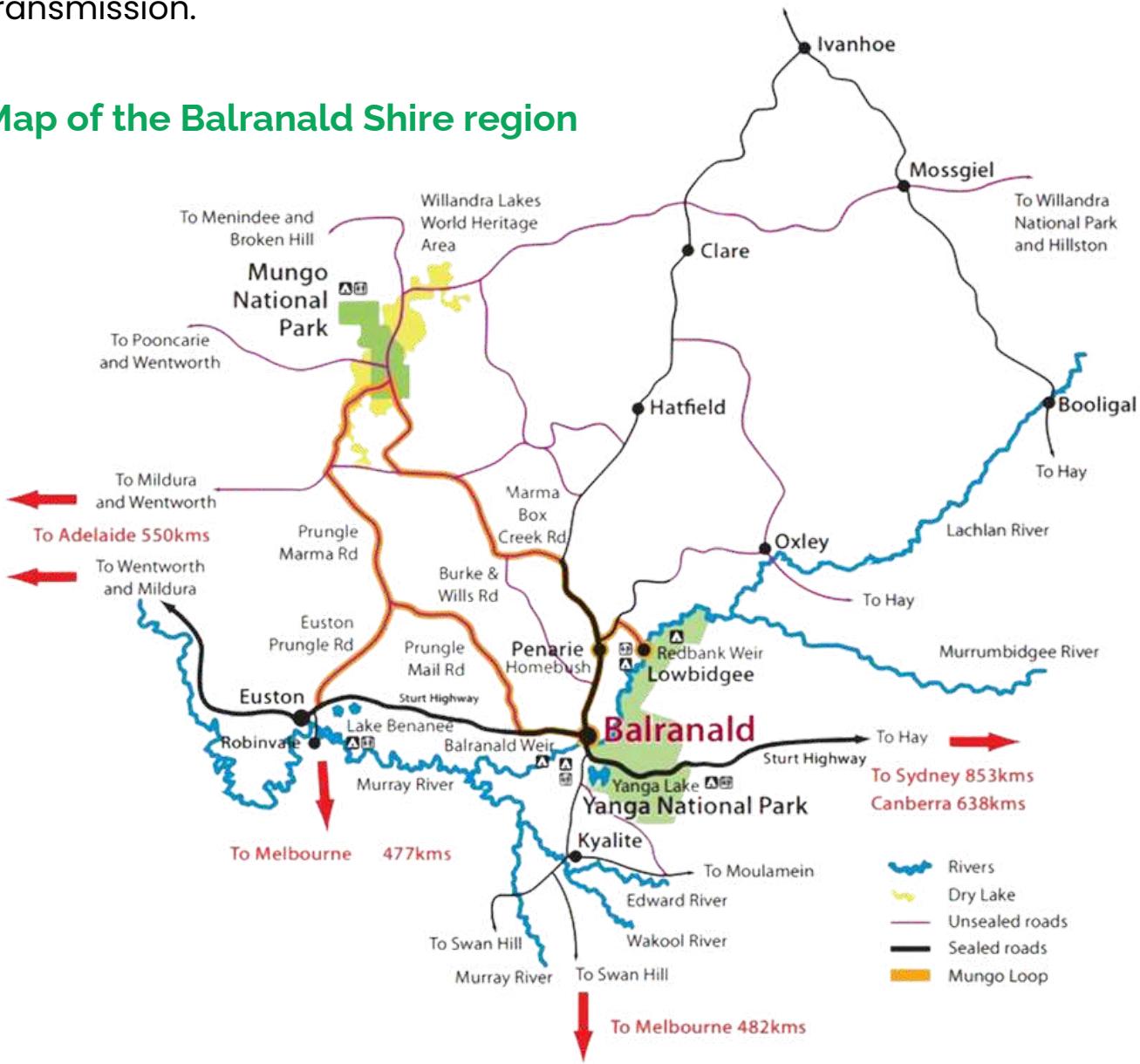
The Balranald LGA has entered a significant economic growth phase. As one community leader noted - "This is our Gold Rush". Another wisely added - "Economic Development is coming down the pipeline so quickly at us and we are dramatically under-prepared".

This is our gold rush

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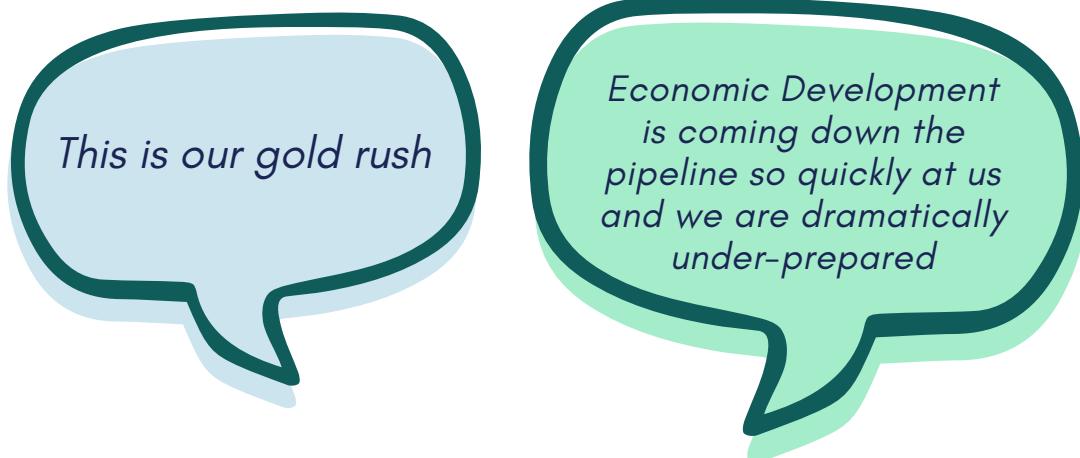
Appendix 2 of this Plan "Key Balranald Shire Council Planning & Reports", provides a brief review of influential reporting and **Appendix 3** maps National, State, Regional and Local level Policy & Programs to inform the creation of the Economic Development Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.

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.

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.

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
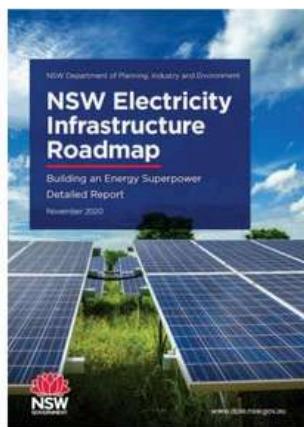
$32 billion in regional energy infrastructure investment by private companies expected across NSW by 2030

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

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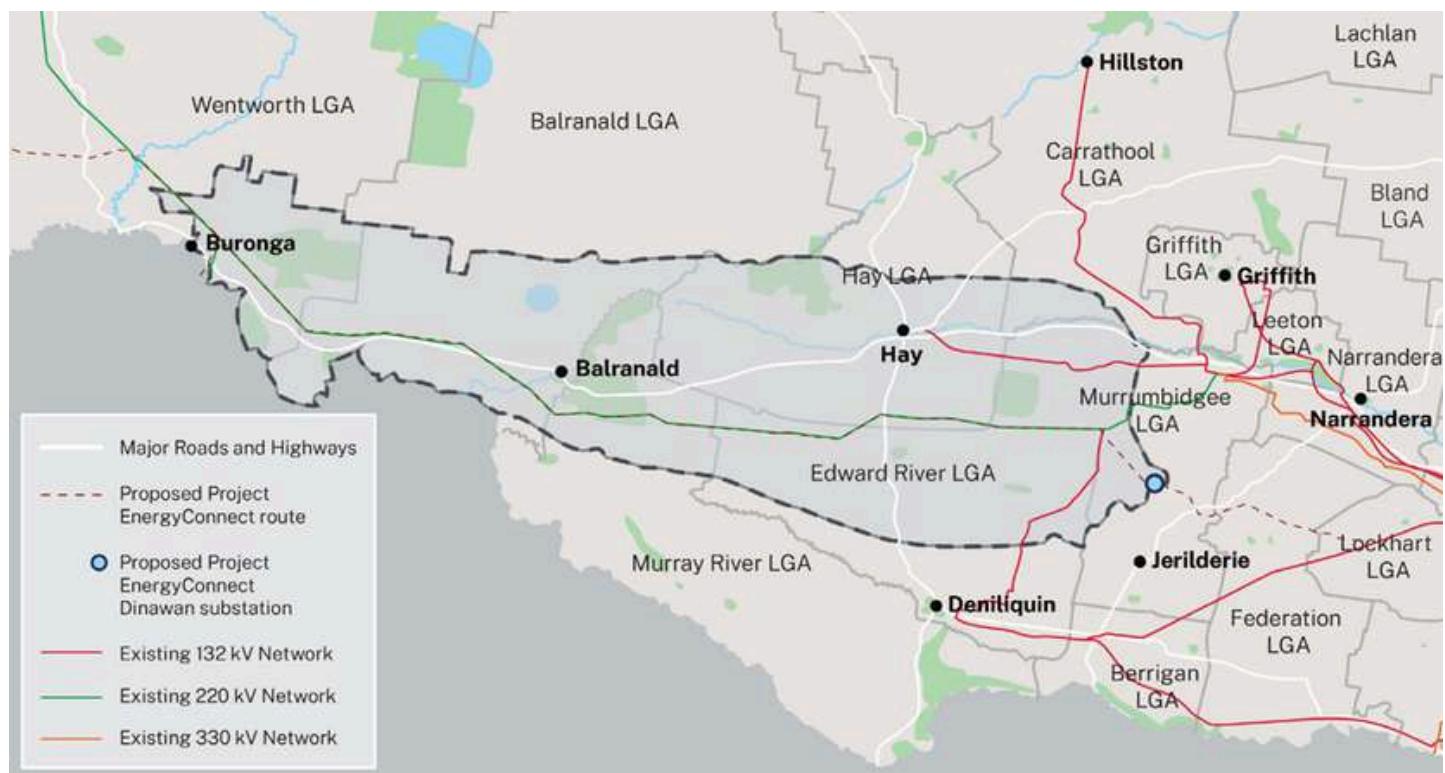
Sourced: (https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez accessed 04/03/2024).

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).

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

Renewable Pipeline in the REZ (June 2024)

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

Technology Type	Capacity (GW)
Solar	3.87 GW
Wind	14.84 GW
Storage	9.09 GW
Total	27.8 GW
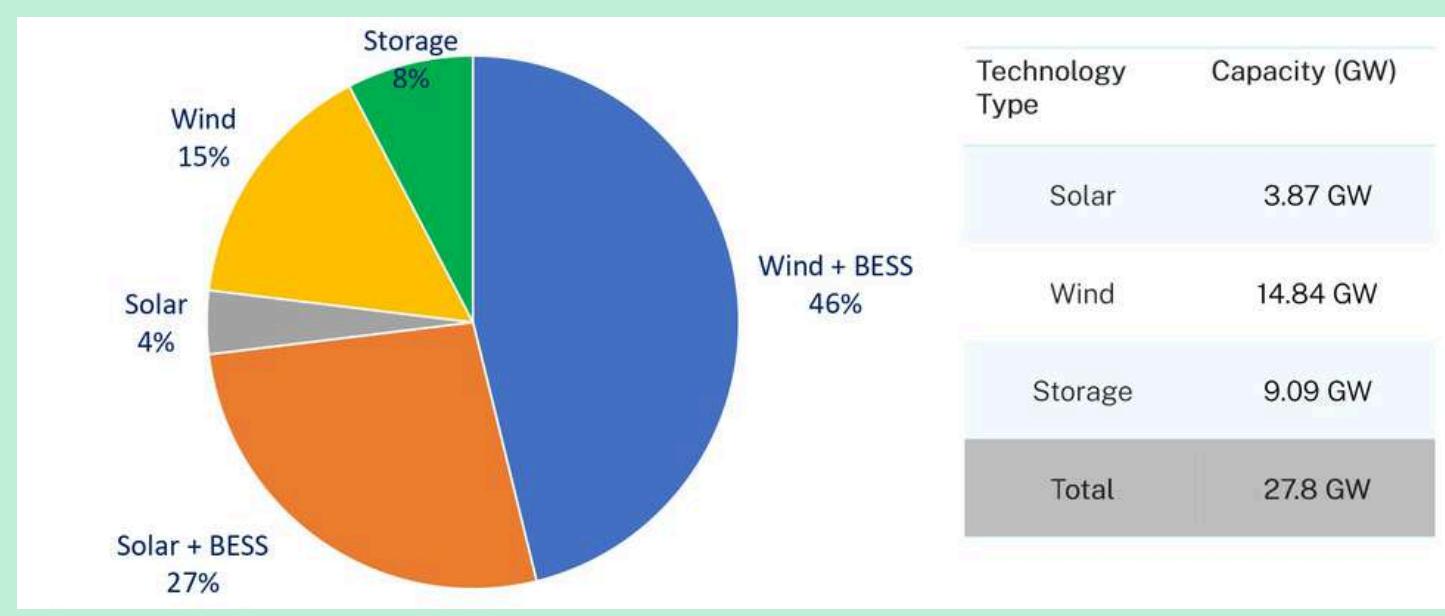
Project EnergyConnect is the first new electricity interconnector between Australian states in 15 years and Australia's largest energy transmission project to date. An electricity interconnector is a connection that allows power to flow between regions in the National Electricity Market (NEM), providing 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).

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.

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

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

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.

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).

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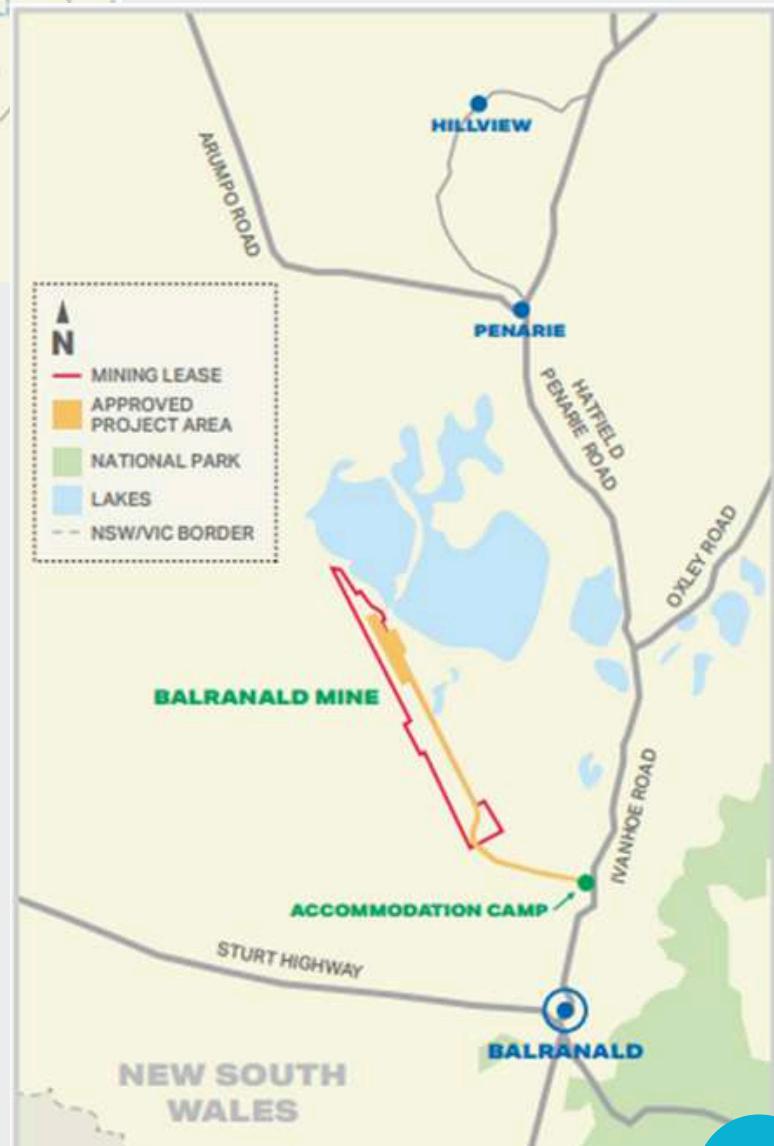
The map showing the approved project area near Balranald in the Balranald Shire

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
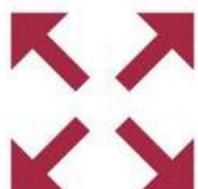
LARGEST INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT (2021, PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER) - AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING 33.9%
Data by Region Australian Bureau of Statistics

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

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%)

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%)

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

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*

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.
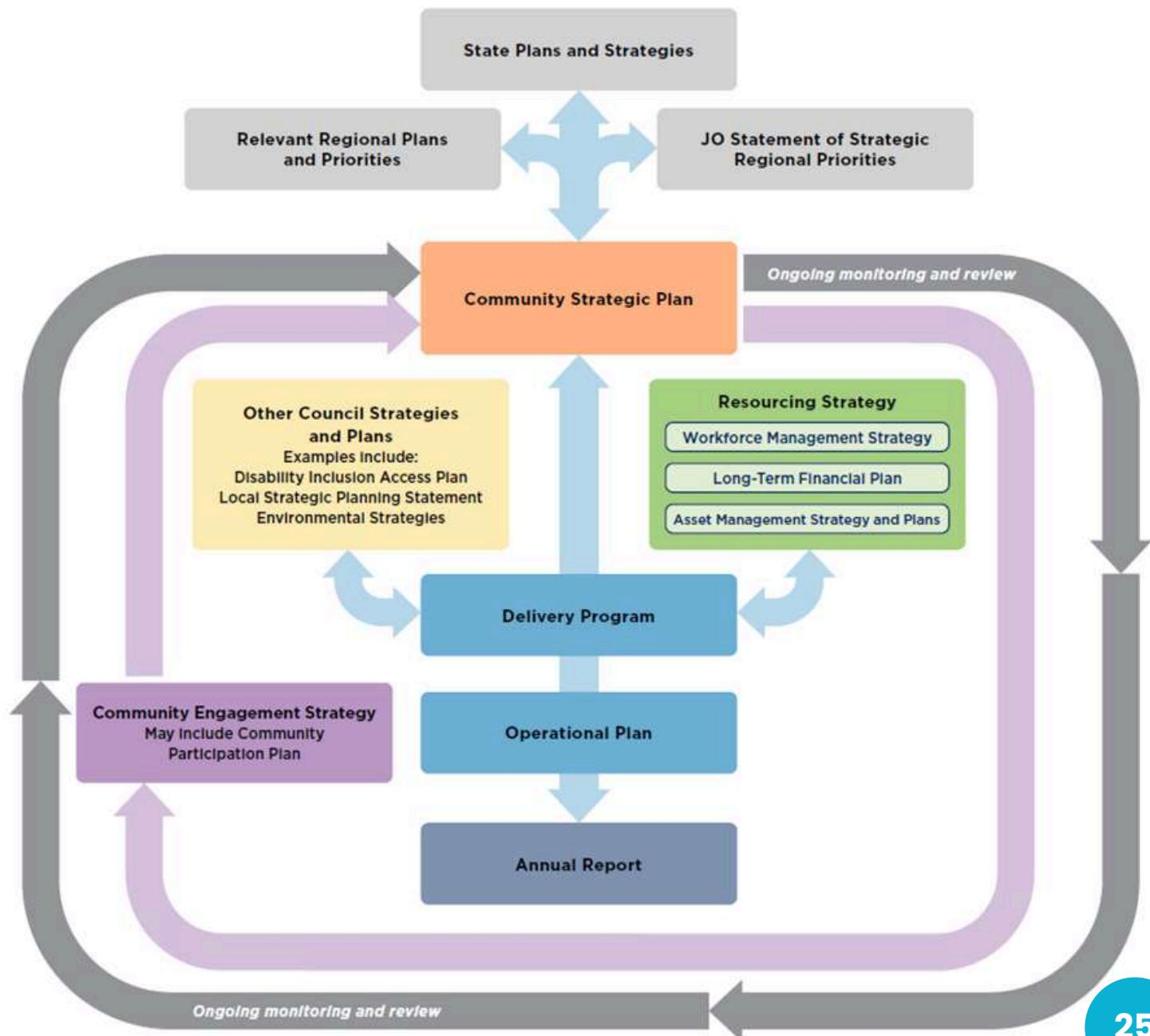
WHAT DRIVES US - VISION & VALUES

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

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.* "

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:

Inclusion, 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.

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) **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 **1.1.3** Map local business and industry to support their full utilisation by larger emerging industries such as mining and renewables	Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.2 Community Strategic Plan 2032 - Section 3.1
1.2 The importance of the agricultural and horticultural industries is protected	**1.2.1** Manage residential encroachment onto agricultural / horticultural land **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	Right to Farm Policy 2015
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 **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	Department of Planning NSW Department of Regional NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, Department of Regional NSW in the distribution of this BSC LGA Prospectus

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

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	

The development of a shire-wide Housing Strategy is essential to support growth

| 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
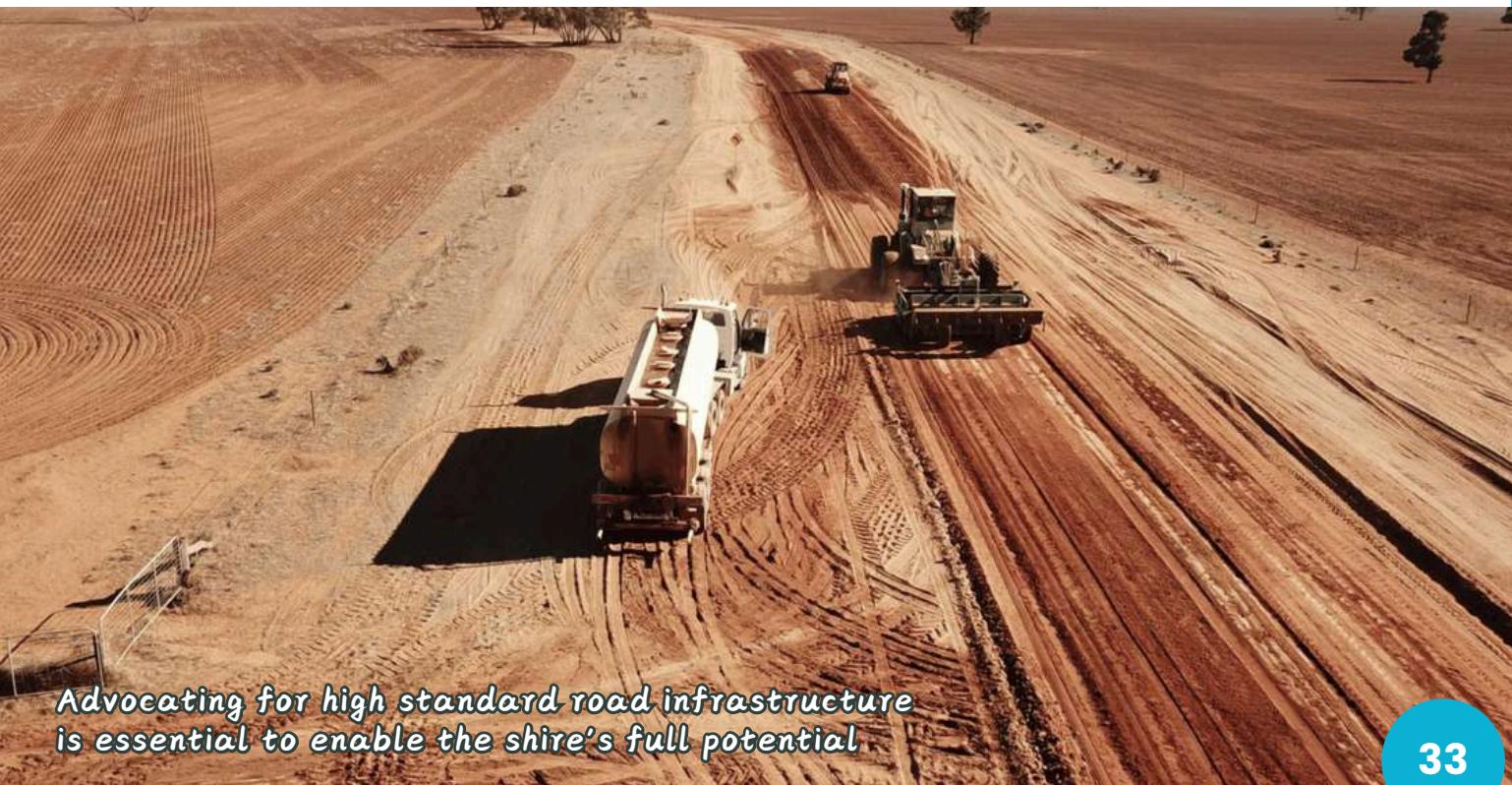
Strategic Goal 3. Our People

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."

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 **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 **3.4.4** Investigate local solutions to workforce gaps by exploring more flexible working arrangements, workforce sharing and role sharing models	Move to More Country Change programs RDA Murray

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 **4.1.2** Our cultural and heritage assets are mapped, their significance recorded and protected **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	Murray National Parks Better Bidgee Program Traditional Owners Balranald Aboriginal Lands Council National Parks / World Heritage Willandra Lakes Advisory Committee

The Murrumbidgee River at the Yanga Woolshed

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

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

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

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

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

- 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.

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.

> 66
>
> *Mungo is a bucket list park – Mungo has re-written humanity's history*
> 99

> 66
>
> *We're unique with the five rivers – we're Kakadu without the crocs.*
> 99

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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.

> "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."

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

> *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

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.*

> "*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.*"

Aboriginal cultural tourism is a development opportunity for the shire

> *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?*

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.

"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 setting 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

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.*

> *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

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)*

> "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)"

> *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

> "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.

REWN
ROBINVALE EUSTON
WORKFORCE NETWORK

The Robinvale Euston Workforce Network (REWN) is a key cross-border partner

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

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.

> 66
>
> *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*
>
> 99

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

> 66
>
> *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*
>
> 99

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.

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.

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
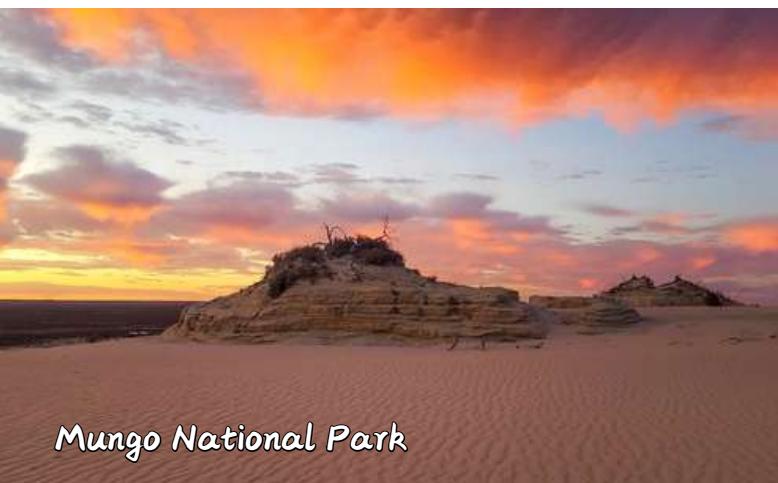
Mungo National Park

Yanga National Park

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.
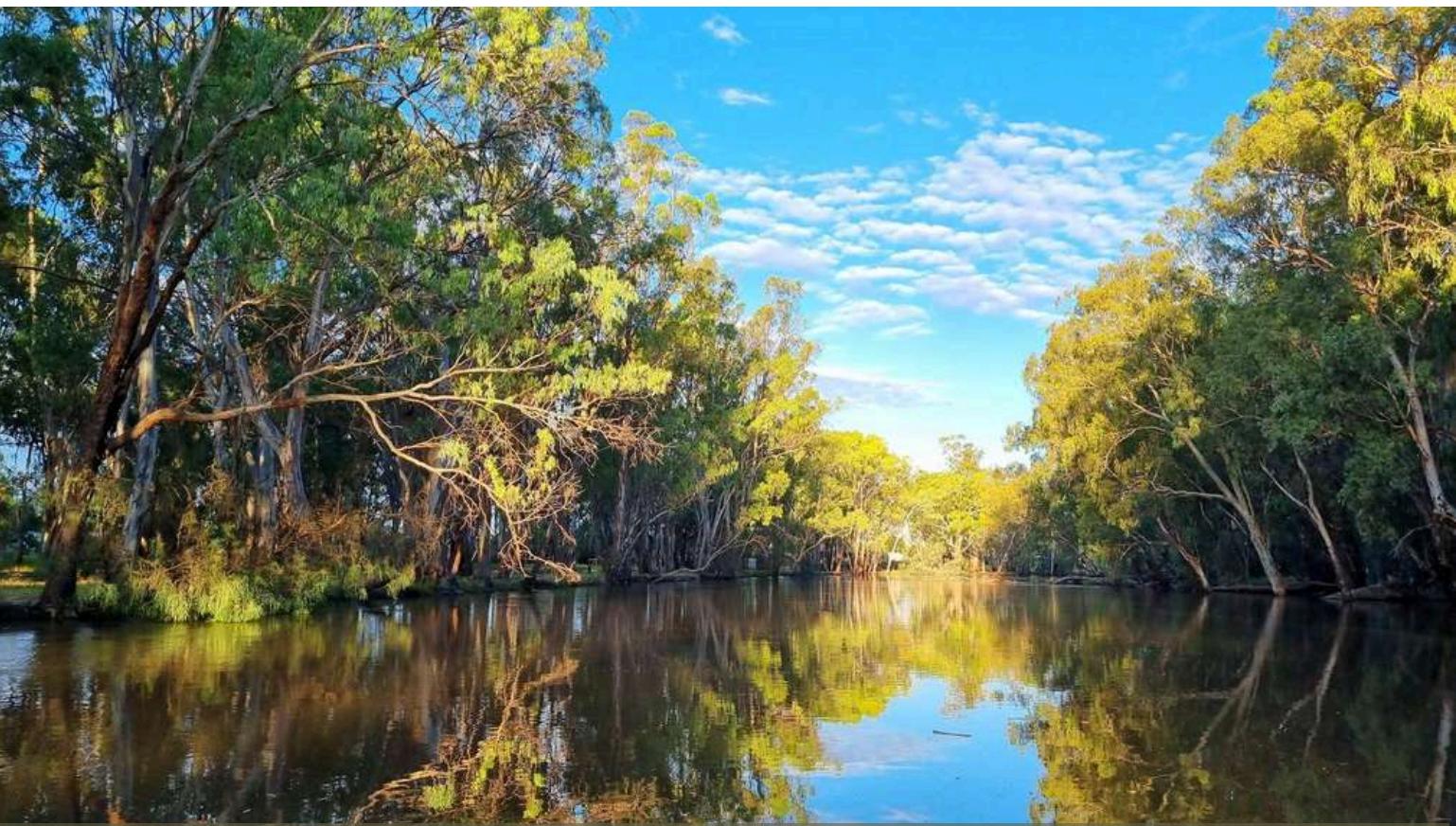
"The river, the people, the built assets, they all interconnect and each would fail without the other. Without one the other breaks down. We must look after the river; it is a part of this system with us."

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.*
> "

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*

> *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.

> 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.

WENTWORTH AND BALRANALD
Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Wentworth SHIRE COUNCIL

March 2024

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

EnergyCo
energyco.nsw.gov.au

Community and Employment Benefit Program

for Renewable Energy Zones in NSW

July 2024

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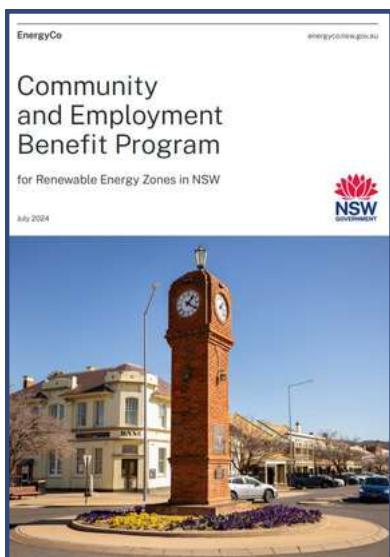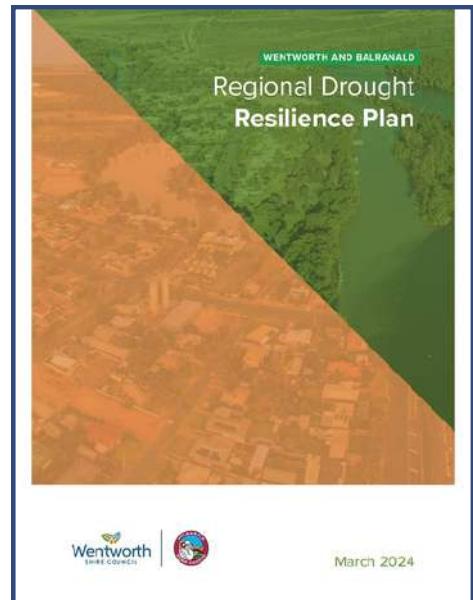
The Community and Employment Program provides the framework for how EnergyCo administers access fees for the community and employment purposes across REZs within a declared access scheme. This will counter the threat of inequitable industry contributions to the communities within the affected LGAs

65

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.*
> "

APPENDIX 1:

Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX 1: 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

APPENDIX 2:
Key Balranald Shire Council Planning & Reports

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;

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.

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)

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

APPENDIX 3:

National, State, Regional and Local level Policy & Programs

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.

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 Progrom

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.

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.

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.

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)

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2032

FEBRUARY 2022
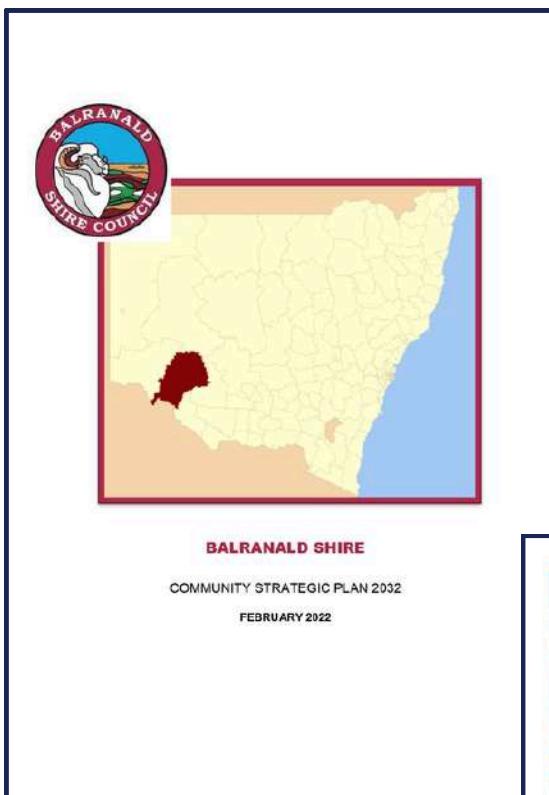
Balranald Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan and Settlement Strategy are currently 2 of Council's key strategic plans