

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

West Arthur Towards 2031



Shire of West Arthur

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INTRODUCTION



Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of West Arthur respectfully acknowledges that the land upon which we work and live, is the traditional land of the Wilman Noongar people. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land. We honour Elders past, present and emerging and we support the principles of a reconciled Australia for all its people.

Executive Message from the Shire President

The West Arthur - Towards 2031 Community Strategic Plan has been prepared as a part of full strategic review required by local government every four years. Our last full review was undertaken in 2017. This plan provides the overarching guiding vision for the Shire for the next 10 years and is the Council's commitment to implementing the community's aspirations.

As part of the preparation of the plan, community engagement was undertaken in a number of forums giving everyone the chance to have some input into the direction of the Shire Council over the next 10 years. Thank you to all those that participated in the various forums. Overwhelmingly our community told us they feel that the community is safe, friendly and stable, offering us lots of opportunities for future development.

The past four years have seen the completion of the Health and Resource Centre, the opening of the Betty Brown Historical Centre, the promotion of our area as a Astro tourism hot spot, commencement of construction on a second chalet at the caravan park, upgrades at the footy change rooms, development of the information bay and many other improvements around the Shire. Roads have continued to be improved with the industrial area development, Growden Place being completed and opened to the public, and shoulder widening on various roads. Our services such as the Senior's meals program has continue to be well supported and make a positive impact in the community.

The years ahead look very exciting for our community. Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding from the Federal Government in response to the COVID pandemic has provided the Shire with many opportunities to undertake projects that may not have been able to progress for a number of years. This funding is being spent on upgrading our roads including white line marking on Duranillin-Bowelling Road and Darkan South Road, the creation of a slip lane at Capercup North road and Darkan South Road intersection, and on developing community buildings and infrastructure including improvements at all the Halls within the Shire, redevelopments at Lake Towerrinning and the upgrading of the infrastructure in the Darkan Railway Reserve.

The COVID pandemic looks to be around for some time and we will continue to support businesses and the community when unexpected challenges are experienced.

The Council thanks Shire staff for their work throughout the last four years and looks forward to implementing this plan and ensuring our Shire is great play to live, work and visit.

Cr Kevin King
Shire President



Understanding our Strategic Plan

This Community Strategic Plan, “West Arthur Towards 2031”, outlines the visions, aspirations and priorities for our community for the next ten years. The purpose of this plan is to give a clear sense of direction with priority areas and key goals for the community and the Shire for the next ten years.

The plan forms part of the Shire’s integrated planning and reporting framework required under the Local Government Act 1995. This Community Strategic Plan is our principal strategy and planning document.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework



Strategic plan overview

The Community Strategic Plan West Arthur Towards 2031 is divided into five key themes:

- Our Community
- Our Economy
- Our Built Environment
- Our Natural Environment
- Our Local Government

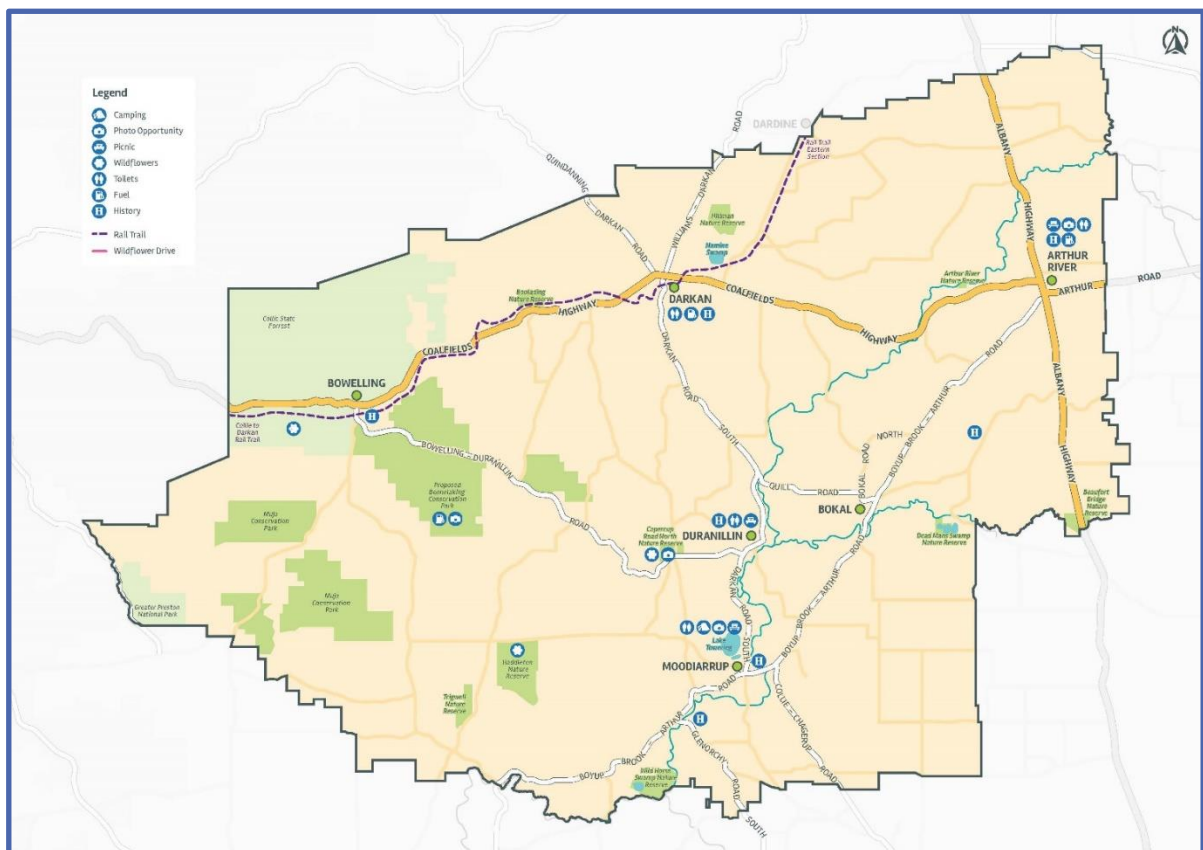
Each theme has an aspiration and a number objectives that will assist the council with decision making, Shire staff to implement programs and projects, and the community to partner with council and staff to achieve this vision.

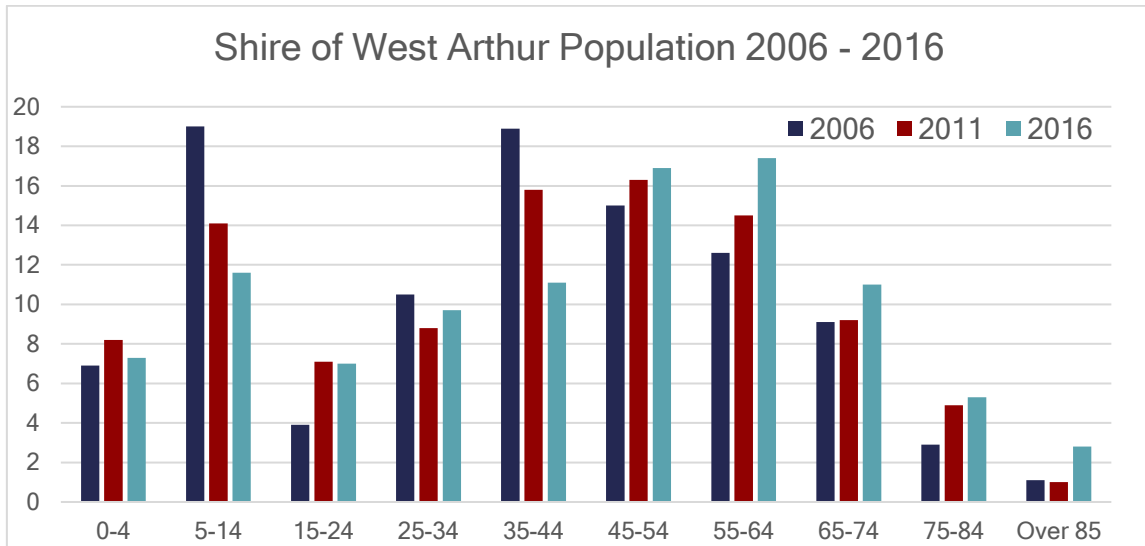
OUR COMMUNITY

Situated 204 km south of Perth and 115 km east of Bunbury, the Shire of West Arthur is nestled between the forests of the South-west and the Wheatbelt with the western side of the Shire typified by bush and forest, and the eastern side predominantly broad acre farming with less than 5% remnant bush.

At 2580 km² it is one of the larger shires in the area and includes Lake Towerrinning, agricultural and bush land, and nature reserves. It is home to unique flora and abundant wildlife, steeped in history and is dominated by an agricultural economy.

The Wilman Noongar people were the first inhabitants of the area, moving about the Shire for food, shelter and social interaction. British explorers arrived in the 1830s seeking suitable farming land to develop. In 1908 the railway line opened from Narrogin to Collie and with it bought rapid development of the Shire and in particular agriculture. Today 82% of privately owned land is used for agriculture. Darkan is the main town and administrative centre of the Shire and a number of smaller localities and settlements are scattered through-out the Shire.





Community Profile at a Glance



Data taken from 2011 and 2016 ABS Census

↑ Increased since 2011 ↓ Decreased since 2011 ↔ Same as 2011

Our Facilities and Events

Events

Biennial Cultural Day, Sheepfest, ANZAC Day, Australia Day, Volunteers Event, Your Week, Shows on the Go, WAX (West Arthur eXpression



Historical and Other

Arthur River Heritage Buildings, Six Mile Cottage, Duranillin School, War Memorial, Darkan and Bowelling Stations, Station Master's House, Betty Brown Historical Centre



Sport and Recreation

Gym, Football oval, halls, swimming pool, youth area, playgrounds, walk trails, outside gym, The Shed, Lake Towerrinning, sports clubs



Administration and Education

Shire buildings, Library, West Arthur CRC, Kids Central, Darkan Primary School



DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN

Community Engagement

Our Community Strategic Plan has been developed through ongoing community engagement. The community have been encouraged to tell us their vision for the community.

Engagement Method	No. Participants
Whole community online survey	32
Duranillin Coffee and Chat	3
Arthur River Coffee and Chat	5
Darkan Coffee and Chat	15
Small business contact	9
Youth "Come Taco with Me" Event	10
Seniors Coffee and Chat	5
Young families playground visit	3
New residents to town online survey	5
Ex-residents online survey	14
Community scorecards	93

Key partners to this plan are:

- Community members
- Local businesses
- Visitors
- Community groups
- 4WDL local governments (Wandering, Williams, Wagin, West Arthur, Dumbleyung and Lake Grace)
- Wheatbelt Development Commission - Wheatbelt Blueprint and Wheatbelt South Sub-Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Development Australia, Wheatbelt
- WA government

OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

The community likes:

- Our small, friendly, peaceful country town vibe
- The community support available
- The safety and honesty of the community
- The stability of the agricultural area
- The communicative, supportive and well managed local government
- Our natural assets such as Lake Towerrinning, rail trail and wildflowers
- The lifestyle opportunities available in the area
- The management of grant funds and bequests by local government
- Clean and tidy town site
- The Haybale Highway and Sheepfest initiatives
- The amenities at the local caravan park
- The leadership shown during times of crisis (e.g. COVID pandemic)
- Availability of activities in the area

The key issues we will face:

- Availability of medical services
- Water security
- Waste management
- Biosecurity
- Aboriginal Heritage
- Lack of local involvement in childcare facilities
- Lack of services and activities available for children and youth
- Ensuring that locals spend locally rather than leaving town
- Creation of more jobs in the district
- Empty businesses on main street
- Housing
- Use of heritage buildings
- Attraction of a skilled workforce
- Population growth

Ideas to make the area a better place to live or visit:

- Better shopping facilities locally
- Fuel available in town
- Public transport or a community vehicle to surrounding areas particularly aimed at servicing the youth and elderly.
- Opening the Duranillin tip on weekends and at other times of the week
- More arts and cultural activities
- More activities for the youth and young adults in the area (beach party, beach slide at lake, live bands, learning courses)
- Garden waste collection twice a year
- Handyman service available for the elderly
- Continued development of local facilities—railway reserve, Lake Towerrinning, Arthur River town site, Darkan main street
- Welcome to West Arthur information pack for new residents
- Focus on heritage—in particular the Arthur River Shearing shed, and use of heritage buildings
- Something to draw people from information bay to the main street of town
- Creation of reasons for ex-residents and family members to visit (reconnection, historical connections)

Ideas for creating jobs and economic growth:

- Development of sheep sale yards
- Development of a pelleting plant
- Secondary processing of agricultural products
- Tourism development
- Attraction of trade based businesses (e.g. auto electrician)
- Development of alternative agricultural crops or enterprises
- Development of a local vision to assist new businesses
- Focus on the industry of senior support and health
- Continue with Shire support for training and development for local business operators
- Initiate informal business networking

The community vision for West Arthur:

- Greater availability of medical appointments and services
- Provision of better shopping facilities locally
- More accessible fuel supply in town
- Promotion of our area to the tourism market (astro, wildflowers, heritage, walk trails, lake)
- Continued development of local facilities such as the railway reserve (shade, fenced area) and Lake Towerrinning (playground and walk trails)
- Recognition of our Aboriginal Heritage
- Development of a better art and cultural scene within the community
- Provision of more activities for the younger people in the district

Priorities to achieve their vision:

- Waste management—container recycling, garden waste collection, Arthur River bin collection, Duranillin tip availability
- Continued promotion and development of our local economy
- Development of tourism
- Continued support and development of the health sector
- Improved amenities for locals

Community Score Card Results

We asked our community to score our services, economy, the liveability of our area and our community. Ninety three scorecards were returned and the results are outlined below. Scores for each category are out of 60 and the overall score is out of 100.

Liveability

Appearance Sporting clubs
Phone coverage Safety
Things to do/activities
Nice places to visit

We scored

49



Our Community

Proud of our history Volunteers
Warm and Welcoming
Accepting of everyone
Have our say Help each other

We scored

53



Overall score

61.4

We scored

39



Our Services

Good Primary school
Access to Childcare
Medical and health facilities available

We scored

43



Our Economy

Strong economy Growing town
Attracting visitors Jobs available
Retail businesses doing well
Comfortable life

Community Vision





**Our community is
safe, friendly, and
inclusive**

Community – Safe, Friendly and Inclusive

Outcome 1.1 - A safe place to work, live and visit

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Support for the provision of emergency services and volunteers
- ⇒ Prevention of crime
- ⇒ Communication of risks and hazards to the community and assistance with management of these

Outcome 1.2 – Support available for people of all ages and abilities

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Actively support and promote a range of activities for a range of ages and abilities
- ⇒ Maintain and support the growth of medical facilities, childcare and aged services in the district.
- ⇒ Provide services and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community

Outcome 1.3 - A unique identity and a strong connection to our past

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Maintain and preserve our cultural and heritage assets
- ⇒ Reconnect with our Aboriginal heritage
- ⇒ Support community events that connect to our history (e.g. Sheepfest/exhibitions/displays in Betty Brown Historical Centre)

We will know we have succeeded when

- ⇒ We have a range of sporting, cultural and recreational activities and people from all walks of life are actively participating in the community
- ⇒ We have developed risk management plans, disability access and inclusion plan, and Reconciliation Action Plan.
- ⇒ We maintain our low crime rate
- ⇒ People are able to access health facilities they require
- ⇒ Increasing numbers of people are actively involved in volunteering within the community
- ⇒ We have created a Heritage list to protect our heritage assets



Our agricultural industry is stable and sustainable and supported by a dynamic and growing business sector

Local Economy – Stable and sustainable agricultural industry and a dynamic and growing business sector

Outcome 2.1 – Improved employment through diversification in Agricultural

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Investigate opportunities for diversification within the agricultural sector
- ⇒ Investigate water security and development opportunities associated with water sources
- ⇒ Liaise with key stakeholders to continue to support agriculture in the Shire

Outcome 2.2 – A growing, diverse business community

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Investigate tourism opportunities and support this growing sector
- ⇒ Maintain and enhance our existing assets to encourage visitation
- ⇒ Promote the light industrial area for the use of new businesses
- ⇒ Advocate for improved communication facilities
- ⇒ Promote the Shire to people outside the area as a fantastic place to live, work and visit.
- ⇒ Investigate opportunities for growth within the local economy

Outcome 2.3 – Existing businesses develop and grow

Our Strategies and Plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Communicate opportunities with existing businesses to support their changing requirements
- ⇒ Encourage main street businesses to meet on a regular basis and discuss issues
- ⇒ Ensure that services and products are sourced locally wherever possible

We will know we have succeeded when

- ⇒ Our population remains stable or increases
- ⇒ There is an increase in development approvals
- ⇒ Visitor numbers increase
- ⇒ There is no loss of businesses in our towns and new businesses are added our main street
- ⇒ There is interest from the local farming community in implementing diversification in agriculture



Our natural assets are valued and are managed to meet the needs of our community.

Natural Environment – our natural assets are valued and meet the needs of the community

Outcome 3.1 – Maintain and improve our key natural assets

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Maintain Lake Towerrinning as our premier, iconic natural asset
- ⇒ Maintain and develop our trails for use by locals and visitors (Collie to Darkan Rail trail, Nangip Creek walk trail, Hillman walk trail, Duranillin to Bowelling Rail trail)
- ⇒ Protect our night skies to ensure that they retain their dark sky rating
- ⇒ Protect and improve additional natural assets.

Outcome 3.2 – Our water resources are well defined and used sustainably

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Develop a whole of Shire Water Strategy to better manage our water resources and target development of supplies
- ⇒ Invest in water security and manage existing water resources in a sustainable manner
- ⇒ Encourage development of private water supplies

Outcome 3.3 – Our natural biodiversity is maintained and valued

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Blackwood Biosecurity Group is supported to manage pests in the Shire
- ⇒ Weeds are managed or eliminated particularly in areas of high biodiversity
- ⇒ Protection of our unique flora and fauna
- ⇒ Consideration of biodiversity in all land use applications and developments


Outcome 3.4 – Waste is minimised and environmentally sustainable practices are employed

Our strategies and Plans to achieve this include

- ⇒ Provide an effective waste management service
- ⇒ Promote environmentally sustainable principles

We will know we have succeeded when

- ⇒ Our natural assets continue to be used by locals and visitors
- ⇒ The community is satisfied with the waste management service provided
- ⇒ Our community has a defined water supply heading into the future
- ⇒ Our rates of recycling and sustainable practices improve

An aerial photograph of a rural town, showing a grid of streets, residential houses, and some larger buildings. The landscape is a mix of green trees and dry, brownish ground. A prominent red text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Our roads, towns
and facilities are well
maintained and
reflect our rural
identity and heritage.**

Built Environment – well maintained roads and infrastructure which reflects our identity

Outcome 4.1 – Our road network is well maintained

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Regularly review and update our long term road construction and maintenance program
- ⇒ Collaborate with surrounding Shires and State government to ensure sound planning and resource utilization
- ⇒ Enhance road safety strategies for road users

Outcome 4.2 – Our built infrastructure is well maintained, attractive and inviting

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Our parks and gardens are well maintained and attractive
- ⇒ Community facilities are continually reviewed and upgraded as required through asset management plans
- ⇒ Our townscapes are attractive and well developed with consideration for current and future usage

Outcome 4.3 – Our cultural heritage is preserved and promoted

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Maintain the integrity of our heritage buildings
- ⇒ Investigate opportunities to develop our historical assets
- ⇒ Planning and development take into consideration heritage values

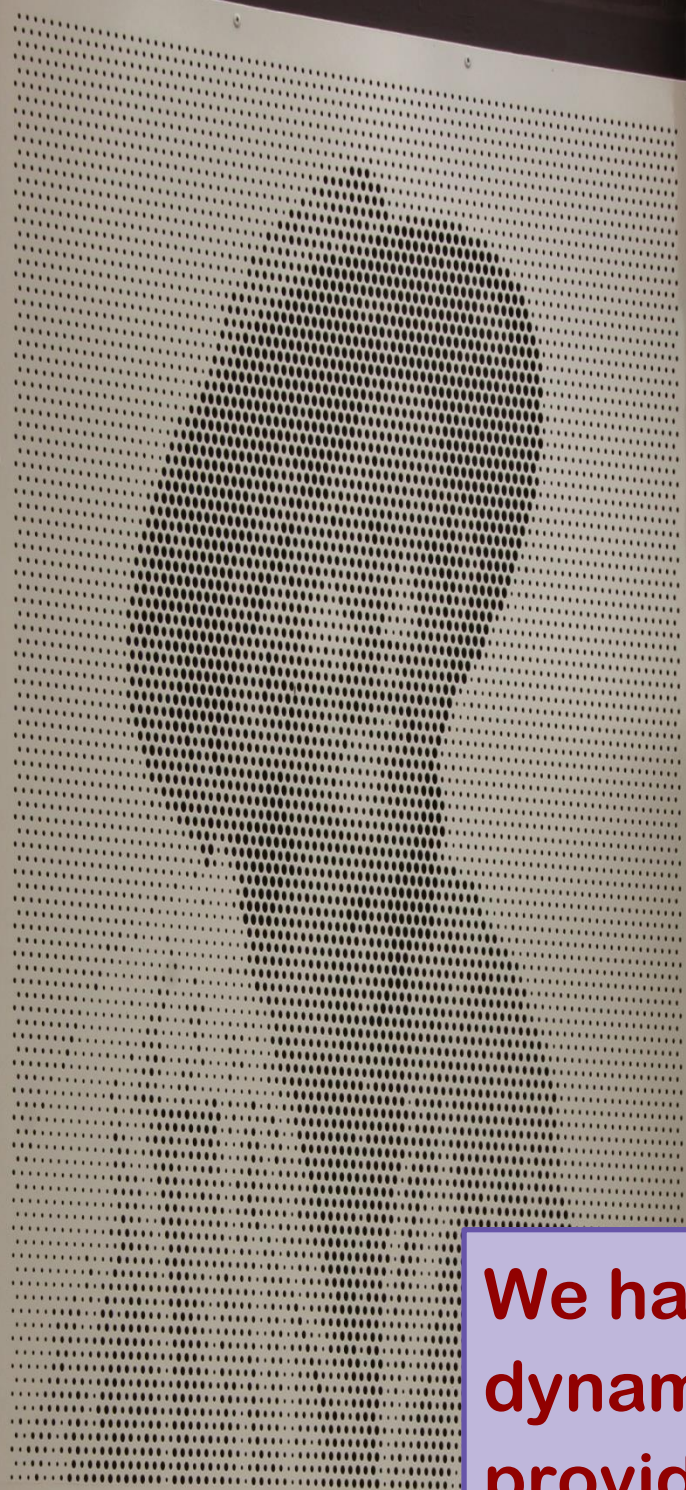
Outcome 4.4 – Appropriate planning and development

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Implement the town planning scheme and policies to ensure any planning and development is appropriate through the Shire

We will know we have succeeded when

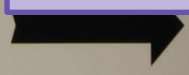
- ⇒ Our community is proud of the look and feel of our towns and district
- ⇒ Our roads and infrastructure meet the needs and expectations of the local community
- ⇒ Our heritage buildings are well maintained and where possible have a continued use.



**We have inspirational,
dynamic leaders
providing well
managed, transparent
governance.**

Betty Brown

Historical Centre



Leadership and Management – inspirational, dynamic, transparent

Outcome 4.1 – Councillors represent the community and well trained

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ The Shire Council is representative of the community and collaborates with Shire staff to ensure the best outcomes for the community
- ⇒ Elected members have the training and skills relevant to serving as Councillors in order to act in the best interest of the Shire
- ⇒ Council process is open and transparent to the general community

Outcome 4.2 – Shire staff are well trained, motivated and customer focused

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Ensure that staff have opportunities to continue professional development when available
- ⇒ Provide flexible working arrangements where possible in order to attract the best quality staff
- ⇒ Continuously strive to be customer focused and serve Council and the community

Outcome 4.3 – Establish and maintain sound business and governance structures

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Ensure that the local community is provided with value for money through the prudent expenditure of rates.
- ⇒ Provide informed decision making based on our strategic directions and legal requirements and that these are open, transparent and adequately communicated with the community.
- ⇒ Comply with regulations and best practice standards to drive good decision making by Council and Staff

Outcome 4.4 – Actively engage with community, business and other stakeholders to grow and develop the community

Our strategies and plans to achieve this include:

- ⇒ Continue to collaborate with other regional shires to achieve maximum benefits for the region
- ⇒ Council will advocate on behalf of the community on issues that the community identifies as important
- ⇒ Continued improvement in communication with the community through various platforms that ensure all members of the community have access to information
- ⇒ Continuously review and revise the Community Plan to reflect the changing needs of the community.

We will know we have succeeded when

- ⇒ Councillors and staff have participated in a range of development and educational opportunities
- ⇒ The community feels that they are provided with sufficient services and facilities and that these have been delivered with a regard to value for money from rates
- ⇒ Staff and Councillors attend regional meetings
- ⇒ Our annual financial audit performance continues to be excellent
- ⇒ Staff and Councillors work collaboratively in a respectful and courteous manner.



ACHIEVING OUR VISION

In order to achieve our vision we have taken into consideration the resources available now and into the future.

Our Resources

Current as at 30th of June 2021

	Current Capacity	Future Capacity
Human Resources	23.6	Consolidating
Infrastructure Assets	\$84,521,407	Consolidating
Property, Plant and Equipment	\$15,760,252	Consolidating
Cash Backed Reserves	\$2,892,467	Consolidating
Borrowings	\$620,210	Consolidating
Annual Rates Revenue	\$1,727,022	Consolidating
Annual Operating Revenue	\$3,473,725	Consolidating
Annual Operating Expenditure	\$4,660,228	Consolidating

How you can contribute

The local community have contributed to this plan through our community consultation programme. You can contribute to achieving the vision for the community by:

- Becoming a volunteer
- Attending and supporting local community events and activities
- Joining a community group
- Providing feedback and advocating to improve your community
- Recycling
- Shopping local and supporting local businesses
- Promoting our area to family and friends as a great place to live, work and visit
- Using local facilities wherever possible
- Enjoying our natural assets
- Keeping your space free of rubbish and weeds
- Interacting with the Shire through our social media pages

How we will report our progress

- Regular contributions to the Bleat
- Regular updates through our webpage, Facebook page and other social media channels
- Annual report each year
- Four yearly comprehensive review of this plan and a two yearly desktop review

Document Management

Status: Rev 0, 2nd March 2021

Date of Adoption: 27 July 2021

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Photo credits: Caroline Telfer, Astrid Volzke, Kerryn Chia