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Community Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Dungog Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians of Country in the Dungog Shire, including the Gringai, Geawegal/Geawal, Wanaruah/Wonnarua, and Worimi peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging.

“The Valley was always there in the Dreaming, though mountains, trees, animals and people were not yet formed. Everything was sleeping. Until the Great Sky Spirit Baiame opened his eyes.”

Wanaruah/Wonnarua Creations Story

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A Message from the Mayor

The Community Strategic Plan 2035 is the highest level document for Council, acting as our guiding roadmap for the future of Dungog Shire. It articulates our community's vision, directing our strategies for the next four years and outlining our objectives for the upcoming decade.

This Community Strategic Plan represents a collective effort, and the responsibility for realising Dungog Shire's vision rests with everyone. While the Council will take the lead in implementing this plan, collaboration with other government levels, individuals, industries, and community organisations is essential to achieving our objectives.

We aim to achieve tangible outcomes for our community in both the short and long term by:

- Completing major projects to enhance the road network and essential community facilities
- Upgrading aging infrastructure despite financial challenges
- Preserving our rural atmosphere while planning for sensible development to accommodate a growing population
- Supporting businesses and industries to flourish
- Advocating for our community with State and Federal governments on key issues such as roads, transport, employment, and education

I am looking forward to collaborating with the community, my fellow Councillors, and Council staff to realise our shared vision and priorities.

Cr Digby Rayward
Mayor of Dungog Shire

"We aim to preserve the rural charm and natural beauty of our region while enhancing infrastructure and supporting a growing economy."

A Message from the General Manager

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the key document that directs our actions at the Council. You have shared your top priority issues and what matters most to you, and the plan is centered around these vital components. It is built on five shared community values that have been developed collaboratively with our residents. These values guide us as we strive to fulfill our collective vision for Dungog.

A key feature of our plan is its reflection of our cooperative approach to shaping our shire's future. We work alongside various government agencies, key stakeholders, and the community to achieve the outcomes outlined in this plan.

Our Community Strategic Plan is supported by the Council's Delivery Program for 2025-2029, the Operational Plan for 2025-2026, and the Resourcing Strategy. Both the Delivery Program and Operational Plan utilise these same five community values to ensure strategic alignment across the Council's long-term, mid-term, and annual planning and reporting. The Operational Plan details the actions the Council will take in the coming year to implement the Delivery Program strategies associated with each community value, including how these actions will be funded.

We are dedicated to ensuring our community remains engaged in the decision-making process and to providing opportunities for all stakeholders to express their opinions. The Council regularly reports on the actions taken to realise the vision and values detailed in our Community Strategic Plan. I encourage you to participate in opportunities to engage with our plans and strategies as they become available.

I am eager to work together with each of you as we strive to achieve our shared vision for Dungog Shire.

Gareth Curtis
General Manager

"We are dedicated to ensuring our community remains engaged in the decision-making process and to providing opportunities for all stakeholders to express their opinions."

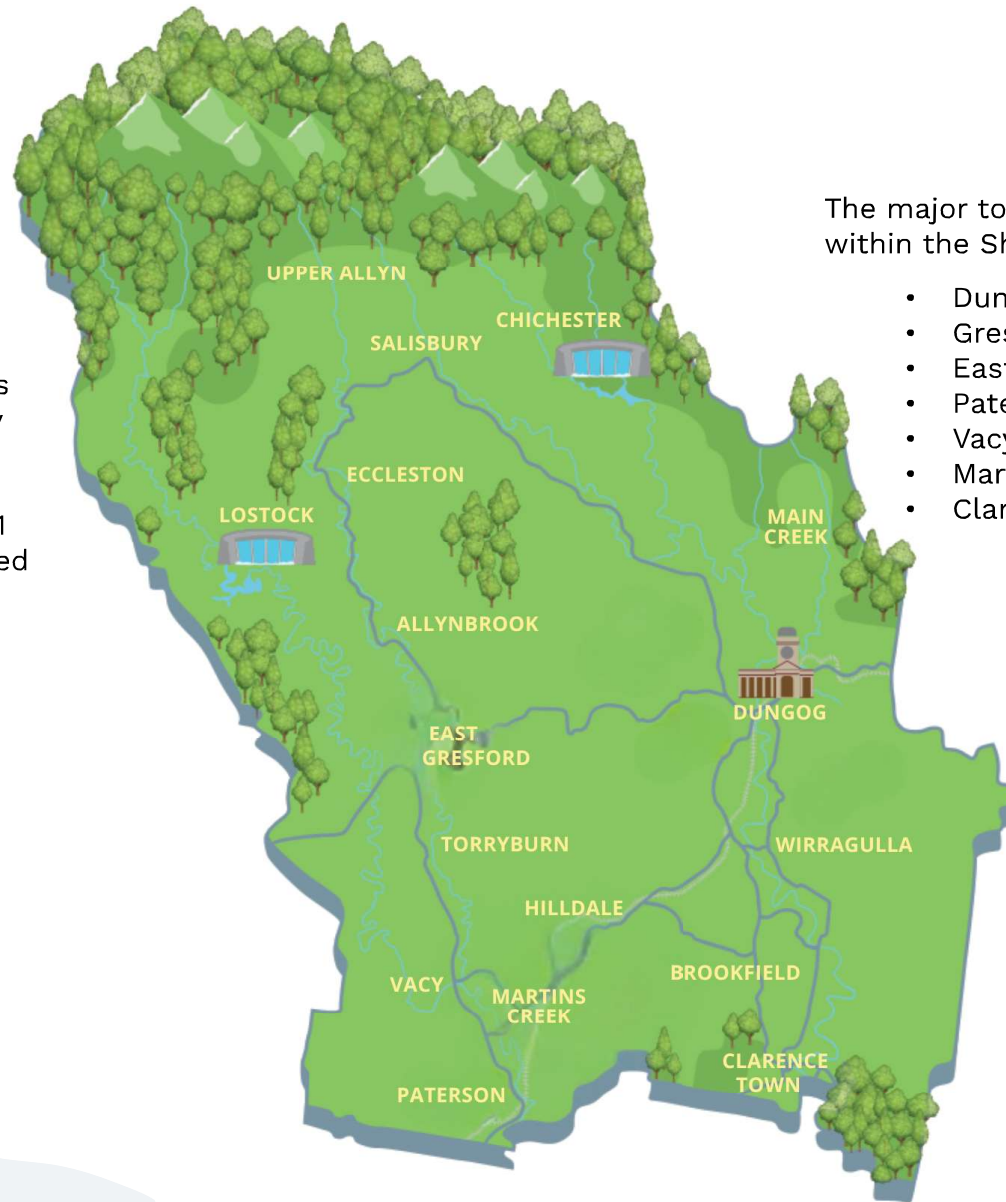


Our Shire

Dungog Shire Council is located inland about 220 kilometres north of the Sydney CBD, roughly halfway between Sydney and Port Macquarie.

The Council is situated in the Barrington Tops region and has a population of approximately 9,767.

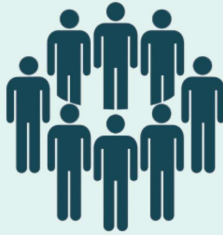
Dungog Shire Council has a land area of 2,251 square km. Of this land almost 60% is deemed unsuitable for agricultural cultivation and activity. Dominant agricultural enterprises include dairying, poultry and beef cattle. Forestry is the other major land-based industry although it has waned in recent years.



The major towns and villages within the Shire include:

- Dungog
- Gresford
- East Gresford
- Paterson
- Vacy
- Martins Creek
- Clarence Town

9,767 (2023 ABS ERP)
Residential Population,
with a population
density of 4.34 persons
per square km.



**Top industry by employment is
Construction with 12.3%**
closely followed by
Health Care & Social Assistance - 12.2%
and **Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing - 9.4%**



200,000
Visitors Annually
adding \$32.5m to the
Shires economy



Dungog Shire had
4,223 dwellings
in 2021



126 Bridges
across the road network



Dungog Shire has
21 Parks
12 Playgrounds
10 Sportsgrounds
2 Pools

Road Lengths

123.72 km - Regional
334.42 km - Local Sealed
270.02 km - Local Unsealed



19.5% of the population
reported doing some form of
voluntary work
in 2021

94% of Residents

rate their quality of life
in the Shire as good to
excellent



Critical water supply
to Hunter and
Greater Newcastle



2248² km
Area of the Shire

3 Principal Rivers and Tributary

- **Paterson River**
- **Allyn River**
- **Williams River**



Developing our Plan

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About our Plan

The Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan describes how we will achieve our Shire's vision, consistent with our community's values, priorities and aspirations. The Plan identifies where we are now and identifies the key challenges and risks for Dungog Shire over the next 10 years. Its purpose is to plan objectives and strategies to address these issues and ultimately achieve our long-term goals.

The Plan has been prepared with regard to the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights and addresses the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership/governance matters facing our community over the next decade.

The CSP is a whole of community plan and responsibility for achieving Dungog Shire's vision sits with everyone. Council will take a lead role in implementing this plan, however partnerships with other levels of government, individuals, industry and community organisations are crucial to achieving our goals.

"The CSP is a whole of community plan and responsibility for achieving Dungog Shire's vision sits with everyone."

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The NSW Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework acknowledges most communities share similar aspirations; reliable infrastructure, education and employment, opportunities for social interaction and a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live. The difference lies in how each community prioritises and responds to these needs. Now, more than ever, councils and communities need a robust, flexible and cohesive integrated planning and reporting framework that can support them as they work together to respond to rapidly changing circumstances and opportunities.

The IP&R includes a suite of integrated plans that set out a vision and 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.

Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

The CSP is the key document in the framework and is a 10-year plan, reviewed every 4 years. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and outline objectives and strategies to achieve them. These objectives and strategies will take into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available. The CSP is organised under five Community Values (key focus areas) that reflect the community's vision and values.

The Delivery Program and Operational Plan use the same five community values and they also provide clear strategic alignment between Council's long-term, mid-term and annual planning and reporting.

Delivery Program

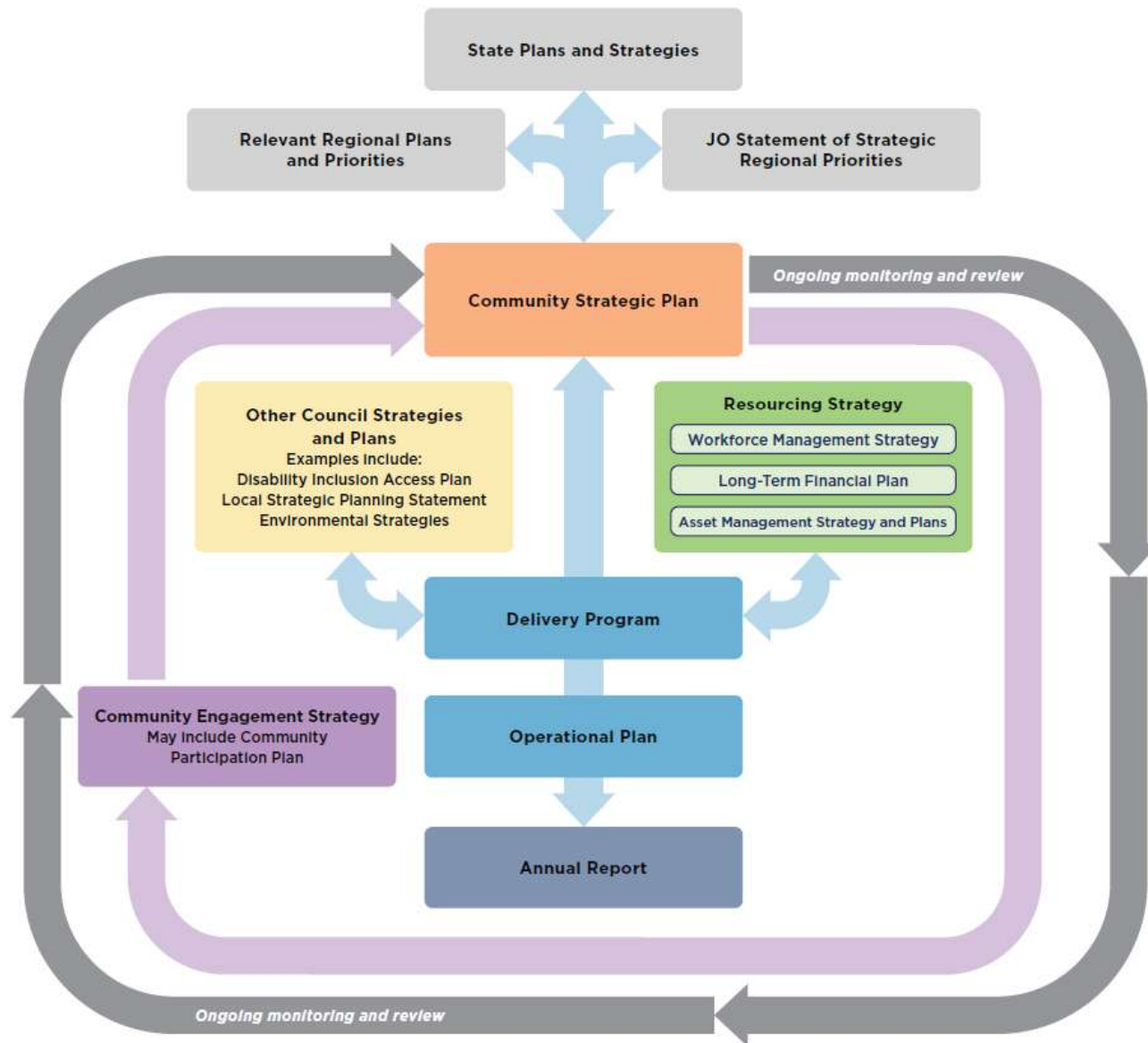
The Delivery Program is a plan that covers the term of an elected Council. To create the program, we look at the Community Strategic Plan and ask what strategies we can achieve over the coming term to bring us closer to the community's vision and values, using the resources identified in the Resourcing Strategy.

Operational Plan

The Operational Plan outlines the actions Council will undertake in the coming year to achieve the Delivery Program strategies under each community value. The Operational Plan also details how Council will fund these actions.

Resourcing Strategy

The Community Strategic Plan can only be achieved with sufficient resources. Council's Resourcing Strategy supports the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan by detailing how Council can help achieve the community's goals in terms of time, money, assets and people.



OLG Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Listening to our Community

Council conducts a biennial independent community survey to access community views. In the most recent survey results from 2022 and 2024 we asked our community what they liked about Dungog Shire and what they want for our Shire in the next 10 years.

We used a range of techniques to seek input and feedback to inform the review of the Community Strategic Plan.



**Dungog Shire Council
Website**



**Independent Telephone
Survey**



Media Releases



Public Meetings



Social Media



Newspaper Notices



Hard Copy Information

What you told us?

94% of residents rated their quality of life living in the Dungog Shire as good to excellent



71% of residents stated road maintenance and supporting infrastructure is the highest priority area for the next 10 years



What you Love

- Rural lifestyle and the laidback lifestyle
- Strong sense of community
- Natural environment - beauty of the area, wildlife and open spaces
- Location is great – convenient and close to everything
- Outdoor recreational activities, such as biking and hiking
- Great area to bring children up in

Key Areas to Address

- Improving and maintaining local roads (sealed and unsealed) and road safety.
- Growth of the area: Managing growth and development, longterm planning, supporting growth of jobs and businesses.
- Council operations: Financial management, leadership, transparency, working with the community.
- Infrastructure and road funding (including grant funding)

Your Priorities






- Maintenance of roads and supporting infrastructure.
- More and improved services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Council - financial management, reducing DA times, internal operations.
- Housing - managing subdivisions, growth, development and affordable housing.
- Employment opportunities

Our Vision

“A vibrant, united community, with a sustainable economy. An area where rural character, community safety and lifestyle are preserved.”

Our Community Values

Our Community Values describe what is important to us and how we would like to live as a community. These are the values our community identified during consultation in 2016, 2022 and reaffirmed in 2024.

 Our Community	That we all enjoy a safe, supportive community, characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage.
 Our Environment and Planning	That we balance the needs of the natural and built environment, by ensuring the natural environment is enhanced and that growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and lifestyle.
 Our Economy	That we ensure our economy is strong, creative, innovative and sustainable and provides us with jobs, business and creative opportunities and easy access to goods and services.
 Our Infrastructure	That we aim to provide safe, functional, accessible, resilient and well maintained infrastructure, services and transport networks and that we all have access to a range of activities and facilities that cater for our sporting and recreational needs.
 Our Leadership	That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance.

How to read this Plan

The following information explains the headings used in the Plan.

A

What are our Community Values?

- They are the Community's long-term priorities and aspirations for Dungog Shire.
- Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?

B

Strategies

- What will we do to get there.
- They are the strategies that detail how we will get there and these provide alignment with the Delivery Program.

C

Indicators of success

- What success looks like.
- The performance measures are how we measure success.

D

Program Activities

- These are the council services and programs we need to deliver the strategies.

E

Partners

- These are the local and state organisations, other organisations and community groups that are involved in delivery.

Our Environment and Planning

Our Goal

2. That we balance the needs of the natural and built environment, by ensuring the natural environment is enhanced and that growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and lifestyle.

Program Activities include:

- Waste and resource recovery
- Waste collection services
- Waste management facility operation
- Pilchers Reserve
- Field days and information sessions
- On-site sewage management
- Sewage facilities in villages
- Weed management
- Environmental management
- Land use planning
- Development assessment
- Compliance
- Local heritage advisory service

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Office of Local Government
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Local Land Services
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Cities Power Partnership

A

B

D

E

C

Strategies (How will we get there?)

- 2.1 Support and manage the responsible use of resources including the minimisation of waste and the promotion of recycling practices.
- 2.2 Work with the community, appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies in proactively addressing environmental issues including weed management.
- 2.3 Planning documents provide adequate land supply while protecting the natural environment, biodiversity, local heritage, rural character and agricultural activities.
- 2.4 We participate in climate change collaboration and partnerships to leverage effort and resources, and are keen to learn from others.

Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents. They will be asked to rate their satisfaction with Councils performance in balancing a mix of development while preserving our scenic qualities, rural amenity, and lifestyle. The baseline for this measure will be established in the 2026 survey.	N/A	Maintain or improve
Completion of Actions	This measure is the number of completed Our Environment & Planning actions divided by the total number of Our Environment & Planning actions in the adopted Delivery Program.	N/A	>75%

*“Rural living, the sense of community
and peaceful area have remained the
most values aspects about living in
the Dungog Shire LGA”*

(Source: Community Survey



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Our Community

Our Goal

1. That we all enjoy a safe, supportive community, characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage.

Program Activities include:

- Community groups
- Community events
- Youth based activities
- Provision of local services for all ages
- Emergency management
- Community preparedness
- Council owned facilities
- Cemetery services
- Food safety and hygiene
- Environmental health programs
- Companion Animals
- Community Grants
- Library services

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Resilience NSW
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Rural and Fire Service

Strategies (How will we get there?)

- 1.1 Promote, develop and align programs and initiatives to support residents of all ages that encourage community participation and volunteerism.
- 1.2 Promote and support a range of cultural and heritage activities that provide a foundation for community building and cohesion.
- 1.3 Work with local residents, community groups and service organisations to build safer and more resilient communities.
- 1.4 Ensure access to council services and facilities that cater for all ages while addressing community needs for all ages.

Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents where they are asked to rate their satisfaction with their quality of life in the Shire. The 2024 rating was 94% compared to 93% in 2022.	94% in 2024	Maintain or improve
Completion of Actions	This measure is the number of completed Our Community actions divided by the total number of Our Community actions in the adopted Delivery Program.	N/A	>75%

Our Environment and Planning

Our Goal

2. That we balance the needs of the natural and built environment, by ensuring the natural environment is enhanced and that growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and lifestyle.

Program Activities include:

- Waste and resource recovery
- Waste collection services
- Waste management facility operation
- Pilchers Reserve
- Field days and information sessions
- On-site sewage management
- Sewage facilities in villages
- Weed management
- Environmental management
- Land use planning
- Development assessment
- Compliance
- Local heritage advisory service

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Office of Local Government
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Local Land Services
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Cities Power Partnership

Strategies (How will we get there?)

- 2.1 Support and manage the responsible use of resources including the minimisation of waste and the promotion of recycling practices.
- 2.2 Work with the community, appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies in proactively addressing environmental issues including weed management.
- 2.3 Planning documents provide adequate land supply while protecting the natural environment, biodiversity, local heritage, rural character and agricultural activities.
- 2.4 We participate in climate change collaboration and partnerships to leverage effort and resources, and are keen to learn from others.

Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	<p>This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents. They will be asked to rate their satisfaction with Councils performance in balancing a mix of development while preserving our scenic qualities, rural amenity, and lifestyle.</p> <p>The baseline for this measure will be established in the 2026 survey.</p>	N/A	Maintain or improve
Completion of Actions	This measure is the number of completed Our Environment & Planning actions divided by the total number of Our Environment & Planning actions in the adopted Delivery Program.	N/A	>75%

Our Economy

Our Goal

3. That we ensure our economy is strong, creative, innovative and sustainable and provides us with jobs, business and creative opportunities and easy access to goods and services.

Program Activities include:

- Land development
- Development of commercial and industrial sites
- Management of Williams River Holiday Park
- Local business
- Economic diversification
- New business attraction and investors
- Destination Management Plan
- Visitor Information Centre
- Barrington Tops promotion
- Economic Development

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Destination NSW
- Department of Primary Industries
- Neighbouring Councils
- Regional NSW
- Regional Development Australia
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Land Services
- Dungog Regional Tourism

Strategies (How will we get there?)

3.1 Develop planning documents that ensures economic, commercial, and industrial growth throughout the Shire is supported by improved local public and private infrastructure.

3.2 Review and enable the provision of improved camping and caravan facilities throughout the Shire.

3.3 Work with Dungog Regional Tourism to develop a strategic approach to growing visitor economy opportunities across the Shire.

3.4 Implement priority actions from the Economic Development Plan.

Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	<p>This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents. They will be asked to rate their satisfaction with Councils strategies to encourage local economic development and job opportunities, supporting businesses, promoting tourism and creative initiatives, and access to essential goods and services.</p> <p>The baseline for this measure will be established in the 2026 survey.</p>	N/A	Maintain or improve
Completion of Actions	This measure is the number of completed Our Economy actions divided by the total number of Our Economy actions in the adopted Delivery Program.	N/A	>75%

Our Infrastructure

Our Goal

4. That we aim to provide safe, functional, accessible, resilient and well maintained infrastructure, services and transport networks and that we all have access to a range of activities and facilities that cater for our sporting and recreational needs.

Program Activities include:

- Building maintenance
- Capital works program delivery
- Plant & fleet management
- Recreation facility mainagement
- Construction and rehabilitation works
- Asset management
- Rail Services
- Water/Sewer
- Public toilets
- Emergency services
- Health and social services
- Aged accommodation
- Fire safety of Council facilities
- Plans of management
- Sporting facility maintenance
- Public Swimming Pools

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- NSW Police
- Resilience NSW
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Rural and Fire Service

Strategies (How will we get there?)

- 4.1 Improve the safety, condition and maintenance of roads, bridges and infrastructure.
- 4.2 Improve the provision of transport services and connectivity to communities within the Shire.
- 4.3 Improve the standard of community assets, facilities and public infrastructure including community halls, sports facilities, parks and playgrounds.
- 4.4 Implement actions from the open space and recreation plan to ensure that sporting and recreational facilities reflect the diverse needs of a growing community.
- 4.5 Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including public land, national parks and waterways are accessible and maintained with adequate clean public amenities.

Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	<p>This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents where they were asked to rate their satisfaction with the condition and maintenance of local roads and rural/unsealed roads.</p> <p>The 2024 scorecard score was <60%.</p>	<60% in 2024	Maintain or improve
Completion of Actions	This measure is the number of completed projects divided by the total number of projects in the adopted Capital Works Program.	N/A	>75%

Our Leadership

Our Goal

5. That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance.

Program Activities include:

- Governance
- Communications
- Human Resources
- Integrated Planning and Reporting
- Business Improvement
- Finance & Accounts
- Procurement
- Corporate Support
- Human Resources
- Advocacy
- Information Systems
- Records Management
- Risk Management
- Workplace Health & Safety

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Office of Local Government

Strategies (How will we get there?)

- 5.1 Prioritise strong community leadership, financial sustainability, responsive customer service and continuous improvement.
- 5.2 The Council engages in effective communication and engagement, ensuring decision-making processes are open, transparent, and inclusive.
- 5.3 Council undertakes prudent sustainable financial management to ensure its long-term viability.
- 5.4 Council continues to advocate for a Dungog Shire regional outlook and seeks opportunities for strategic alliances with neighbouring Councils and other levels of government and key stakeholders.
- 5.5 Council actively pursues funding and grant funding opportunities that align with and support the vision, priorities and directions outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.






Indicators of Success (Measures)

The measures listed below will serve as benchmarks to measure our progress toward the strategic objectives:

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Community Satisfaction	This measure is from a random biennial survey of residents where they were asked to rate their satisfaction with Councils performance. The 2024 rating was 74% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied.	74% in 2024	Maintain or improve
Grant Funding	This measure is the number and \$ amount of grant funding applications and outcomes. This indicator will be measured by monitoring and reporting the number and \$ amount of applications aligned to the CSP.	N/A	>10%



Links to our Strategic Priorities

	NSW 2021	Hunter Regional Plan 2041	Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan	Hunter Regional Transport Plan	NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+
 Our Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Our Environment and Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
 Our Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Our Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Our Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Measuring our success

In the Community Strategic Plan, each of the five strategic themes is supported by various strategies and evaluated using success indicators outlined in this Plan.

The IP&R framework requires councils to report in the following ways:

- Quarterly financial budget review statements
- Delivery Program progress reports
- Annual Report
- State of the Shire Report

In line with the IP&R Framework, updates on progress will be provided to Council at least twice a year, along with a detailed Annual Report, to meet the IP&R reporting guidelines.

Every two years, the Council will conduct independent community research to assess community perceptions regarding progress in relation to the Community Strategic Plan.

At the end of each council term, the Council will compile a State of the Shire Report that assesses the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan. Success will be gauged by examining the outcomes of the Measures of Success specified in this plan.

The insights derived from this review and analysis will inform the revision and development of the subsequent Community Strategic Plan.



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