

LOCKHART SHIRE

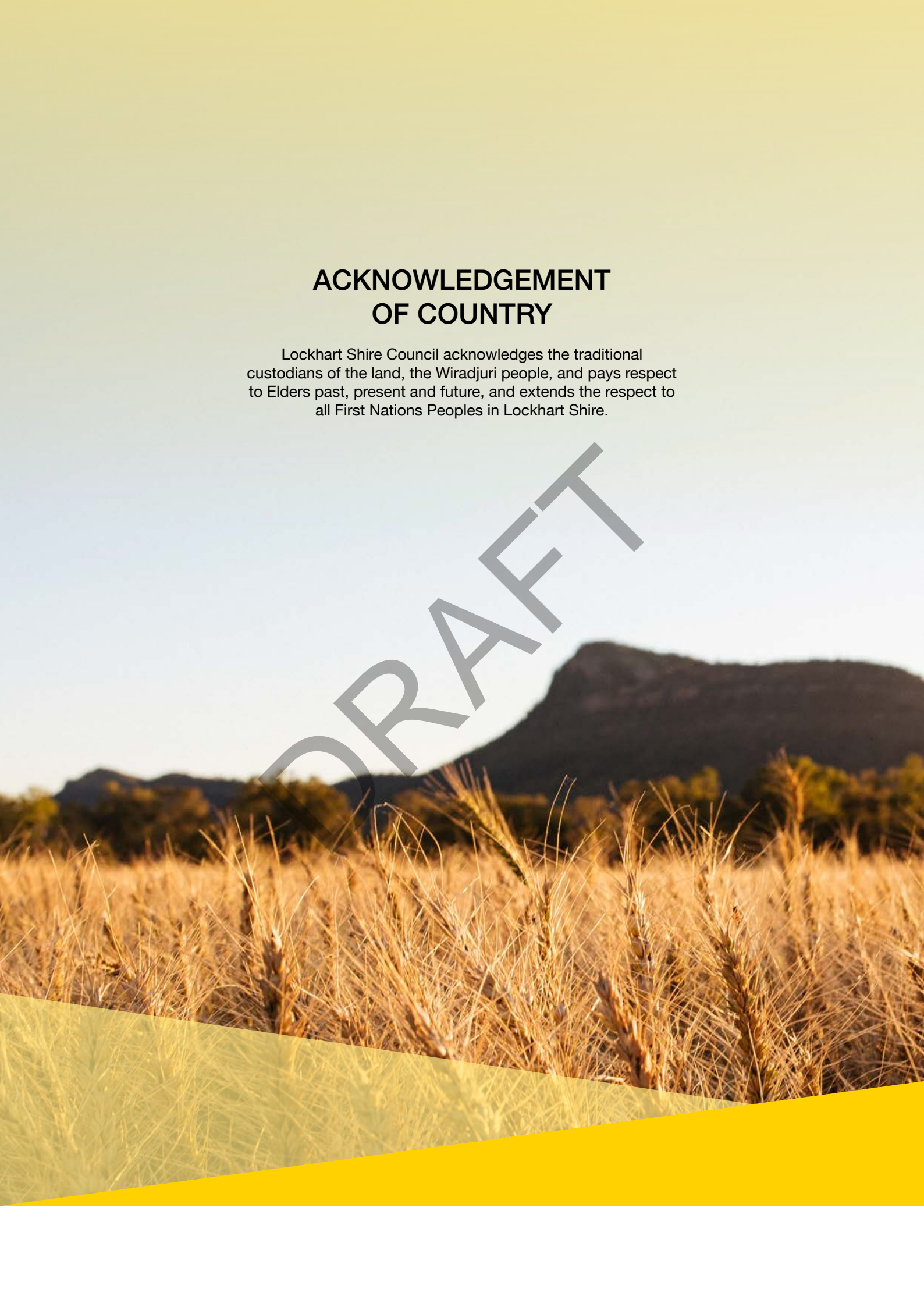
Community Strategic Plan 2035



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Lockhart Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future, and extends the respect to all First Nations Peoples in Lockhart Shire.

DRAFT



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CONTACT US

Please contact Council with any enquiries regarding the Lockhart Community Strategic Plan 2035:

phone 02 6920 5305

email mail@lockhart.nsw.gov.au

lockhart.nsw.gov.au



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lockhart Shire Community Strategic Plan 2035 has been developed in partnership with the Lockhart community, Lockhart Shire, and lead agencies and delivery partners.

Lockhart Shire wish to thank the community members who gave their time and thoughts during the engagement process to inform the strategy.



OUR COMMUNITY VISION

Deeply connected to the land and proud of our independence.

Dynamic, resilient, and have a strong sense of community.

Passionate for innovation and diverse opportunities.

Welcoming, vibrant, inclusive, accessible and value the rights of people equally.



WELCOME

We are delighted to share the Lockhart Shire's shared vision for the future

This is our roadmap, shaped by local voices, partners and the broader community to build a stronger Lockhart Shire together.

We are proud to present the Lockhart Shire Community Strategic Plan 2035, a shared roadmap for the future. This Plan captures the community's aspirations and outlines the priorities we will work towards together over the next 10 years and beyond.

Developed in partnership with the people of Lockhart Shire, this Plan reflects what matters most. It builds on the strong foundation of previous plans and has been updated following extensive community engagement in 2024 and 2025.

Lockhart Shire Council is the custodian of this Plan, with responsibility for facilitating its development and advocating for its implementation.

However, achieving the outcomes within it is a shared responsibility. Council, community groups, residents, businesses, non-government organisations, and all levels of government must work together to deliver the vision we have set.

This Plan celebrates the values and strengths of our region, including our strong sense of community, our connection to the land, and our willingness to look out for each other. It also acknowledges the challenges ahead: the rising cost of living, housing pressures, changing service expectations, and the need to retain young people and services in our towns and villages.

Through this Plan, we aim to protect what we value, build on our strengths, and support a great future for all who call Lockhart Shire home.

This is your Plan. We invite you to read it, share it, and play your part in bringing our community's vision to life.

Mayor Peter Sharp

REALISING OUR VISION

Achieving our community vision requires the effort and accountability of everyone: individuals, community groups, businesses, and all levels of government. Each of us has a role to play and must take ownership of what we can influence. Our success relies on shared responsibility and coordinated action across the whole community.

Global

Responding to global shifts that shape our local future.

Global trends and issues influence the way we live and the choices we make locally, from climate change to human rights.

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Glasgow Climate Pact
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Paris Agreement

National

Aligning with national priorities to improve thriving local communities.

Commonwealth Government policies shape our lives through their influence on aged care, digital infrastructure, defence, energy, trade and investment.

- Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Regions 2030 Unlocking Opportunity
- Regional Development Australia
- Social Inclusion Agenda
- National Cultural Policy
- Australia's Biodiversity and Conservation Strategy
- National Digital Economy Strategy
- National Road Safety Strategy
- Renewable Energy Target Scheme
- NDIS - National Disability Insurance Scheme
- National Education Reform
- Thrive 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy

State

Working within state systems to deliver essential public services.

The NSW Government provides many of the services our community depends on, including education, health and hospitals, transport, policing, childcare, community services, and supports economic and regional development.

- NSW State Plan
- 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW
- Housing 2041
- Creative Communities
- Future Transport Strategy 2056
- NSW Digital Strategy
- State Infrastructure Strategy
- Future Health 2032
- Youth Health Framework 2017-24.
- Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025.
- Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027
- Child Safe Standards
- Smart and Skilled Program
- Visitor Economy Strategy 2030



Regional

Collaborating with neighbours for shared regional progress.

Many shared opportunities and challenges require collective regional action, such as workforce attraction, tourism, regional planning, catchment management, regional infrastructure, joint procurement, and disaster response and resilience.

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041.
- Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy 2023 Update 2022-2030.
- 2030 Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan.
- Destination Riverina Murray Agritourism Development Strategy 2024-2033.
- REROC Statement of Strategic Priorities 2022-2026.
- RDA Riverina Strategic Regional Plan 2022-2025.
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District Strategic Plan 2021-2026.
- Murrumbidgee PHN 2023-2027 Strategic Plan
- Lockhart Shire and Wagga Wagga City Council Drought Resilience Plan

Local

Delivering the leadership, services and infrastructure that shape daily life.

Lockhart Shire Council plays a hands-on role in shaping our towns and villages through direct service delivery, community planning, and advocacy.

- Council's Delivery Program (4-year strategic plan).
- Council's Operational Plan (12 month operational plan).
- Council's 10-year Long Term Financial Plan.
- Council's 10-year Asset Management Plan.
- Council's Workforce Management Plan.
- Council's Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan.
- Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
- Council's Tourism and Economic Development Strategy.

Business

Delivering essential services, jobs and economic vitality. From national providers to small local enterprises.

Businesses are integral to delivering goods, services, generating employment, supporting families, and driving investment and growth in our towns. Also, in many areas once managed by government, businesses now play a leading role including internet, mobile phone services, utilities, disability and aged care.

Community

Owning our future together.

The people of Lockhart Shire play an active role in bringing this Plan to life, as neighbours, volunteers, club members, carers, creators, business owners and engaged citizens. Strong community ownership is essential to realising shared aspirations.



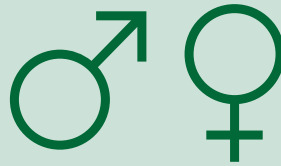
OUR COMMUNITY

Lockhart Shire, located in the Southern Riverina of New South Wales, includes the townships of Lockhart, The Rock, and smaller villages such as Yerong Creek, Milbrulong, Pleasant Hills and Osborne. The area is rich in cultural history, with both Indigenous and European influences, and was once known for bushranger activity. Renowned for its agricultural excellence, the Shire is a hub for grain, lamb, beef, and wool production. Tourism, particularly heritage and eco-tourism, has grown in recent years.

TOTAL POPULATION

3,319

If the Lockhart Shire consisted of 100 people, there would be:



50 MALES
50 FEMALES

1 aged under 19 years | 41 aged between 20 and 59 years | 18 aged over 60 years



5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples
5 born overseas
2 speaking languages other than English at home



7 with a disability
12 that care for someone with a disability



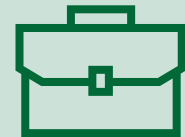
7 living by themselves
76 living in families



19 with an individual income less than \$400 per week



36 who completed higher education
45 who did not complete year 12



1 unemployed/looking for work
27 working full time
13 working part-time
23 who volunteer



18 who own or mortgage a house
5 who rent



27 who drove to work
3 who walked to work

Source: ABS Census.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What we asked

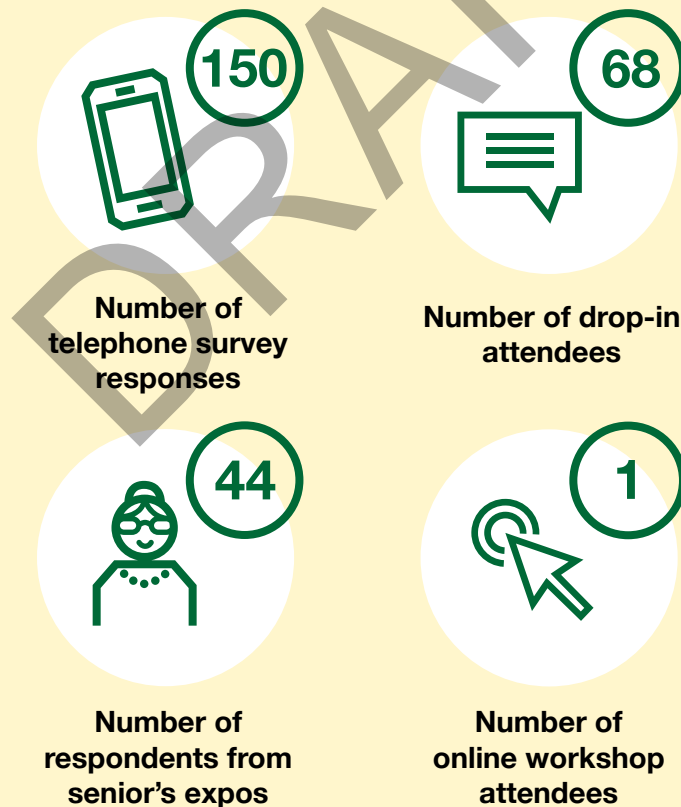
1. How do you feel about the vision in the endorsed CSP?
2. What do you love about living in the Lockhart Shire?
3. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing your community now, and across the next ten years?
4. Thinking of the next ten years, what three things would you like to see achieved in your community?

Participation

Over 263 people from Lockhart participated in the Stage 1 engagement from 28 November 2024 to 11 March 2025.

Total participation: 263

Population (2020) 3,319 | % of population engaged 7.9



What is important to you

When we asked the community what makes Lockhart Shire a great place to live, they told us that living in a community with friendly people, strong community spirit, and a sense of community was extremely important. Respondents valued the community facilities, the pools at The Rock and Lockhart, and the volunteers who manage the Pleasant Hills community hotel and bring people together. The community was referred to as affordable with people valuing the quiet atmosphere and quality of lifestyle, infrastructure, and freedom that comes with a country life. There was also a strong focus on family and neighbours.

Main challenges

The Lockhart Shire community faces several challenges, including concerns about the rising cost of living pressures and worsening housing affordability, exacerbated by a shortage of rentals and social housing. Economic growth across the community is a priority, with a focus on revitalising street scapes, rezoning vacant blocks to attract business and increase tourism. Residents seek improved infrastructure, road safety, parking improvements and more footpaths. Social inclusion remains a concern for residents who want to ensure young people are engaged in meaningful social or recreational activities and to help integrate new families into the community. Additionally, access to health services is inadequate, with residents facing long travel distances for care, insufficient mental health support, and a lack of accessible transport services.

Key priorities

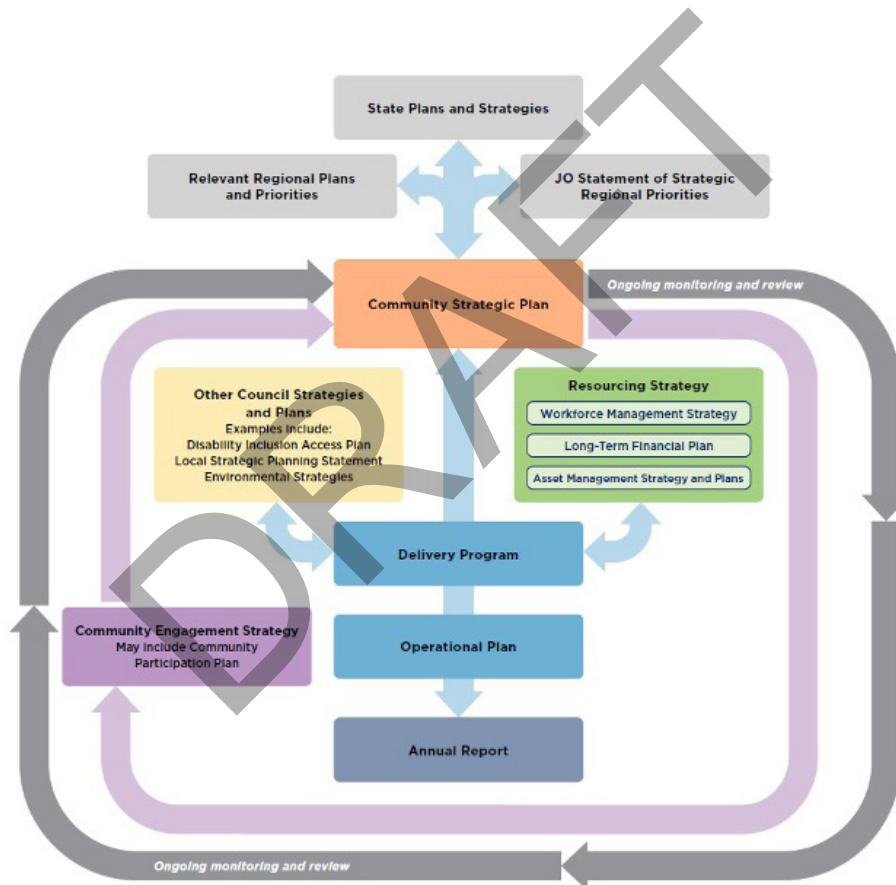
People who took part in the engagement indicated they prioritise:

- Maintain and grow local services and retailers by supporting existing and attracting new businesses.
- Invest in roads and footpaths to keep them safe, maintained, and accessible.
- Improve sport and recreation facilities, including pools, skateparks, playgrounds and courts.
- Increase affordable housing options that suit people at different stages of life.
- Improve public transport connections within the Shire and to nearby regional centres.
- Ensure better digital access, improving mobile phone coverage and internet reliability.
- Strengthen community connections through local events, public spaces and volunteering opportunities.
- Support small businesses, encourage tourism, and promote the Shire's unique character and history.
- Protect the natural environment, enhancing public spaces, and investing in sustainable infrastructure like walking and cycling paths.
- Foster open, responsive leadership that builds trust through clear communication, support for local ideas and modern ways to engage with Council.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Lockhart Shire Council is the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), which reflects our community's vision and priorities to 2035. Achieving this vision requires collaboration between Council, government agencies, businesses, community groups, and residents.

Under NSW legislation, Council follows an Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. This means Council's plans and strategies align closely with the community vision outlined in the CSP. Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plan, and supporting plans for assets, finances, workforce and engagement are all guided by this vision.





Council plays an important role in delivering services and infrastructure that support the community's vision. This Plan identifies Council's role for each strategy using the following four categories.

Provide

Council delivers services, facilities, infrastructure, programs, planning, and community engagement activities.

Collaborate

Council works in partnership with community groups, businesses, neighbouring councils, and other levels of government to achieve shared outcomes.

Advocate

Council raises the voice of the community and champions its needs and aspirations to other decision-makers to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Monitor

Council tracks the progress of community priorities where another agency is responsible, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Understanding Council's responsibilities

Lockhart Shire Council is committed to understanding the community's needs, concerns, and priorities. Council will continue to work with the community to define and review what level of service is needed and affordable.

Service levels define the scope and standard of Council's services and infrastructure. These are informed by ongoing engagement with the community and documented in Council's Asset Management Plans.

Balancing community expectations with available resources is an ongoing challenge. In many areas, Council has assumed responsibilities previously held by other levels of government, increasing the pressure on already limited resources. To stay sustainable, Council must keep aligning expectations with what is affordable and practical to deliver.

By clearly defining its role in each strategic priority and working in collaboration with others, Lockhart Shire Council will continue to guide and support the delivery of meaningful outcomes for the community.

OUR PLAN

The Lockhart Shire CSP consists of four themes

COMMUNITY

A vibrant, connected community with opportunities for all.

ECONOMY

A diverse, thriving economy providing employment and growth.

ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable stewardship of our natural and built environments.

LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership that engages, collaborates, and delivers.

Each theme includes:

- An objective that describes the community's desired future
- Key strategies to guide how we achieve our desired future
- The lead agency responsible for delivery
- Council's role in implementation
- Key delivery partners and collaborators





COMMUNITY

Objective 1:

A vibrant, connected community with opportunities for all.

We aspire to:

- Be a connected, safe and welcoming community.
- Embrace diversity and live inclusion every day.
- Support mental health through local care and connection.
- Ensure access to services, events and activities for all.
- Create more for young people, especially in smaller towns.
- Help older residents stay active and connected at home.
- Grow participation, volunteering and local leadership.
- Make it easy to belong, contribute and feel proud.
- Retain and enhance schools, health and community services.
- Foster creativity, culture and storytelling.

Strategies	Delivery responsibility		
How we'll get there	Lead agency	Council's role	Delivery partners
1. Encourage arts, culture, and creativity.	Council	Collaborate Provide	NSW Government Local artists Cultural organisations Schools Community groups
2. Celebrate diversity and strengthen inclusion for all.	Council	Collaborate	NSW Government Local community groups Advocacy groups
3. Promote active and safe lifestyles and quality health and community services.	Council NSW Government	Provide	NSW Government Murrumbidgee Local Health District Police Community health



ECONOMY

Objective 2:
A diverse, thriving economy providing employment and growth.

We aspire to:

- Grow and support local businesses and jobs.
- Improve digital and mobile connectivity.
- Restore fuel and essential services to our towns.
- Attract visitors through tourism, events and local shopping.
- Expand local services to reduce travel for basics.
- Unlock land for housing and enterprise.
- Attract investment in aged care, childcare and services.
- Strengthen retail, food and hospitality offerings.
- Create local job paths for young people.
- Cut red tape and support entrepreneurs.

Strategies	Delivery responsibility		
	Lead agency	Council's role	Delivery partners
How we'll get there			
4. Support and grow diverse industries and thriving local businesses.	Council	Collaborate	Business and industry NSW Government RDA Riverina
5. Promote tourism by enhancing events and experiences.	Council	Collaborate	Destination Riverina Murray Business and industry
6. Strengthen education and employment to attract and retain residents.	NSW Government	Collaborate	NSW Government TAFE Schools Universities



Image courtesy of Destination NSW

ENVIRONMENT

Objective 3: Sustainable stewardship of our natural and built environments.

We aspire to:

- Keep our towns clean, green and well-kept.
- Control weeds and protect native plants and animals.
- Improve waste services.
- Protect farmland from inappropriate development.
- Ensure reliable water supply and infrastructure.
- Link places with safe, accessible footpaths and trails.
- Reduce environmental risks and build climate resilience.
- Use renewables and smart infrastructure.
- Preserve our heritage, history and public art.
- Plan infrastructure that supports both people and place.

Strategies	Delivery responsibility		
	Lead agency	Council's role	Delivery partners
How we'll get there			
7. Protect and enhance our natural, yet changing, environment.	NSW Government	Provide Collaborate	NSW Government Community organisations NSW EPA Local Land Services Waste service providers
8. Plan, develop, and maintain our infrastructure and facilities.	Council	Collaborate	NSW Government NSW Public Works Advisory Essential Energy
9. Elevate the attractiveness, character, and amenity of our towns and villages.	Council	Collaborate	Businesses NSW Government



LEADERSHIP

Objective 4:
Effective leadership that engages, collaborates, and delivers.

We aspire to:

- Be heard, respected and involved in decisions.
- See transparent, clear and consistent communication.
- Trust in timely, reliable and responsive service.
- Know and feel represented by our Councillors.
- See Council listen and act on what matters.
- Be part of shaping our future.
- Be strongly advocated for at all levels.
- Keep decisions grounded in community priorities.
- Celebrate local leadership and shared success.
- Solve problems together across generations and sectors.

Strategies	Delivery responsibility		
How we'll get there	Lead agency	Council's role	Delivery partners
10. Communicate and engage to ensure transparent decision making.	Council	Provide	Community Office of Local Government
11. Our leadership is responsive, strategic and collaborative.	Council	Provide	Community Community organisations REROC NSW Government Committee members
12. Manage civic resources responsibly to deliver service excellence.	Council	Provide	Community Office of Local Government



OUR PROGRESS

Working together

This Community Strategic Plan outlines our collective vision for the future. We must work together to guide and implement strategies that move us towards our shared aspirations.

Council is proud to act as the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, ensuring that the aspirations of our community are meaningfully documented and elevated among our partners.

Each strategy in this Plan is addressed through actions in Council's four-year Delivery Program and one-year Operational Plan. These documents provide detail on timeframes, budgets and responsibilities.

Reporting

Reporting on our progress is a key component of this process.

Council will prepare the State of the Shire Report in the year in which an ordinary election of councillors is held. This Report outlines the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan in achieving its objectives and will be presented to the second meeting of the newly elected council.

Review

To ensure accountability and transparency, the plan is reviewed every four years in line with the Council term. This review allows the plan to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging community needs.

Measures

The following table outlines the measures for determining whether the objectives of this plan are being achieved. They are not measures of Council's performance, but a gauge for stakeholders to determine whether the community is moving closer to, or further away from, the vision.

Measure	Source	Desired Trend
COMMUNITY		
% of people aged 15+ who volunteered for an organisation or group	ABS Census 2021	Increase
% of residents satisfied with access to health, childcare, and community services	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024	Maintain or improve
% of households with access to internet	ABS Census 2021	Increase
ECONOMY		
Gross Regional Product	ABS Census 2021	Increase
Total number of GST-registered businesses	ABS Census 2021/Monitor CRMS	Increase
Visitation Data and Spend	CommBank/Spendmapp	Increase
% of people with no non-school qualifications	ABS Census 2021	Decrease
ENVIROMENT		
Number of Development Applications	Council Data	Increase
% of residents satisfied with waste, roads, and public space cleanliness	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024	Increase
LEADERSHIP		
Community satisfaction with Council's overall performance	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
Community satisfaction with Council communication	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024	Increase
Community satisfaction with Council engagement and listening	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024	Increase

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Lockhart Shire Council

65 Green Street (PO Box 21)
Lockhart, NSW 2656

phone 02 6920 5305

email mail@lockhart.nsw.gov.au

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