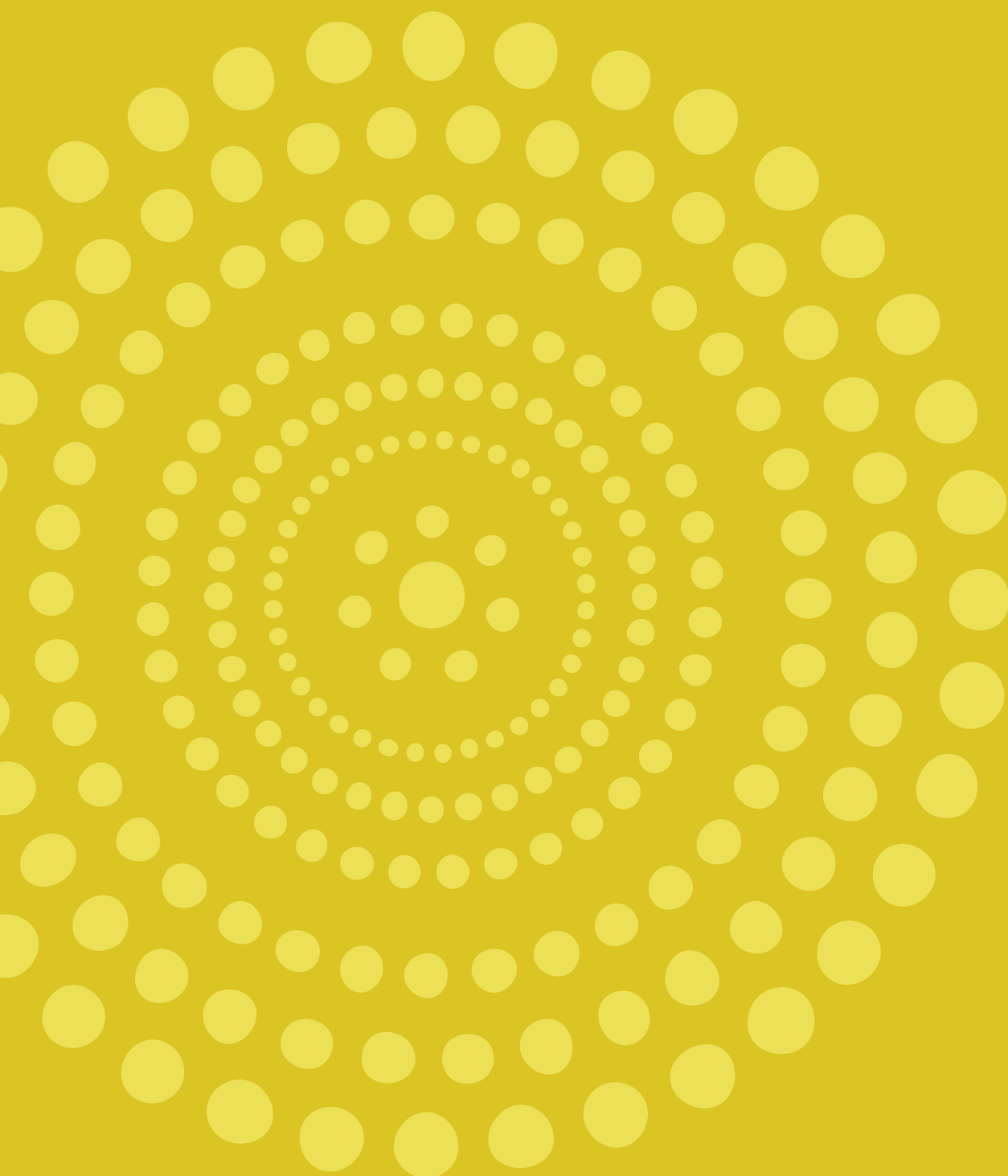


# MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE 2022 – 2032 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



***Muswellbrook Shire Council respectfully  
acknowledges the Local Aboriginal People who are  
the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land***



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# Foreword

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



As the concept of energy transition in the Hunter moves from theory to reality the crux of this Community Strategic Plan is to develop a comprehensive and well-co-ordinated strategy that

brings together all levels of government, local business and the community to attract investment and new employment opportunities.

In 2021 the State Government announced a \$25 million Royalties for Rejuvenation fund to drive job creation and provide support to our communities as they move to a clean energy economy over the coming decades. The Hunter Joint Organisation, representing ten of the region's Council's, including Muswellbrook Shire Council, is advocating for the creation of the Hunter 2050 Foundation to also work towards attracting new industries and opportunities as thermal coal mining is scaled down.

In the coming decade Muswellbrook Shire Council will foster the moves towards new industries such as renewable energy, bioresources and intensive agriculture and support the growth of existing viticulture and equine industries. Diversification of the economy will be achieved by building on the strengths of the region – a skilled workforce and existing infrastructure assets.

The Community Strategic Plan sets a clear direction, reflecting community expectations, for job creation, education opportunities, revitalisation of the town centre and improved liveability. Council will continue its focus on promoting, improving and expanding the many existing attractions in the Shire.

Collaboration with the University of Newcastle will see further research and development opportunities evolve while the Donald Horne Building, stage two of the Tertiary Education Centre, will house the Upper Hunter Innovation Hub and "makerspace", a prototyping facility combining engineering capability, equipment and business mentoring skills for students, entrepreneur's and start-ups.

This plan is a culmination of consultation and careful planning. Council thanks the General Manager and Council staff for the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and commends the document to the community.

**Steve Reynolds**

Mayor,  
Muswellbrook Shire Council



# Introduction

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest-level plan that Council prepares on behalf of the community. The purpose of the plan is to capture and define the community's main priorities and

aspirations for the future of the Shire, devise strategies and identify partnerships for achieving these goals. The CSP guides all other Council strategies and plans and is reviewed by Council with, and on behalf of, the community at the beginning of each new term of Council.

The minimum timeframe for the CSP is 10 years and it addresses 4 key questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we want to be in 10 years?
3. How will we get there?
4. How will we know we have arrived?

The answers to these questions assist Council to understand the community's vision, values, opportunities and challenges, while establishing baseline targets, strategies and measures to guide performance monitoring and reporting.

Addressing the quadruple bottom line of social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues in an integrated manner, the CSP is based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

The Community's goals outlined in the *Muswellbrook Shire Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032* are informed by, and aligned with the priorities and actions endorsed in the Premier's Priorities, as well as the NSW State Plan and other NSW Government plans to grow the economy, deliver infrastructure, protect the vulnerable, reduce human impacts on the environment and improve health, education and public services across NSW.

Specific elements of those goals are also aligned with the strategic objectives identified in the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* which will guide the delivery of greater prosperity and connectivity for communities across the Hunter region, including those in the Muswellbrook Shire.

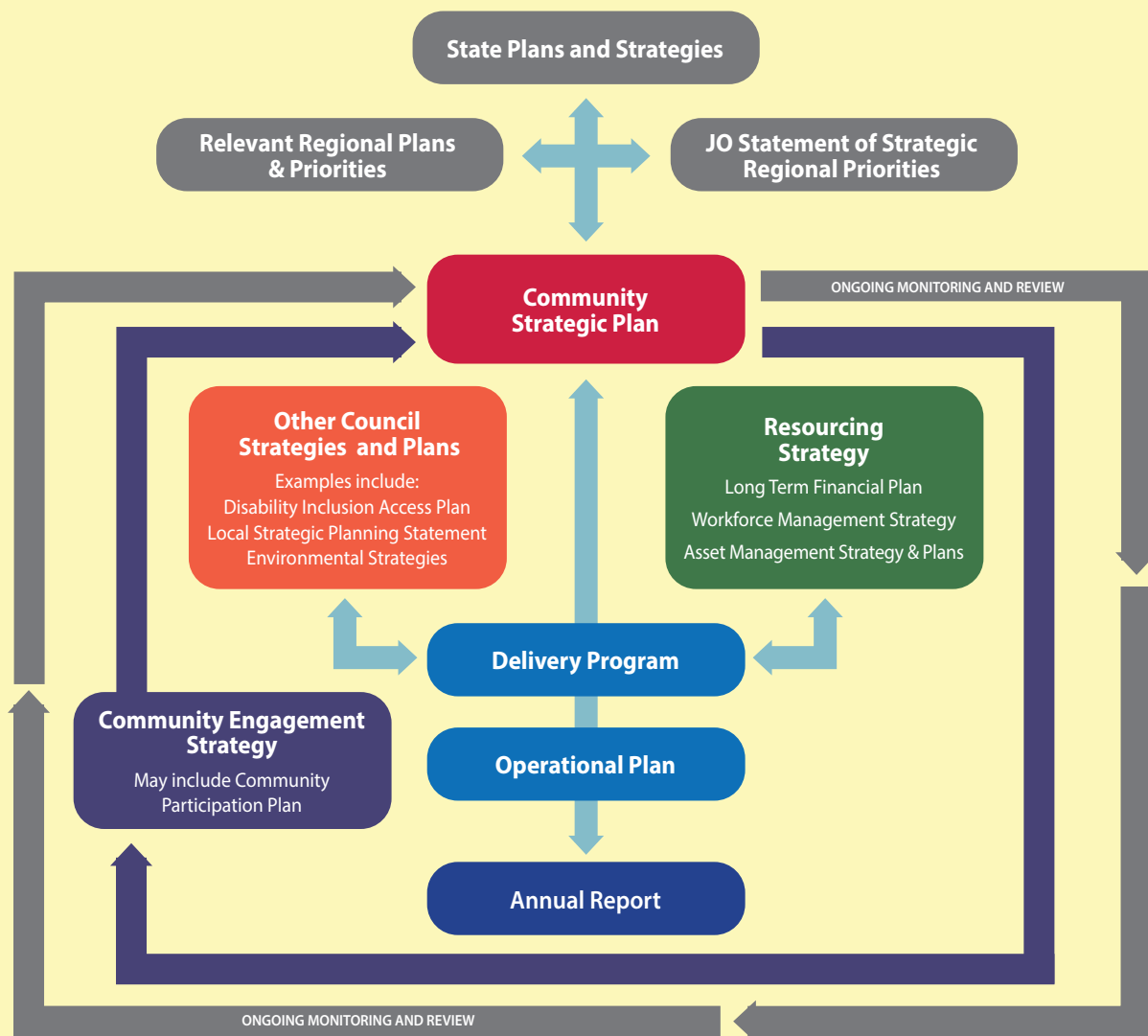
### **Fiona Plesman**

General Manager,  
Muswellbrook Shire Council



# The Integrated Planning and Reporting Cycle

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework was established in 2009 by the New South Wales Government. This legislation requires all Councils to have the following plans developed in consultation with the community:



**Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework**

## The Community Strategic Plan (10 year)

The Community Strategic Plan is an overview document that identifies the community's vision and goals for the future. It covers a minimum time frame of 10 years. Council's role is initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community, however Council is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, including state agencies, non-government organisations, business and industry, joint organisations and community groups may also have a part to play in enacting the strategies identified within the Plan.

## The Delivery Program (4 year)

The Delivery Program is a four-year plan. It is the point of reference for all activities undertaken by the Council during the Councillors' term of office. The Delivery Program details the activities Council will undertake over a four-year period, which align with and support the goals and strategies identified by the community and outlined in the Community Strategic Plan. The Delivery Program also allocates responsibilities for each activity and it identifies suitable performance measures for determining the effectiveness of the activities undertaken.

## Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy demonstrates how Council will resource achievement of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. Council's Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan and Workforce Management Plan have been developed to explain how Council intends to resource the activities identified in the Delivery Program and the Community Strategic Plan goals.

## The Operational Plan (annual)

The Operational Plan is a sub-plan of the Delivery Program. It directly addresses the activities outlined in the Delivery Program and identifies specific actions, projects and programs Council will be undertaking within the current financial year and allocates a corresponding budget commitment.

## Annual Report

The Annual Report is one of the key means by which Council reports on its progress to the community. It focuses on Council's implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan because these are the plans that are wholly Council's responsibility.



# 3. The Community Strategic Plan In Context

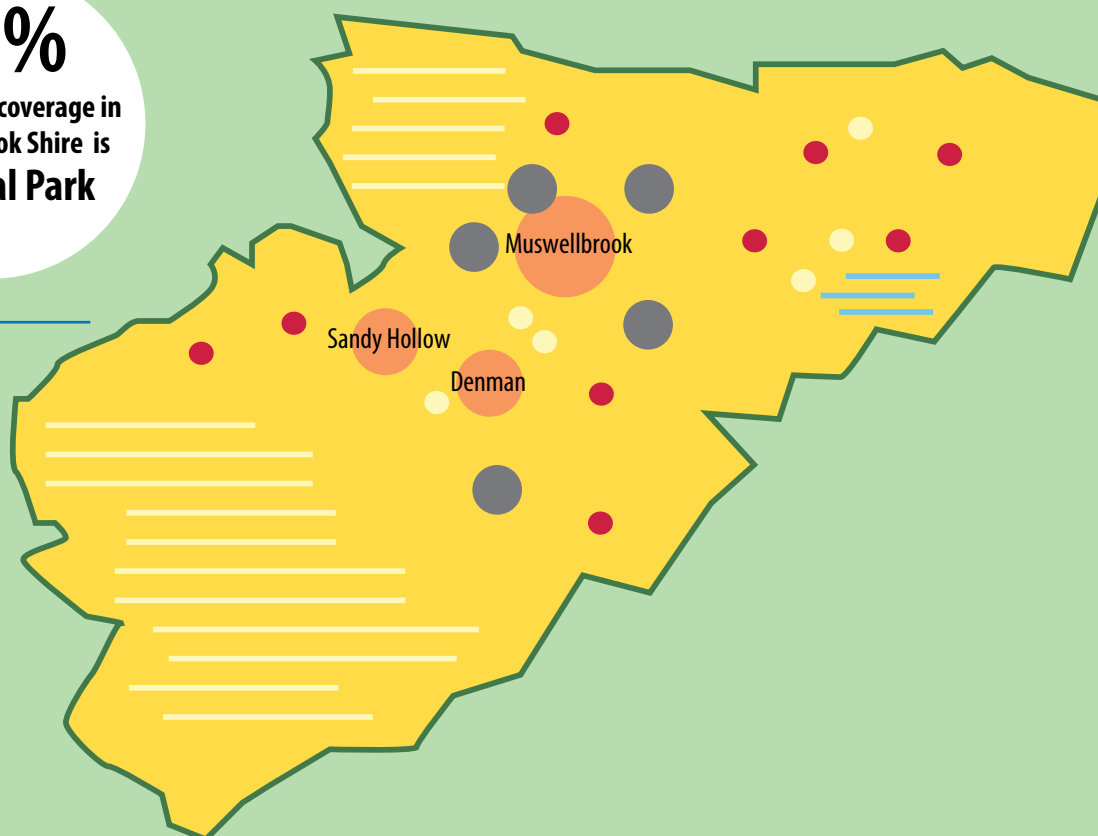
WHERE ARE WE NOW? WE ARE HERE





**43%**

of total land coverage in  
Muswellbrook Shire is  
**National Park**



### Muswellbrook Shire Towns

Antiene	Martindale
Baerami	McCullys Gap
Bureen	Muscle Creek
Castle Rock	Muswellbrook
Dalswinton	Muswellbrook North
Denman	Muswellbrook South
Dunbars Creek	Sandy Hollow
Giants Creek	Widden
Kayuga	Widden Valley
Kerrabee	Wybong
Manobalai	Yarrawa

### National Parks

### Mines

### Equine, Viticulture and Cropping

### General Rural

### Environment Management

### Lake Liddell

## 3.1 OUR SHIRE

Prior to European settlement, the Muswellbrook Shire was occupied by people of the Wonnarua/ Wanaruah language group. The Wonnarua/ Wanaruah people traded and had ceremonial links to their neighbouring tribes such as Awabakal, Darkinung, Geawegal, Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri and Worimi. The Muswellbrook Shire Local Government area is located within the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council boundary.

Muswellbrook Shire acknowledges that the local Aboriginal People are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

The first European settlement occurred in the 1820s and the township of Muswellbrook was gazetted in 1833.

Muswellbrook Shire is centrally located in the Upper Hunter Valley, approximately 130km north-west of Newcastle. By road, Muswellbrook is approximately three hours from Sydney, two hours from Tamworth and around 90 minutes from Newcastle.

The Shire consists of two larger towns, Muswellbrook and Denman, as well as a number of outlying rural communities including Sandy Hollow, Wybong, Baerami, Martindale, McCully's Gap, Widden and Muscle Creek.

The boundaries of the Local Government Area (LGA) are marked by Lake Liddell to the east, Goulburn River National Park to the west, Wollemi National Park to the south and bordering Aberdeen in the north.

A surprising fact to many is that 1,455km – or 43% - of Muswellbrook Shire's 3,402km<sup>2</sup> land coverage is national park. This includes the World Heritage Wollemi National Park.

### **We are a young community with a rising population**

Muswellbrook Shire is a welcoming community offering all the cultural, recreational, educational and community facilities that you would expect to

find in a city. It is the main regional centre for the Upper Hunter. The population of Muswellbrook Local Government Area (LGA) is concentrated in the towns of Sandy Hollow, Denman and Muswellbrook.

The estimated residential population for Muswellbrook (LGA) in 2020 was 16,355 people (ABS). This is up from 15,793 in 2016. Council anticipates low to modest population growth, in the short to medium term, associated with the planned closures of Liddell and Bayswater power stations offset by some diversification in the local economy.

The average population of the Muswellbrook LGA has reflected the ebbs and flows of the mining industry. Annual population growth over the last decade, 2006 to 2016, was 5.3% - a steady rise for a regional area. The majority of this growth has concentrated in Muswellbrook, which accounted for around half the growth. However, the 2016 census showed that growth overall since 2011 has only been 1.9%.

The 2016 census indicated that Muswellbrook Shire has a relatively high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples residing in the community at 8.3%. This compares with the 2.9% NSW State average.

Muswellbrook Shire tends to be a younger community with the median age of people being 36.9 years, compared to 37.9 for NSW.

In 2020 our population consisted of 22.6% aged 0-14 years compared with NSW at 18.5%; while 63.4% were aged 15-64 years compared with NSW at 64.8% and 14.1% aged 65 years and over compared to 16.7% across the State.

The ratio of men to women in 2020 was 51.4% and 48.6% female.

For more on the Shire's Community Profile visit: [communityprofile.com.au/muswellbrook](https://communityprofile.com.au/muswellbrook)

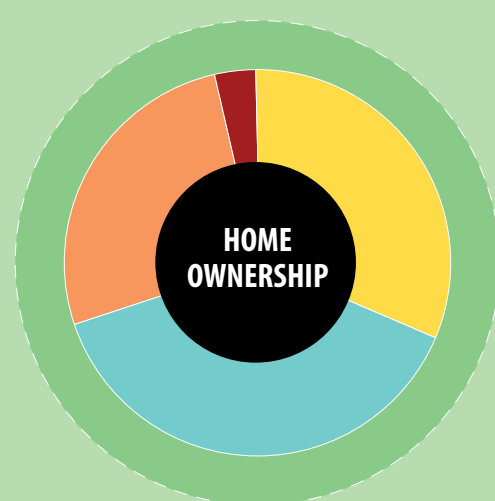
## 3.2 MUSWELLBROOK AT A GLANCE

A summary of significant indicators for Muswellbrook compared with NSW as a whole:

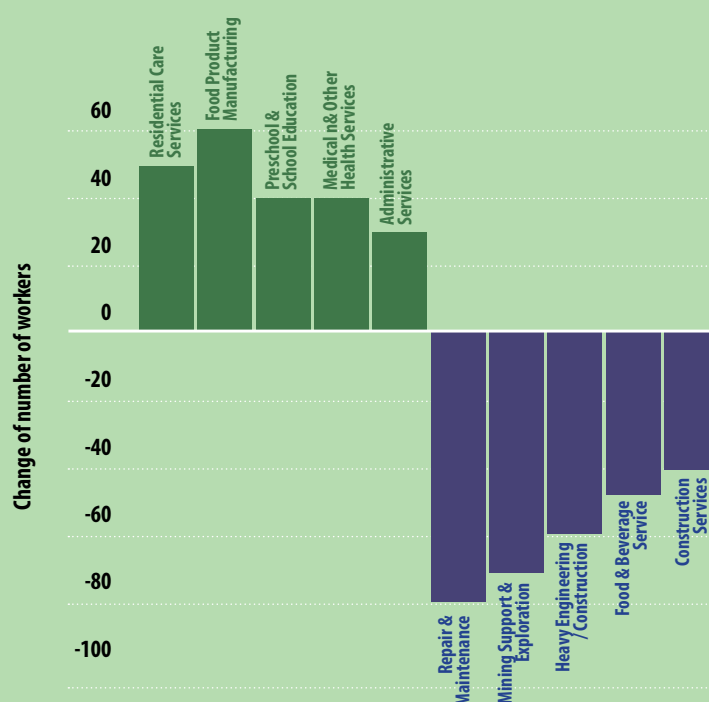
Indicator	Muswellbrook Shire	NSW
% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (2016)	8.3	2.9
% University or tertiary institution level education (2016)	4.3	16.2
% Certificate level III or IV (2016)	22.7	14.8
Males per 100 females	105.7	98.5
Average age	36.9	37.9
% 0-14 years	22.6	18.5
% 15-64 years	63.4	64.8
% 65+ years	14.1	16.7
% born in Australia (2016)	84.7	65.5
% unemployed (2016)	8.2	6.3
% coal mining industry (2016)	20.3	0.6
% horse farming (2016)	3	0.1
% internet accessed from dwelling (2016)	76.5	82.5

## EMPLOYMENT

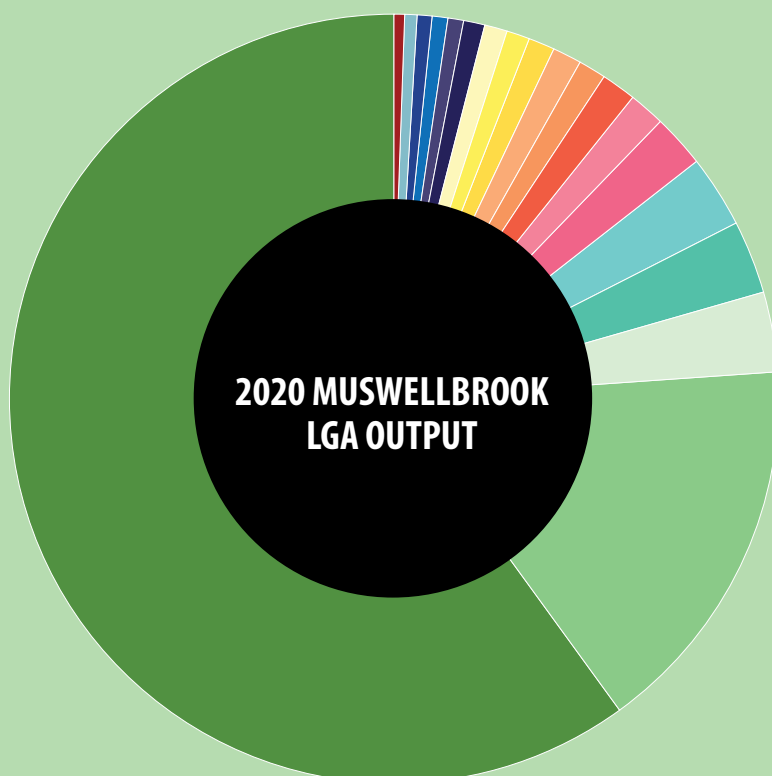
Top growth and decline industries of employment in Muswellbrook



<span style="color: #00A0C0;">●</span> Rent	38.9%
<span style="color: #FFD700;">●</span> Paying off mortgage	26.3%
<span style="color: #FFA500;">●</span> Owned Outright	31.3%
<span style="color: #8B0000;">●</span> Other	3.5%



### 3.3 ECONOMIC OUTPUT OF THE SHIRE



Industry Sector	Output (\$)	Output (%)
Mining	\$5,049,144	60.1%
Electricity, Gas, Water Waste Services	\$1,361,562	16.2%
Manufacturing	\$279,336	3.3%
Rental, Hiring Real Estate Services	\$270,452	3.2%
Construction	\$259,180	3.1%
Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	\$187,742	2.2%
Wholesale Trade	\$123,672	1.5%
Public Administration Safety	\$119,013	1.4%
Administrative Support Services	\$97,596	1.2%
Health Care Social Assistance	\$93,450	1.1%
Transport, Postal Warehousing	\$92,699	1.1%
Retail Trade	\$80,638	1.0%
Accommodation Food Services	\$75,303	0.9%
Professional, Scientific Technical Services	\$74,729	0.9%
Other Services	\$70,799	0.8%
Education Training	\$61,615	0.7%
Financial Insurance Services	\$54,933	0.7%
Information Media Telecommunications	\$33,362	0.4%
Arts Recreation Services	\$13,342	0.2%
Total	\$8,398,568	100.0%



## 3.4 FEDERAL, STATE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

For the past 50 years, the Shire's economy has been closely linked to the ebbs and flows of the energy industry and, in particular, the international thermal coal industry and the domestic power industry. When the *2012-2022 Community Strategic Plan* was adopted, the general focus had been on managing the rapid tripling in size of the thermal coal industry over the forward decade. The Community's focus had been on air quality and dust management, visual impacts, housing supply, childcare and health services.

Since that time there has been increasing uncertainty in the long-term future of the thermal coal mining industry, coal-fired power generation industry and associated jobs. AGL has announced closure dates for both local power stations (Liddell in 2023 and Bayswater by 2033) and regionally, Origin Energy has announced the closure of Australia's largest coal-fired power plant seven years earlier than scheduled, with the Eraring facility in the lower Hunter now set to close in 2025. Accordingly, the *2017-2027 Community Strategic Plan* reflected the shift in community focus to jobs, economic diversification, access to education and skills development and progressive mined-land rehabilitation.

At a time of rapid change, against the backdrop of an ongoing global pandemic and multiple natural disasters across Australia, the Federal Government is prioritising:

1. economic recovery by: investing in skills; increasing training places; supporting apprenticeships; boosting workforce participation; assisting vulnerable unemployed Australians into jobs; developing digital skills and investing in emerging technologies; and helping regional economies to grow and thrive;
2. achieving net zero emissions by 2050 by: taking advantage of new economic opportunities while continuing to serve traditional markets; and prioritising technologies to help Australia cut emissions while creating jobs and growing the economy.

While acknowledging that mining will remain important to the State economy, the NSW Government is promoting high-growth areas such as advanced manufacturing, tech-innovation, medicine, education and tourism. The *NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint* outlines the NSW Government's priorities for:

- › innovative businesses and industries of the future;
- › an economy that is diversified in favour of fast-growing industries and services;
- › a high standard of living for a healthy, well-educated population that is skilled for the high-income jobs of the future;
- › productive and growing regions with world-class infrastructure and transport links;
- › biodiverse environments preserved for future generations, with reliable and affordable energy sources and enhanced water resilience across the State.

Closer to home, the DRAFT Hunter Regional Plan 2041 promotes:

- › the concept of a '15-minute region', where access to jobs and services should be met within a short walk, bike-ride or car trip - in response to the effect of the COVID-19 on the way that people live and work;
- › the Hunter's sustainable transition to net zero emissions by diversifying employment, mining and energy generation lands to support economic renewal and innovation and open opportunities for renewal and change to new land uses;
- › economic self-determination and greater recognition of traditional custodians and respect for Aboriginal cultural knowledge;
- › net zero emissions as a guiding principle for all planning decisions and a renewed focus on green infrastructure, public spaces and nature to improve quality of life.

Accordingly, the *2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan* recognises the community's continued focus on challenges and opportunities identified in previous community strategic plans, while also acknowledging that the Shire's fortunes are tied to regional, state and federal contexts.

## 3.5 STRATEGIC RISKS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Building Economic Resilience

Muswellbrook Shire Council acknowledges both the long-term transition of the thermal coal industry and the closure and transition of coal-fired power generation and is committed to broadening the focus on the sustainability of the Shire's economic and employment base. Our region is rich in natural resources with significant mining, viticulture and equine sectors and the opportunity to attract new enterprise.

### Mining

Muswellbrook Shire's long association with mining began in the late 1800s with the commencement of the first underground coal mine. Open cut coal mining has had a presence since 1944 and is the largest employer in the Shire today, with over 30 percent of the workforce engaged in the resources sector. The Shire is home to Muswellbrook Coal, which commenced operations in 1906 and is Australia's longest continuously operating coal mine. The owner of the soon-to-close mine, the Australian arm of Japanese company Idemitsu, has unveiled a masterplan for the Muswellbrook site that will see it converted into an industrial hub with a total of four renewable energy projects and related training facilities. All mining operations, including at Mt Arthur, Bengalla, Mangoola, Mt Pleasant and Dartbrook, contribute \$4,860.5 million or 75.8% of the Shire's total regional exports.



Wollemi summer day

All industry sectors in Muswellbrook (A) ranked by Regional Exports

Industry Sector	Muswellbrook (A) (2020 Release 2)	
	\$M	%
Mining	\$4,860.491	75.8%
Electricity, Gas, Water Waste Services	\$1,082.777	16.9%
Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	\$147.295	2.3%
Manufacturing	\$119.565	1.9%
Rental, Hiring Real Estate Services	\$34.922	0.5%
Construction	\$32.415	0.5%
Wholesale Trade	\$28.397	0.4%
Transport, Postal Warehousing	\$27.282	0.4%
Administrative Support Services	\$16.835	0.3%
Financial Insurance Services	\$14.519	0.2%
Public Administration Safety	\$12.638	0.2%
Accommodation Food Services	\$12.034	0.2%
Other Services	\$8.950	0.1%
Information Media Telecommunications	\$6.080	0.1%
Professional, Scientific Technical Services	\$3.676	0.1%
Education Training	\$3.310	0.1%
Retail Trade	\$3.217	0.1%
Health Care Social Assistance	\$1.391	0.0%
Arts Recreation Services	\$0.564	0.0%
Total	\$6,416.358	100.0%

## Power Generation

AGL Macquarie is one of the country's biggest energy producers. The company's Liddell and Bayswater power stations are based in the Muswellbrook Shire and employ over 600 workers. Between them, the power stations generate enough electricity to power over three million homes each year and produce around 30 percent of the State's electricity.

AGL has announced its intention to close the Liddell power station by 2023 and in February 2022 announced that the closure of the Bayswater power station would be brought forward to no later than 2033. AGL and Council are working closely together to minimise the challenges and maximise the opportunities that will arise from a transition to renewable energy generation in the Shire in order to contribute to the further diversification of our regional, state and national economy.

## Education

Muswellbrook is strategically positioned for the efficient and effective provision of education and vocational training for both existing and emerging industries. Council has worked closely with Hunter TAFE, the University of Newcastle and industry to promote and provide higher learning pathways for local and visiting students, offer collaborative research opportunities with established and new industries and support the diversification of the Shire's economy.

Hunter TAFE and Council collaborated to construct the Tertiary Education Centre in the Muswellbrook Town Centre to facilitate higher education delivery. During the past term of Council, it expanded to house the University of Newcastle and works are progressing on the construction of the next stage of the Centre.

Driven by the community's expectations, Council is working with industry and the research sector to identify new opportunities and reduce the Shire's future dependency on a mining dominated local economy. Council is fostering the transition towards new industries such as renewable energy, bioresources and intensive agriculture, while continuing to support the growth of our existing viticulture and equine industries. The diversification of our economy can be achieved by promoting and building on the strengths of the region with our skilled workforce and existing infrastructure assets.

## Thoroughbred Industry

The origins of the Upper Hunter's thoroughbred breeding industry date back over 150 years and have earned a global reputation for excellence and success. It is one of only three International Centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence. The others are Kentucky, USA and Newmarket, UK.

The Hunter Valley's landscape, soil, air, water availability and specialised workforce makes the Shire an ideal location for the horse breeding industry. This combination ensures that nearly half of all the thoroughbred bloodstock born in Australia come from this area.

Muswellbrook Shire is home to the largest critical mass of thoroughbred rearing in Australia, with a total employment in the vicinity of 200 people located in an arc from Widden Valley through Sandy Hollow to Jerry's Plains. Two of the largest thoroughbred horse studs in the southern hemisphere are located in the Muswellbrook Shire.

## Viticulture Industry

Local wine is high quality and integral to the Upper Hunter food and wine offering and while the Upper Hunter viticulture industry is small, it is an internationally acclaimed wine tourism destination renowned for its quality and the volume of wine production and processing.

The earliest evidence of grape growing in the Upper Hunter dates back to 1860 when vines were planted at the meeting of Wybong Creek and the Goulburn River. The wine from these grapes gained international recognition and established a proud tradition for the Upper Hunter as a centre for wine production that continues today.



## Government Services

As the principal regional centre of the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook is the location of several regional agency offices of the State and Federal Government including the Hunter New England Local Health District, Corrective Services, Juvenile Justice, Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Police Local Area Command and the Department of Human Services.

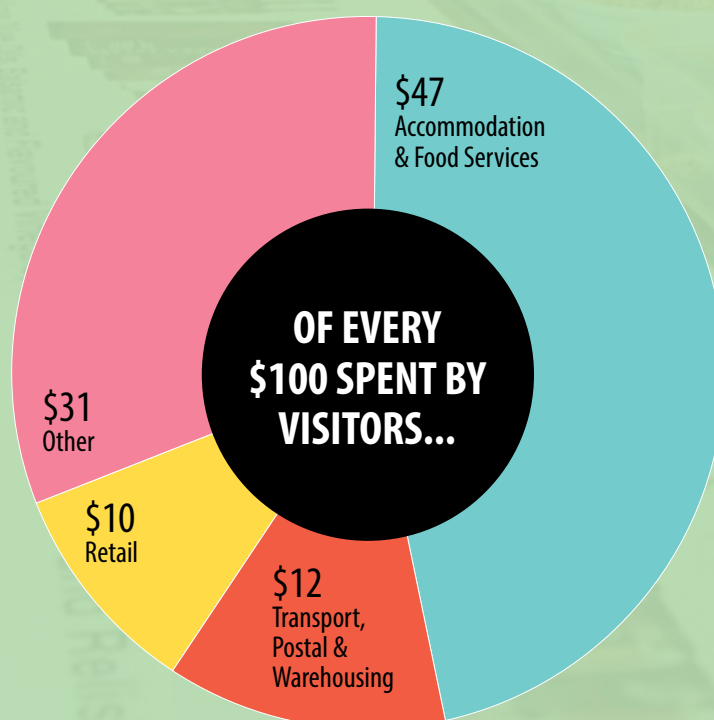
Centrally located between New England and Lower Hunter, Muswellbrook Shire provides an excellent geographical advantage. This has established it as the regional centre of the Upper Hunter, allowing government agencies to efficiently service the surrounding areas.

## Tourism

Muswellbrook Shire is home to a significant proportion of the equine and wine industries in the Upper Hunter Region, along with boutique producers of olives, cheese, camel milk and other products. A key location advantage for the Shire as a tourist destination is its proximity to the already popular tourist destinations such as the Lower Hunter and the Blue Mountains. In addition, the New England and the Golden Highways, along with Bylong Valley Way are used as arteries to the New England, Central West and Lower Hunter.

The total value of output from accommodation and food services for Muswellbrook is estimated at \$75.3 million, which is 0.9% of total output. The total related employment estimate for the Shire was 505 jobs, which represents 5% of the total workforce.

Most visitors to the region are from NSW. Similarly, in the previous two years Sydney was the largest source of visitors to the region, followed by regional NSW and Queensland.





All industry sectors in Muswellbrook (A) ranked by portion of \$1 spent by tourist:

REMPAN – 2020 descending order	Muswellbrook (A) (2020 Release 2)		
Industry Sector	\$	%	Hundred dollars
Accommodation Food Services	\$0.43	43.3%	\$43.00
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$0.11	11.0%	\$11.00
Retail Trade	\$0.11	10.7%	\$11.00
Manufacturing	\$0.10	10.1%	\$10.00
Ownership of Dwellings	\$0.06	5.9%	\$6.00
Wholesale Trade	\$0.04	3.9%	\$4.00
Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	\$0.04	3.8%	\$4.00
Arts Recreation Services	\$0.03	3.5%	\$3.00
Education Training	\$0.03	3.3%	\$3.00
Administrative Support Services	\$0.01	1.2%	\$1.00
Rental, Hiring Real Estate Services	\$0.01	1.1%	\$1.00
Other Services	\$0.01	1.0%	\$1.00
Information Media Telecommunications	\$0.01	0.7%	\$1.00
Health Care Social Assistance	\$0.00	0.5%	\$0.00
Mining	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Electricity, Gas, Water Waste Services	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Construction	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Financial Insurance Services	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Professional, Scientific Technical Services	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
Public Administration Safety	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

## Local Challenges and Opportunities by theme:

<b>Local economic prosperity challenges and opportunities</b>
Uncertainty in the coal and energy industry, associated direct and indirect job losses, and impact more broadly upon the Shire's economic base
The growth of the knowledge, creativity, and digital economy and a reshaping labour market
Record high net migration from capital cities to regional areas
Housing affordability and accessibility
Land use conflict
The movement from a linear economy (take, make, waste) to a circular economy (reduce, re-use, recycle)
Growing export demand for agricultural product
The continued growth of the services sector and access to services in regional centres
<b>Local social equity challenges and opportunities</b>
Liveability and amenity - the extent to which the general well-being, health and quality of life of residents is supported physically, aesthetically, and in terms of accessibility
Socio-economic and geographic disadvantage for people living in social housing
Link between early childhood education and social advantage
An ageing population and changing retirement patterns
A high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in our community
Community dissatisfaction with the quantity of quality youth services and facilities
<b>Local environmental sustainability challenges and opportunities</b>
Impacts of mining on the environment today and in the future
Loss of native vegetation and vegetation connectivity
Poor riverside natural environments and limited public access to waterways
Impacts of increasing human activity upon the local environment
A changing climate
<b>Local cultural vitality challenges and opportunities</b>
Preservation of the Shire's history and heritage
Limited cultural participation
Access to national and international arts and culture
<b>Local community infrastructure challenges and opportunities</b>
Infrastructure to support Muswellbrook as a service centre for the Upper Hunter
Limited all abilities access to Council's facilities
Ageing Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
Incomplete footpaths & cycleway links
<b>Local community leadership challenges and opportunities</b>
Insufficient community consultation and participation in council planning and decision making
Understanding community expectations for the delivery of appropriate, efficient and effective Council services and facilities
Increasingly competitive market for attracting and retaining a suitably skilled Council workforce

## 4. Community Engagement

Over the past 5-year term (2016 – 2021), Council has consulted and engaged with Shire communities and stakeholders to inform the review of this Community Strategic Plan and the entire suite of Council's new integrated planning documents. Community members have been invited to share their attitudes and ideas about a wide-range of local issues, including their level of satisfaction with Council's services and facilities and their perceptions of the major challenges and opportunities affecting the region's future via:

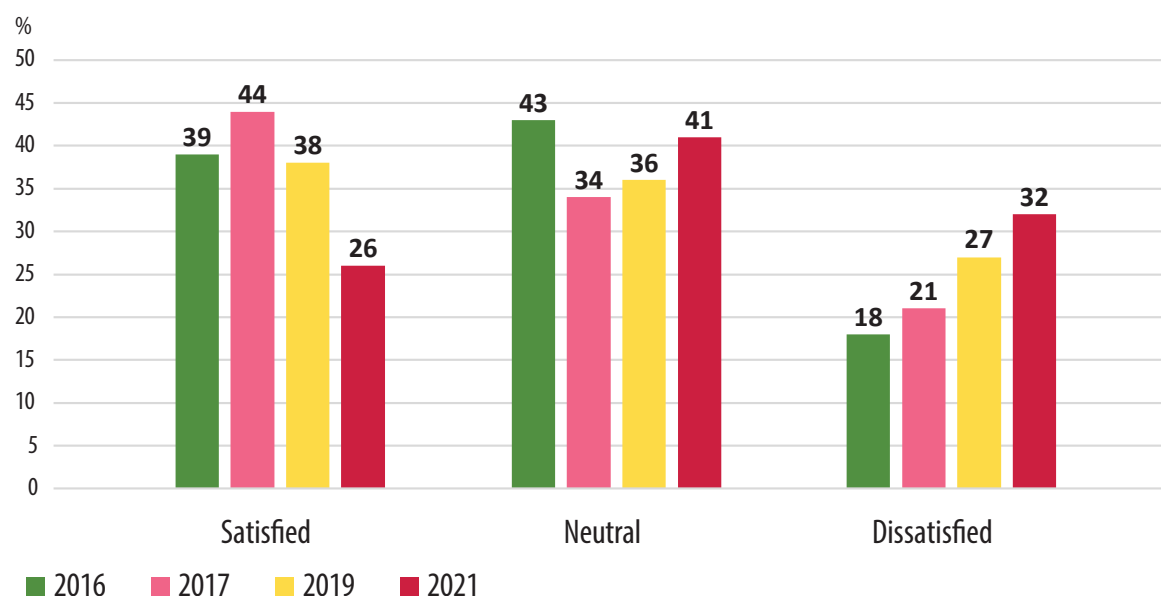
- › 6 random and statistically representative telephone surveys;
- › 2 Community Panels;
- › 1 online survey;
- › Listening Posts at Denman Memorial Hall and Muswellbrook Marketplace during the public exhibition period.

### What the community has told Council:

Overall satisfaction with Council has fallen over the past term to 26% in 2021 after reaching a peak satisfaction rate of 44 % in 2017 (see graph below). In 2021 the majority of respondents struggled to pinpoint a reason for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction score, with 18% indicating that there was 'room for improvement' and a further 18% stating that 'Council do a good job'. Where specific issues were identified, the top concerns were:

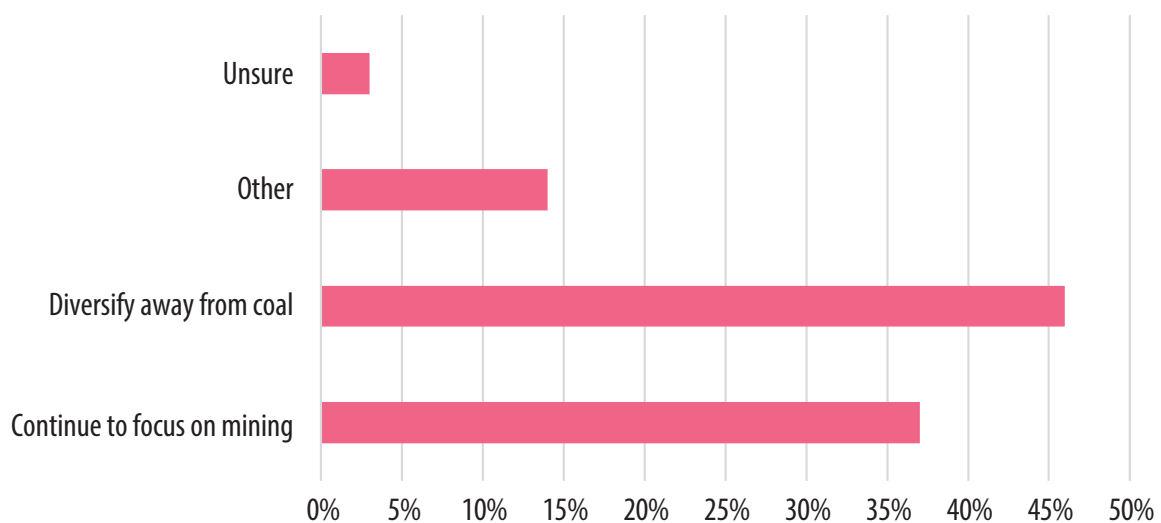
- › poor community engagement (13%),
- › 'problems with roads/parking' (7%), and
- › 'rates are too high' (6%).

**Overall Satisfaction with Council 2016 - 2021**



In light of ongoing debate about the Shire's economic future, in 2021 Council asked respondents: *Some people think the Shire should continue to focus on coal mining for its future prosperity, while others think it should be trying to diversify into other industries. Which category do you fall into?*

**Some people think the Shire should continue to focus on coal mining for its future prosperity, while others think it should be trying to diversify into other industries. Which category do you fall into?**



Some other noteworthy findings included:

- › The proportion of residents agreeing that “there are good employment prospects for locals” in Muswellbrook has risen 35% since the survey in 2016, while agreement that “I feel safe walking in my local streets at night” increased by 9%;
- › When asked how Council should spend a hypothetical \$5m windfall, residents focussed predominantly on the need for additional youth facilities and services. Roads and parking were the second most-mentioned item, along with community events and facilities, and enhanced sporting facilities;
- › Major perceived opportunities for the Shire in 2021 included additional retail (13%), more coal mining (10%), agriculture and agribusiness (7%), and new energy sources (6%).

- › The largest challenges identified by respondents included the uncertain future of the coal industry and coal-fired power generation (28%) and related job insecurity or unemployment (16%).





Following is a list of Council's stakeholder groups, including how we engage and communicate with them and why our relationships are important.

WHO	HOW	WHY
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Social media</li> <li>› Publications</li> <li>› Community Panel</li> <li>› Community forums</li> <li>› Events &amp; ceremonies</li> <li>› Council meetings</li> <li>› Council offices</li> <li>› Surveys</li> <li>› Annual Report</li> </ul>	<p>The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council provides leadership, partnership, representation, information and efficient and effective services and facilities.</p>
<b>Ratepayers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Rates notices</li> <li>› Social media</li> <li>› Community Panel</li> <li>› Community forums</li> <li>› Events &amp; ceremonies</li> <li>› Council meetings</li> <li>› Council offices</li> <li>› Surveys</li> <li>› Annual Report</li> </ul>	<p>Ratepayers contribute knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council generates sustainable growth and return to the community.</p>
<b>Council Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› The Magpie Newsletters</li> <li>› General Manager's Newsletter</li> <li>› General Manager's Forums</li> <li>› Manex</li> <li>› Managers' Meetings</li> <li>› Tool box talks</li> <li>› Posters</li> <li>› Intranet</li> <li>› Email</li> <li>› Staff events and training</li> <li>› Staff Awards</li> <li>› Staff satisfaction and well-being surveys</li> </ul>	<p>Staff members contribute valuable knowledge, skills and labour for our operations.</p> <p>Council provides employment, training opportunities and flexible and supportive work arrangements.</p>
<b>Community, Sporting &amp; Cultural Organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Grants programs</li> <li>› Sustainability Hub</li> <li>› Social media</li> <li>› Community Panel</li> <li>› Community forums</li> <li>› Events &amp; ceremonies</li> <li>› Council meetings</li> <li>› Council offices</li> <li>› Surveys</li> </ul>	<p>The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council provides civic leadership, partnership, representation and efficient and effective services and facilities.</p>

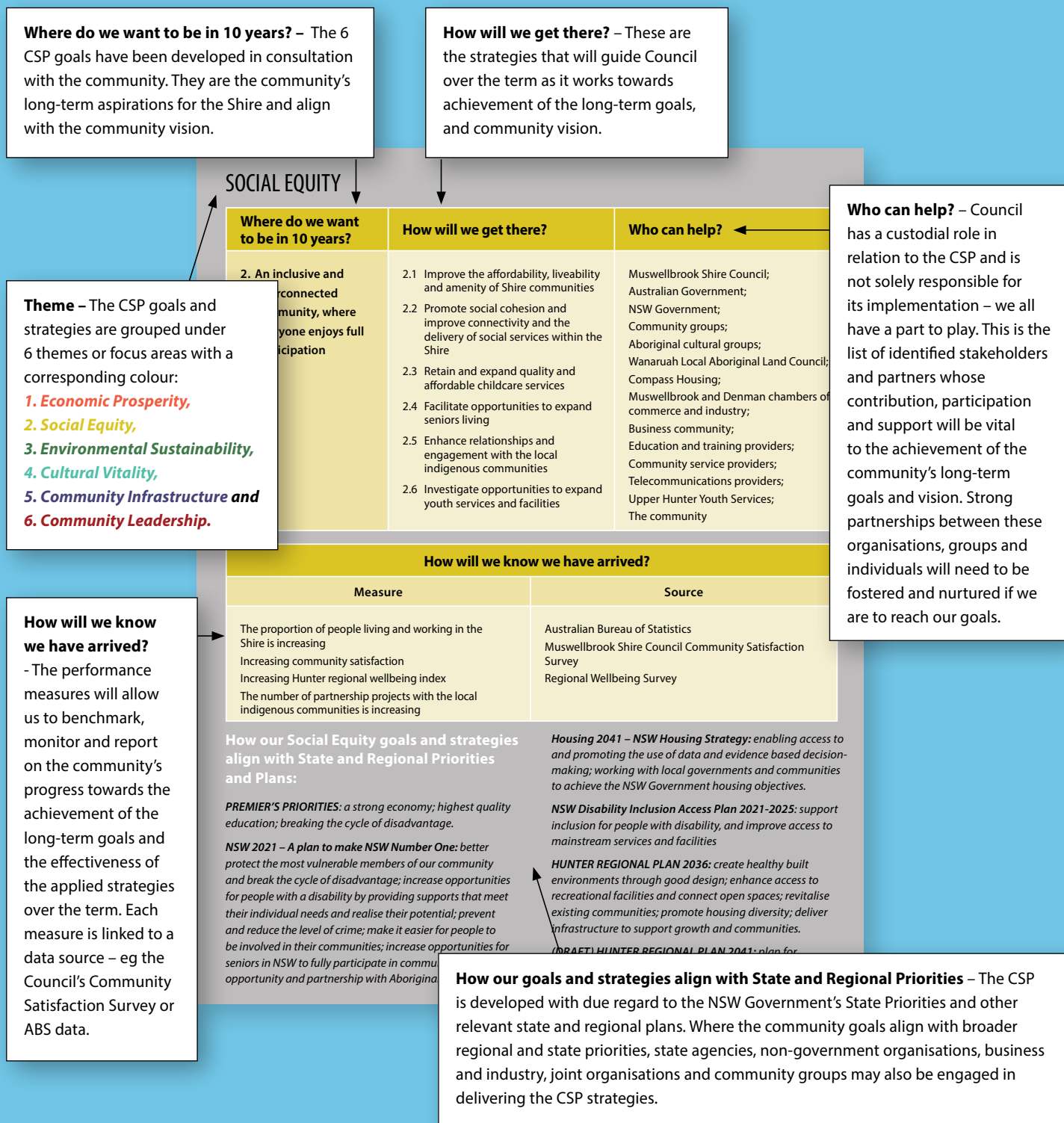
WHO	HOW	WHY
<b>Muswellbrook business and industry sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Participation in MCCI breakfasts</li> <li>› Annual Report</li> <li>› Other publications</li> <li>› Meetings</li> <li>› Surveys</li> </ul>	<p>The local business and industry community provides employment and economic growth.</p> <p>Council provides guidance, support and opportunity.</p>
<b>Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre</li> <li>› Upper Hunter Country Visitor Guide</li> <li>› Events</li> </ul>	<p>Visitors bring economic benefits to the Shire including more local employment opportunities.</p> <p>Council provides high standard facilities and services.</p>
<b>Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>› Formal meetings</li> <li>› Correspondence</li> <li>› Forums and Conferences</li> <li>› Compliance reporting</li> <li>› Grant applications and reporting</li> </ul>	<p>The Federal and NSW State Governments provide partnerships, funding and networking opportunities.</p> <p>Council provides resources, partnerships and networks.</p>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Media releases</li> <li>› Media alerts and briefings</li> <li>› Social media</li> <li>› Interviews</li> <li>› Paid advertising</li> </ul>	<p>The media raises the community's awareness of services, facilities, events, emergencies and issues of importance.</p> <p>Council contributes content and comment for publication and broadcast.</p>



# 5.Strategic Direction

## 5.1 HOW TO READ THIS CSP

Following is an explanation about the various elements of the CSP to help you navigate the plan:



## 5.2 COMMUNITY VISION

*“Engaging with our community to achieve an inclusive, vibrant and sustainable future”*

## 5.3 COMMUNITY VALUES

We value:

**Community Wellbeing**

**Economic Prosperity**

**Social Equity and Inclusion**

**Environmental Sustainability**

**Cultural Vitality**

**Open communication and community engagement**

**Collaborative, accountable and transparent community leadership**









## 5.4 COUNCIL'S ROLE AND SERVICES

Local Government is the most responsive, agile and community driven level of government in Australia. Council, as the local government authority, is responsible for day-to-day community services and infrastructure, ranging from kerbside bin collection, local roads and the public swimming pools in Denman and Muswellbrook to the provision of water and sewer across the Shire. Council also operates the Regional Art Centre, the Denman Memorial Hall, libraries and other cultural activities for residents and visitors alike.

It is important to distinguish between local government (Council) and the State and Federal governments that have responsibility for other services (see table below). The Federal Government is responsible for defence, trade, foreign affairs and the collection and distribution of tax, whereas the State Government looks after schools, hospitals, public transport and national parks.

Federal Government	State Government	Local Government (Council)
immigration	local governments	water and sewerage services*
foreign affairs	education (schools)	rubbish collection and recycling
quarantine	health (hospitals)	local roads maintenance
defence	public transport (buses and trains)	parking
trade	public housing	footpaths and cycleways
currency	prisons	building regulation
taxation	national parks	pet control
communications (post, phone and internet)	main roads	parks
aged care	consumer affairs	sports fields
Centrelink	emergency services	swimming pools
Medicare	utilities (water, electricity and gas supply)	libraries
banking	environment	community halls
marriage and divorce	child welfare	local events
insurance		

\*provided by 89 of the 128 councils in NSW

Councils are not responsible for the decisions of private enterprise, although Muswellbrook Shire Council is committed through its Job Creation Fund to support and encourage local businesses to establish, grow and flourish in the Shire.

## On behalf of the community Muswellbrook Shire Council maintains:



**a road network of  
almost 628 km**



**approximately 86 kms  
of stormwater drainage  
measures and over 1,427  
rural culverts**



**67 carparks**



**185 km of kerb  
and guttering**



**47 km of footpaths  
and cycleways**



**24 parks**



**7 sporting fields**



**3 Cemeteries**



**2 Swimming Pools**



**11 Rural Fire Stations**

## Council manages, maintains and provides services to the Shire communities via community owned facilities and infrastructure including:

- › Denman and Muswellbrook libraries;
- › Denman and Muswellbrook aquatic centres;
- › Muswellbrook Waste and Recycling Centre;
- › Denman Waste Transfer Station;
- › Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow water treatment plants;
- › Muswellbrook and Denman Recycled Water Treatment Works;
- › Works Depot;
- › Muswellbrook Administration Centre;
- › Community Halls;
- › Muswellbrook and Denman Indoor Sports Centres;
- › Denman Memorial Hall;
- › Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre;
- › Muswellbrook, Denman and Giants Creek Cemeteries.

## 5.5 STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND AGENCIES

Council partners with the following corporations, organisations, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates (or other bodies):

- › Arts Upper Hunter
- › Australian Local Government Association
- › Community Consultation Groups for the mines in our Shire: Mangoola, Bengalla, Mt Pleasant, Mt Arthur, Muswellbrook Coal, Malabar Coal and Dartbrook Coal
- › Create NSW
- › Denman and District Development Association
- › Denman Chamber of Commerce
- › Destination NSW
- › Healthy and Well Upper Hunter
- › Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils and Group Entities; and Strategic Services Australia
- › Hunter Research Foundation
- › Integrated Living Australia
- › Liddell Transition and Community Dialogue Group
- › Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee (run by BHP)
- › Local Government Professionals
- › Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- › National General Assembly of Local Government
- › NSW Health and Local Area Health
- › NSW Local Government Association
- › NSW Rural Fire and Emergency Services
- › NSW Sport and Recreation
- › NSW Water Directorate
- › Planning Institute of Australia (NSW division)
- › Regional Arts NSW
- › Richard Gill National Music Academy
- › Royal Lifesaving NSW
- › Sandy Hollow Progress Association
- › Standards Australia
- › State Library NSW
- › Statecover
- › Statewide Mutual
- › TAFE NSW
- › Transcare Services
- › University of Newcastle
- › Upper Hunter Community Services
- › Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
- › Upper Hunter Domestic Violence Service
- › Upper Hunter Drug and Alcohol Service
- › Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Party
- › Upper Hunter Homeless Services
- › Upper Hunter Landcare
- › Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue, (coordinated by NSW Minerals Council)
- › Upper Hunter Tourism
- › Upper Hunter Water Alliance
- › Upper Hunter Youth Services
- › Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council

## 6. Goals, Strategies and Measuring Success





## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
1. A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries	1.1 Support job growth within the Shire 1.2 Diversify the economy, facilitate the development of intensive agriculture, innovative manufacturing, health services and other growth industries 1.3 Facilitate greater access to higher education 1.4 Develop Muswellbrook as a regional centre	Muswellbrook Shire Council; Australian Government; NSW Government; Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils; Industry groups; Research & development organisations; Muswellbrook and Denman chambers of commerce and industry; Tertiary education providers; Telecommunications providers; Mining and energy producers; The community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
The Shire's employment growth reflects workforce growth	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Increasing Hunter Region business confidence & sentiment	Hunter Research Foundation
Increasing number and diversity of businesses and industries in the Shire	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Increase in local matriculation rates	Department of Education
Increasing community satisfaction	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey

### How our Economic Prosperity goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans:

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** a strong economy; highest quality education; breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** improve the performance of the NSW economy; drive economic growth in regional NSW; strengthen the NSW skill base; improve education and learning outcomes for all students.

**NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint** - a population that is healthy, well-educated and skilled for high-income jobs of the future; a diversified economy in favour of fast-growing industries and services and be expanding quickly enough to lift living standards; productive and growing regions, serviced by world-class infrastructure and transport links; innovative businesses and industries of the future;

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** enhance inter-regional linkages to support economic growth; transform the productivity of the Upper Hunter; develop advanced manufacturing, defence and aerospace hubs; promote innovative small business and growth in the service sectors; grow tourism in the region; protect and enhance agricultural productivity; manage the ongoing use of natural resources; diversify and grow the energy sector; protect the economic functions of employment land; deliver infrastructure to support growth and communities; strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.

**(DRAFT) HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041:** diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity; ensure economic self-determination for Aboriginal communities; plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities.



## SOCIAL EQUITY

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
2. An inclusive and interconnected community, where everyone enjoys full participation	2.1 Improve the affordability, liveability and amenity of Shire communities 2.2 Promote social cohesion and improve connectivity and the delivery of social services within the Shire 2.3 Retain and expand quality and affordable childcare services 2.4 Facilitate opportunities to expand seniors living 2.5 Enhance relationships and engagement with the local indigenous communities 2.6 Investigate opportunities to expand services and facilities for youth and children within the Shire	Muswellbrook Shire Council; Australian Government; NSW Government; Community groups; Aboriginal cultural groups; Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council; Compass Housing; Muswellbrook and Denman chambers of commerce and industry; Business community; Education and training providers; Community service providers; Telecommunications providers; Upper Hunter Youth Services; The community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
The proportion of people living and working in the Shire is increasing	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Increasing community satisfaction	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey
Increasing Hunter regional wellbeing index	Regional Wellbeing Survey
The number of partnership projects with the local indigenous communities is increasing	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure

### How our Social Equity goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans:

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** a strong economy; highest quality education; breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage; increase opportunities for people with a disability by providing supports that meet their individual needs and realise their potential; prevent and reduce the level of crime; make it easier for people to be involved in their communities; increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life; fostering opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people.

**Housing 2041 – NSW Housing Strategy:** enabling access to and promoting the use of data and evidence based decision-making; working with local governments and communities to achieve the NSW Government housing objectives.

**NSW Disability Inclusion Access Plan 2021-2025:** support inclusion for people with disability, and improve access to mainstream services and facilities

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** create healthy built environments through good design; enhance access to recreational facilities and connect open spaces; revitalise existing communities; promote housing diversity; deliver infrastructure to support growth and communities.

**(DRAFT) HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041:** plan for “Nimble Neighbourhoods”, diverse housing and sequenced development

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
3. An environmentally sensitive and sustainable community	3.1 Advocate for best practice mined-land rehabilitation to include local workforce participation, progressive, quality final landforms, and fewer and shallower voids 3.2 Improve native vegetation connectivity across the upper Hunter Region 3.3 Enhance our local rivers and creeks to improve environmental outcomes and access for recreation 3.4 Support initiatives which reduce the community's impact on the environment 3.5 Support federal and state initiatives to reduce the impacts of climate change	Muswellbrook Shire Council; Australian Government; NSW Government; Hunter Joint Organisation; Local mines and mining industry groups; Development Industry; Research and development orgs; Landcare; Community groups; Muswellbrook and Denman chambers of commerce and industry; Business community; Energy providers; The community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
Increasing community satisfaction	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey
Increasing native biodiversity in the Shire's natural areas	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Rivers and creeks are a recognised recreational destination	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey
Muswellbrook's heat profile is improving	Muswellbrook tree-canopy survey
Decreasing waste to landfill/increasing material separated from waste for recycling	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure

### How our Environmental Sustainability goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** Well-connected communities with quality local environments

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** protect our natural environment; increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments; ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters

**NSW DPIE – Net Zero Plan, Stage 1: 2020 – 2030:** drive uptake of proven emissions reduction technologies;

empower consumers and businesses to make sustainable choices; invest in the next wave of emissions reduction innovation; ensure the NSW Government leads by example

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** protect and connect natural areas; sustain water quality and security; increase resilience to hazards and climate change

**(DRAFT) HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041:** increase green infrastructure and quality public spaces and improve the natural environment; reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure

## CULTURAL VITALITY

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
4. A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging	4.1 Conserve the heritage and history of the Shire 4.2 Facilitate options to improve participation in cultural activities in the Shire 4.3 Host and support a diverse range of cultural activities and events which create a sense of identity and belonging, engage the local community and attract visitors	Muswellbrook Shire Council; Australian Government; NSW Government; Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils; Research and development organisations; Sporting and leisure organisations; Cultural groups; Muswellbrook and Denman chambers of commerce and industry; Business community; The community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
Number of properties receiving Local Heritage Fund payments is trending upwards	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Increasing community satisfaction	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey
Increasing attendances at Council events	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure

### How our Cultural Vitality goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans:

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** *a strong economy*

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** *make it easier for people to be involved in their communities; enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities*

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** *grow tourism in the region; identify and protect the region's heritage; revitalise existing communities*

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
5. Effective and efficient infrastructure that is appropriate to the needs of our community	5.1 Construct and maintain well-planned community infrastructure that is safe, reliable, and provides agreed levels of service 5.2 Improve all abilities access to Council facilities 5.2 Provide safe, secure and reliable water supply and sewer services 5.3 Ensure road, footpath and cycleway networks are integrated and allow for the safe movement of residents and visitors	Muswellbrook Shire Council; NSW Government; Transport for NSW; Department of Planning; Environment and Industry; Developers; Mining and energy providers; The community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
Asset condition inspections demonstrate asset condition trending upwards	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Local infrastructure delivery supports planned growth and community needs	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Increasing number of accessibility upgrades at Council facilities	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Annual quality audits indicate compliance with best practice	Audit reports to Council
Increasing amount of new shared pathways	Compliance with Council's adopted Active Transport Strategy
Increasing community satisfaction	Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey

### How our Community Infrastructure goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans:

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** a strong economy; well-connected communities with quality local environments

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** invest in critical infrastructure; build liveable centres; secure potable water supplies; ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** grow centres and renewal corridors; deliver infrastructure to support growth and communities

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Where do we want to be in 10 years?	How will we get there?	Who can help?
6. Collaborative and responsive leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community	6.1 Enable genuine and well-informed community participation in decision making 6.2 Ensure Council is well managed, appropriately resourced, effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to its communities and stakeholders 6.3 Ensure Council is a best practice employer providing a safe, happy, suitably resourced and productive workplace	Muswellbrook Shire Council; NSW Government; Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee; Councillors and Council staff; The Community

How will we know we have arrived?	
Measure	Source
Increasing number of unique users, page views and time spent on Council's website	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Increasing number of people following Council on Facebook and LinkedIn	Muswellbrook Shire Council internal measure
Increasing community and customer service satisfaction	Community Satisfaction Survey
Increasing staff wellbeing index	Staff Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey

### How our Community Leadership goals and strategies align with State and Regional Priorities and Plans:

**PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:** *a strong economy; well-connected communities with quality local environments; putting customer at the centre of everything we do*

**NSW 2021 – A plan to make NSW Number One:** *restore confidence and integrity in the planning system; restore trust in State and Local Government as a service provider; improve government transparency by increasing access to government information; involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects*

**HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2036:** *monitor housing and employment supply and demand*



# 7. Democratic Governance

## THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body of the Council consists of twelve (12) councillors elected for four years. The Chair of Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Mayor of Muswellbrook) and the Deputy Chair are elected by Councillors every two years.

### The Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor holds a number of Council delegations and some statutory responsibilities to make determinations on behalf of the Governing Body of the Council between Council meetings. The Mayor is responsible to the Governing Body for the determinations he or she makes.



#### **MAYOR – Councillor Steve Reynolds**

Second term councillor Steve was born and raised in Muswellbrook and is now raising his own family in the Shire. He was elected Mayor

of Muswellbrook in January 2022 and, as a lifetime local, fully understands the history, spirit and needs of the town and its surrounding areas. His priorities include upholding the pledge to improve communication and engagement within the community and delivering key capital projects alongside a team of dedicated councillors.

[Steven.Reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Steven.Reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



#### **DEPUTY MAYOR – Councillor Jennifer Lecky**

As a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW) and offering many years of invaluable experience

on Council, Jennifer's passions are her community and supporting women entering politics.

During the current term she would like to see revenue contributions from mining companies used to benefit the community and work towards developing a vibrant region.

[Jennifer.Lecky@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jennifer.Lecky@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



#### **Councillor Amanda Barry**

First term councillor and Denman resident, Amanda is looking forward to being part of a strong council that can be trusted and respected.

An advocate of community engagement, she wants to create a shared vision for the future which includes efficient and effective services and protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

[Amanda.Barry@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.Barry@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



#### **Councillor Mark Bowditch**

Second term councillor Mark is involved in the environmental revegetation industry and runs trainee programs for young people giving them practical skills to

enhance future opportunities.

He wants to represent the community without an agenda, support homeowners on issues around development in the Shire and focus on listening to residents.

[Mark.Bowditch@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Bowditch@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



#### **Councillor De-Anne Douglas**

First term councillor and long-term Muswellbrook resident, De-Anne brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience to the role.

As manager of the Muswellbrook PCYC for more than 15 years she has developed deep community connections and a strong local voice. Her priorities include improved access to medical services and delivering the planned Community Hub.

[De-Anne.Douglas@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:De-Anne.Douglas@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Jeff Drayton**

Born and raised in Denman before relocating to Muswellbrook and with previous experience on Council Jeff wants to see this new Council refocus on real issues and best

outcomes for the community.

While acknowledging that Council is financially strong he wants to ensure that consultations with stakeholders are strong and transparent.

[Jeff.Drayton@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jeff.Drayton@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Graeme McNeill**

Incumbent councillor Graeme is in his third term on Council. As spokesperson for sport and recreation in the previous two terms, Graeme's priorities include

pathways, cycleways, improvements to roads and investment in the Shire's youth.

His hope for this new term is for Council to have a strong focus on community engagement.

[Graeme.McNeill@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Graeme.McNeill@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Louise Dunn**

Long-term resident, schoolteacher and first term councillor Louise has a strong sense of community and has resolved to bring the Shire back to being caring and compassionate.

While acknowledging that carbon neutrality and sustainable energy is the way of the future, she also understands that coal mining is vital to the economy and would also like to see more parks and open spaces.

[Louise.Dunn@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Louise.Dunn@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Rod Scholes**

Third term councillor and Muswellbrook resident since 1982 Rod and his family have contributed greatly to the Shire community.

He has served as deputy mayor and mayor during his time on Council and brings a wealth of experience to the table. He wants to continue to improve the Shire's liveability, infrastructure and services.

[Rod.Scholes@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rod.Scholes@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Rohit Mahajan**

Born in India, Rohit is now a proud Australian citizen, Muswellbrook resident and successful businessman.

Running his own business puts him face-to-face with the community daily and he shares their concerns regarding local business and employment opportunities. With sound relationships in place, he wants to be their voice on Council.

[Rohit.Mahajan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rohit.Mahajan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Brett Woodruff**

With strong connections to the Shire spanning four decades, Denman resident Brett wants to continue to represent the region with both head and heart.

Council's longest serving councillor, this is his sixth term, he is determined to provide residents with guidance, support and governance. His mantra is to look back and appreciate the past, enjoy the now and plan for the future.

[Brett.Woodruff@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Brett.Woodruff@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### **Councillor Darryl Marshall**

A shire resident for 56 years, first term councillor Darryl has worked across the wine, agriculture and coal industries and ran his own contracting business for 20 years.

Now semi-retired he has the time to commit to Council and pledges to serve the people of the region, work hard for the community and bring a vibrant voice to Council.

[Darryl.Marshall@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Darryl.Marshall@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

# Notes







