

# MUSWELLBROOK ADVOCACY AGENDA

FEBRUARY 2022





# Advocacy Agenda

Advocacy Agenda *continued*

## MUSWELLBROOK BYPASS

**Seek commitment for delivery of the Muswellbrook Bypass by 2026**

After a persistent campaign and extensive advocacy by Council, the Federal and NSW State governments have committed \$266M to a New England Highway bypass of Muswellbrook, with construction due to commence in late 2022 and the project delivered by 2026.

The preferred route corridor for the bypass was delete corridor published in July 2018. Following further discussions, the preferred option for the bypass, announced in November 2020, included a refined alignment of the bypass south of Coal Road, and full southern and northern connections with the existing New England Highway.

**Then Deputy and Premier and Minister for Regional NSW said: “Today I can also announce that as we work towards a concept design for the Muswellbrook bypass, the NSW Government will commit to include connections to Coal Road, and we will co-fund with Council local road upgrades to support that connection.” – John Barilaro, November 2020.**



Muswellbrook Hospital

## IMPROVED HEALTH SERVICES FOR MUSWELLBROOK

**Seek commitment to maintaining and expanding health services in Muswellbrook Shire**

**Seek commitment to provide maternity services including obstetric and paediatric specialists at Muswellbrook Hospital**

**Seek commitment for an increase in mental health services.**

Muswellbrook Hospital serves a large regional population and has the potential to be a first-class district hospital. However, Council has identified a number of healthcare needs for the community including but not limited to GP services, maternity and paediatric facilities and adult and youth mental health services.

At a minimum a Headspace Outreach would provide vital services and support for young people in Muswellbrook who are experiencing difficulties, or have concerns about drug and alcohol use, mental and physical wellbeing, and sexual health.

In May 2021, NSW Government pledged \$45M for Stage III of the Muswellbrook Hospital upgrade, to include a new 26-bed inpatient unit, two palliative care beds, four-bed maternity unit and two birthing suites, however equipment and staffing concerns remain.

“After delivery of stage three of the Muswellbrook Hospital upgrade and improved maternity services this wonderful new hospital won’t be any good without a workforce to operate it. Muswellbrook Shire has a medical workforce shortage and must remain a **high priority area** under the **Distribution Priority Area** (DPA) for General Practitioners and Obstetricians and be eligible for Visiting Medical Officers (VMO’s). The DPA status for GP’s is updated every year. In 2021 after much lobbying, Muswellbrook Shire moved to **High Priority**. We need to retain a **High Priority** rating until the critical shortage of medical staff is addressed.”

*Mayor Steve Reynolds*

## TOWN SQUARE

**Cornerstone of a purpose-built civic precinct the town square has been identified as a catalyst site in the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy and a priority in the Hunter Regional Plan.**

The multi-functional town square will encourage community congregation and cultural events, outdoor performances and screenings and provide a sense of place and identity to the township. It is proposed that the Town Square will provide a connection between heritage items, the education precinct, Town Hall, the Conservatorium of Music and Council’s Administration centre.



Concept Town Square

## PLANNING FOR POST MINING LAND USE

**Planning and resourcing for post mining land use to ensure coal mining communities are not left with scars on the landscape and economic and social challenges**

Undertake master planning with a focus on facilitating post-mining land uses for a range of large-scale agribusiness, energy generation, food processing, manufacturing, tourism, and recreation with consideration for leveraging existing infrastructure – roads, rails and power grid to support job creation.



Wollemi summer day

## LEADERSHIP TO DRIVE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

**Develop and implement a leadership and governance model that provides direction, drives innovation and is accountable for long-term economic diversification of the region**

Actively address changes within the thermal coal mining industry to foster new industries and businesses for coal mining communities now. Leadership is required for a holistic approach to planning and resourcing for region-wide benefits. Apply Royalties for Rejuvenation to focus on coal mining communities and provide concrete opportunities for transfer of employment to like industry.



# TAFE AND EDUCATION

Encourage further collaboration and strong engagement between the Tertiary Education Centre (TEC) University of Newcastle and TAFE campuses to provide training and research to support local economic activity.

TEC houses a range of training and industry engaged research activity and is part of the University's 12N network of innovation hubs which aim to strengthen the links between business and research, foster innovation and improve skills-based training.



# LEADERSHIP ON WASTE AND RECYCLING ISSUES

Seek commitment to actively work with industry to develop viable waste and recycling processes such as FOGO

Seek funding commitment to ensure recycling infrastructure is delivered

Seek commitment for 100% of the waste levy to be returned to local governments for community waste minimisation and recycling programs

Council is collaborating with other Hunter councils to develop a regional response to the uncertain future of the waste and recycling industries and will continue to work with our partners to deliver advocacy, improved service delivery opportunities and better outcomes for the environment.

The Draft Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) Implementation Plan outlines a strategic framework for Council for the introduction of food organics to the existing garden waste service. Once approved the FOGO implementation plan will inform the FOGO Community Education and Engagement Plan.



# OLYMPIC PARK PRECINCT

Complete Stage Two of the Olympic Park Masterplan

Olympic Park is one of Muswellbrook's premier sporting venues, home to junior and senior rugby league and touch football, velodrome and tennis courts and is in the same precinct as the aquatic centre, golf club and squash courts.

Stage One of the Masterplan has addressed significant issues with parking and access via the construction of a bridge, formal car parking and shared pathways and over-use of fields via installation of field drainage systems as well as improving the aesthetics and functionality of the site.

Stage Two includes the construction of a grandstand and improved amenities with the goal of attracting regional sporting events to the Shire.

# RESOURCES FOR REGIONS

Seek long term commitment to the Resources for Regions funding program to continue to recognise and provide certainty for mining communities

The NSW State Government have introduced reforms to the Resources for Regions program to link funding allocations in line with the proportion of mining contribution and level of impact in that area. The reforms simplified the application process and expanded the program to include funding for projects which help communities manage the impacts of mining.

# WOLLOMBI AND HUNTER PARKS

The objectives of these parks are to promote and enhance community identity and sense of belonging, provide active and passive recreation opportunities with safety and amenity for all users.

The Wollombi Park concept is designed to accommodate a wide range of community activities with a primary focus on families and teenagers while the Hunter Park concept is more intimate and located central to residences in the Wollombi Road precinct.

# GATEWAY PROJECT

South Muswellbrook: To complement the proposed Muswellbrook Bypass

A one stop service centre for heavy vehicles and other traffic to include a heavy vehicle inspection station, service station, proposed water reservoir, hospitality services, heavy vehicle and RV parking.

# IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Seek commitment to permanently fund an increased level of service

Especially increased frequency of train services to provide enhanced links from Muswellbrook and Scone to Newcastle and the Lower Hunter. One goal is for Upper Hunter students to be able to access tertiary education in Newcastle while continuing to live in the Upper Hunter.

# DENMAN TOURIST PARK AND HOT POOLS

Proposed as a key infrastructure project within the Shire

The proposal builds on the existing recreational facilities in the Denman Recreation Reserve which includes golf, tennis, swimming, indoor sports stadium, football grounds, cricket pitch, RV dump point and Heritage Village. The pools would be a gateway tourism attraction for Wollemi National Park and would attract more visitors but especially the RV market, well-being, and backpacker segments of the visitor economy.





# Some achievements



Muswellbrook Shire Council established the Muswellbrook Shire Future Fund to ensure that future generations enjoy some of the benefits of local coal mining by investing revenues associated with mining to generate a permanent dividend. **“The Future Fund is akin to a superannuation fund for our community” – John Flood OAM Chair Future Fund 2014-2021**



The NSW Government recently introduced much-welcomed reforms of the Resources for Regions program to link funding allocations for regions in line with the proportion of mining contribution and level of impact in that area. The reforms also removed Benefit Cost Ratio and co-contribution requirements, simplified the application process, and expanded the program to allow funding for community projects.



Recycled Water Treatment Works, Council’s largest and most complex project of its kind to date, will cater for the Muswellbrook’s domestic, commercial, and industrial sewage treatment needs well into the future. **“The 27M project incorporates the latest technologies for the control of noise and odour and to improve the quality of recycled water for use, such as the irrigation of the golf course or use in the mining industry” – Derek Finnigan Deputy General Manager MSC**



Recycled Water Treatment Works



The Donald Horne Building. Construction is well underway on Stage Two of the Tertiary Education Centre – the Donald Horne Building. Home to the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter STEM school and innovation program, it will deliver innovative STEM, technical education, and start-ups from the new Makerspace. **“Access to STEM is critical for the Shire’s young people the technical, digital and people skills to adapt to a changing world of work. Partnering with local industry and educators to tailor learning to current and future skill needs will develop local talent to support economic diversification” – Fiona Plesman General Manager MSC**



A major upgrade of the Muswellbrook Aquatic and Fitness Centre, while hampered by COVID-19 restriction and weather events, is on track to be completed by May 2022 and features an indoor pool hall, heated learn to swim pool, spa and sauna, and Splash café.



The first three stages of the Denman Town Centre Masterplan included the rebuilding of Denman Memorial Hall, upgrade of Ogilvie and Paxton streets and refurbishment of Denman Memorial Park have been completed. The next stage includes the section from Paxton Street to Turner Street to complement the finished works and assist in activating the town centre for business, residents, and visitors.



The Donald Horne Building

# Our Advocacy Partners

Muswellbrook Shire Council is proud to be a member of these industry organisations:

- › Hunter Joint Organisation
- › University of Newcastle
- › Country Mayors Association
- › Regional Institute of Australia
- › Local Government NSW
- › Australian Local Government Association
- › NSW Public Libraries Association





