



DRAFT

Muswellbrook Shire Community Engagement Strategy

September 2022

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

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



The Community Vision articulated in our Muswellbrook Shire 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan – ***engaging with our community to achieve an inclusive, vibrant and sustainable future*** – makes it abundantly clear that community engagement needs to be at the heart and centre of everything we do at Council.

We are a diverse community with many voices and points of view when it comes to identifying solutions for priority challenges such as job creation, improved educational opportunities, town centre revitalisation and liveability. At the same time, we share many common values including community wellbeing, economic prosperity, social equity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, cultural vitality and collaborative, transparent, accountable community leadership.

By directing resources to community engagement, Council seeks to ensure that our assets, facilities, events and services continue to be efficient, effective and relevant to the needs of our community. At the same time, we hope to encourage greater understanding of, and broader participation in, Council's decision-making processes.

The greatest challenge for Council is ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to have a say by seeking to eliminate or at least reduce the impacts of potential barriers to participation including, but not limited to, age, literacy, gender, ethnicity, ability, access to technology or facilities, competing priorities and obligations.

This Community Engagement Strategy is Council's framework for continuous and meaningful community engagement.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Cr Steven Reynolds
Mayor of Muswellbrook

1 INTRODUCTION

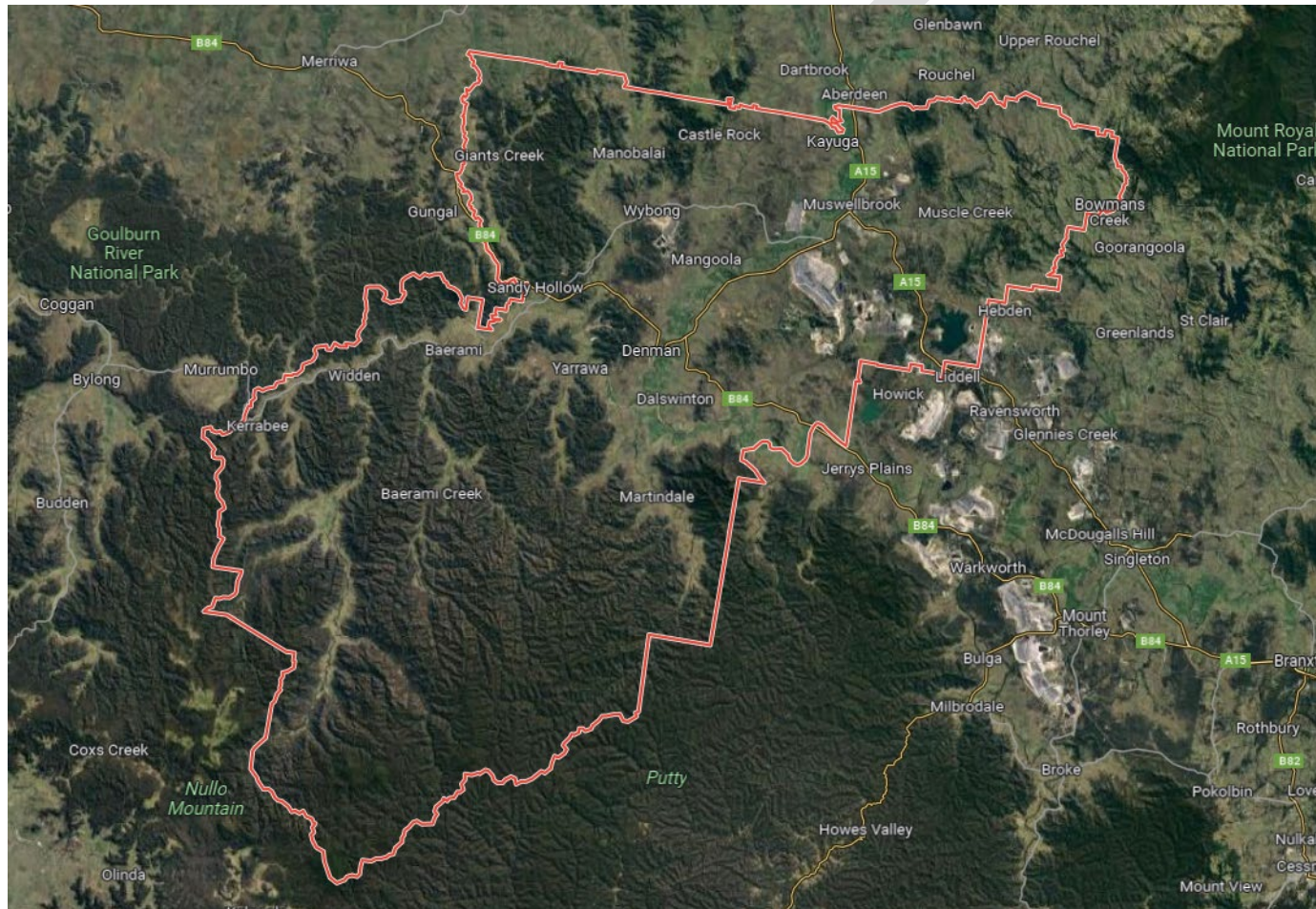


Figure 1: Muswellbrook Shire

1.1 BACKGROUND

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.

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

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

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.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Council must comply with several pieces of legislation that set out when we must initiate consultation:

- The *Local Government Act 1993* requires that Council establish and implement a strategy (its Community Engagement Strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs, and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters);
- The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* also requires that all councils outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policy-making and assessment (Council's Community Participation Plan outlines the exhibition and notification requirements under the EP&A Act. This is available for viewing on Council's website at <https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/policies/>)

This Community Engagement Strategy has been developed in accordance with these requirements.

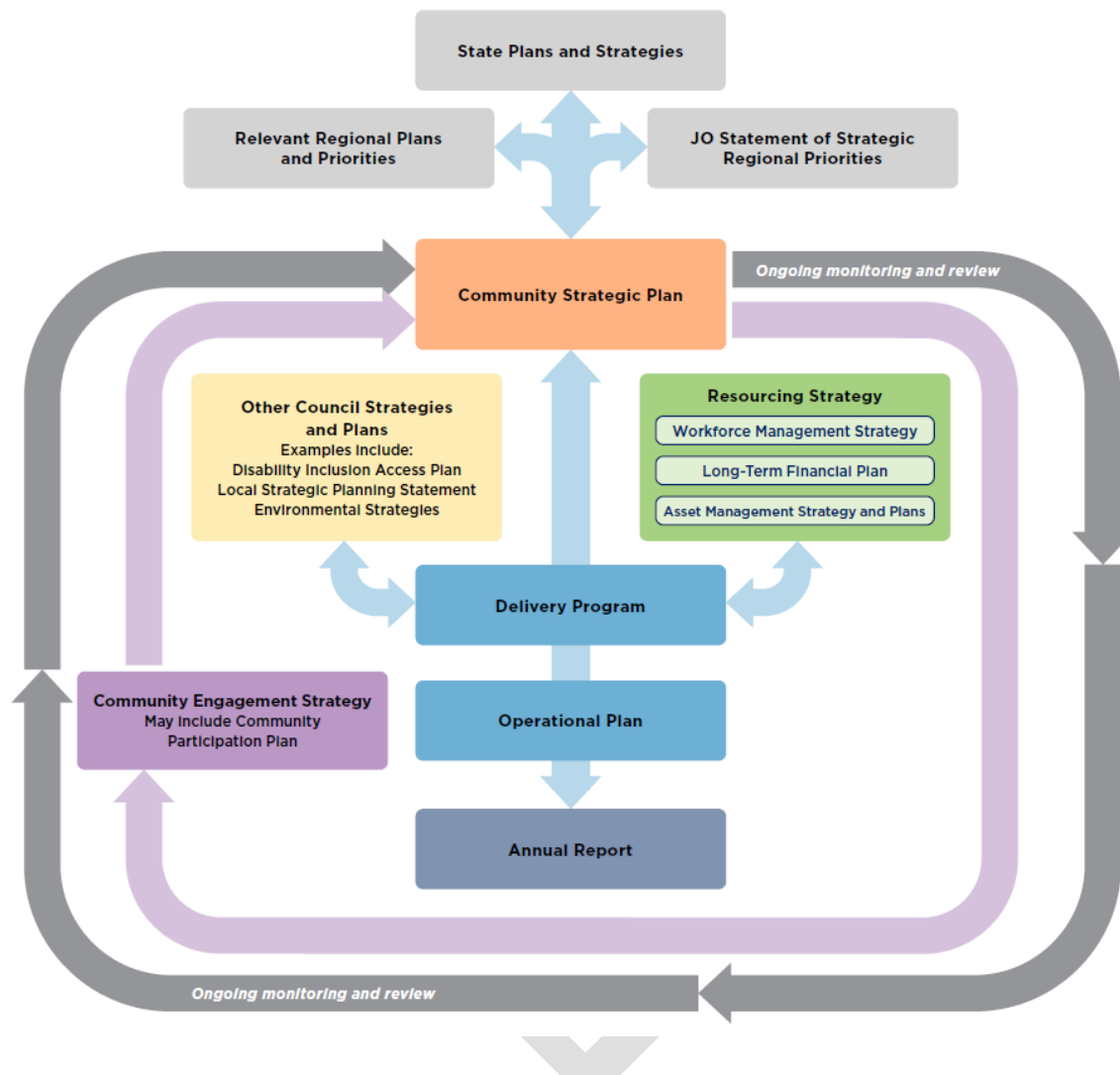


Figure 2: NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework was introduced by the NSW Government in 2009 and stems from the central assumption that all council planning should originate from a sound understanding of the community's expectations around priorities and service levels.

It includes a series of interrelated documents that together provide a rigorous, consistent approach to community planning across all NSW local councils, while also ensuring alignment with regional and state priorities.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Community engagement is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives. It is ongoing, promoting open discussion and shared responsibilities for decisions.

It enables better problem solving, leading to decisions that are balanced and informed and results in better outcomes. It supports transparency, builds trust in the decision-making process and an understanding of how and why decisions are made.

Council recognises that people have a right to be informed and to have a say on projects that are important to them or may impact on their daily lives. Community engagement gives Council a better understanding of community views and helps us make more informed decisions and deliver better services.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY?

Our community includes the many different individuals, groups and organisations that have a vested interest in our Shire, including:

- people that live or own a property here
- local Aboriginal communities and agencies
- people who work or study here
- people that visit the local area
- business owners and operators
- resident and ratepayer associations
- community, sporting and environmental groups
- community agencies that provide services to and/or advocate for people in the local area
- business and industry associations
- developers and investors
- neighbouring councils and regional bodies
- government agencies
- local members (state and federal).

1.2 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES GUIDING ENGAGEMENT

This Community Engagement Strategy identifies the relevant stakeholder groups within our community and outlines when, how and why each stakeholder group will be able to provide input into Council's long-term planning and decision making, based on the following social justice principles:

- Equity: the whole community has fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life;
- Access: every effort is made to include hard to reach or vulnerable groups;
- Participation: everyone is empowered to have their voices heard and understand how decisions are made;
- Rights: opportunities provided for people of all abilities and backgrounds to participate in community life.

These principles will support Council in developing its plans and determining key activities including the review and development of the Community Strategic Plan, and all relevant Council plans, policies and programs.

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE 2022-2032 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 guides the future direction of our Shire for the next 10 years, and this strategy will assist in delivering the vision and aspirations for the future of Muswellbrook Shire:

Community Vision

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

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*

1.3 KEY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

This Community Engagement Strategy will guide how we plan and undertake engagement.

Planning for engagement considers a range of factors including who the project or program will impact, how much impact the project or program will have and how interested the community might be in the project or program.

Beyond satisfying legislative and statutory requirements, Council's key objectives for undertaking engagement include:

- increased community awareness of Council projects and programs;
- improved community satisfaction with Council's services, facilities and events;
- enhanced community understanding of how and why decisions are made by Council.

To support the achievement of these objectives, Council recognises the importance of ensuring that community engagement:

- has a clear purpose, objectives and approach;
- is easy for the community to access and participate in;
- is clear and simple;
- builds trust and understanding;
- is meaningful, authentic and adds value;
- is evaluated and improved.

Successful engagement programs are underpinned by careful preparation and thorough planning, where we:

- create an environment of honest and timely communication when engaging with the community about projects and activities;
- commit to establishing clear processes and allocating required resources to assist with better planning and decision making;
- ensure processes are inclusive and seek to connect all in the community including those who are hardest to reach;
- respect the feedback we receive;
- act in the best interests of the whole community;
- keep people informed of progress and outcomes.

1.4 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Council will need to consider the following risks and opportunities when undertaking community engagement:

Table 1: Key Community Engagement risks and mitigation strategies

RISK	INDICATOR	CAUSE	MITIGATION
Projects, facilities, assets, and programs don't meet community expectations	Limited overall participation in engagement activity	Lack of awareness	Engagement is promoted via multiple communication channels to ensure all members of the community can actively participate
		Accessibility barriers	Engagement occurs in multiple accessible locations across the Shire at various times and dates and includes both online and traditional tools in plain language and accessible formats
		Resource & timing constraints	Provide a range of opportunities and sufficient background material to enable a high level of informed public participation
	Low levels of community satisfaction	Consultation fatigue	Schedule staggered or combined engagement opportunities for multiple projects and programs to reduce the risk of the community and key stakeholders feeling saturated and bombarded
		Distrust in Council & decision-making process	Clearly and simply define engagement scope to help manage community expectations regarding the level of influence they can have on the outcome and an improved understanding of how and why decisions are made
			Provide timely updates to engagement participants and the broader community and report engagement outcomes and results
Facilities, assets, programs and events are not fit for purpose	Limited engagement with target groups and community sectors	Inappropriate tools &/or timing	Engagement plan considers appropriate tools and schedules to suit specific user groups such as young people, families and minority groups (ie school holidays; language barriers; locations; technology)
Reputational damage	Inaccurate social and traditional media reports and complaints	Lack of internal engagement	Have the conversation early and often with Councillors and staff about engagement initiatives and the opportunities for involvement
		Inadequate consultation with/ reporting to external stakeholders, media & community influencers	Regular and continuous communication with and reporting to local representatives, government departments and agencies, funding bodies and groups of interest.

* A risk assessment should be undertaken in relation to each engagement activity.

1.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that the Community Engagement Strategy is adopted and accepted as a key Council-wide document with commitment from both staff and Councillors. The roles and responsibilities of Council's internal stakeholders are outlined below:

Table 2: Roles and responsibilities of Muswellbrook Shire Council elected representatives and staff

Role	Responsibilities
The Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ act as the spokesperson for Council to promote engagement on key strategic plans including developing the Community Strategic Plan;✓ together with the General Manager, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between Council and the local community;✓ promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ promote engagement on key strategic plans including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the Community Strategic Plan;✓ participate in the development of Integrated Planning & Reporting component documents, including the Community Strategic Plan;✓ as members of the elected body, endorse the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component Integrated Planning & Reporting process documents.
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ oversee preparation of the Community Engagement Strategy and Integrated Planning & Reporting process component documents and endorsement/ adoption by the elected Council, as applicable;✓ ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the Integrated Planning & Reporting process in a meaningful way.
Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ work with and support the General Manager in the development of the strategy and plans to engage the community;✓ implement the Community Engagement Strategy and provide timely advice to the General Manager on community views.



Figure 3: Muswellbrook Shire Australia Day and Citizenship Ceremony 2022

2 STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Community engagement is a shared right that comes with shared responsibility. We all have our part to play in decision-making that effects the places that we live, work and play. Council and the community play roles in initiating, leading, participating in and delivering engagement activities.

A vital component of the community engagement process includes identifying and understanding key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision or outcome.

Our key stakeholders include:

- people that live or own a property in the Shire
- local Aboriginal communities and agencies
- people who work or study here
- people that visit the local area
- business owners and operators
- resident and ratepayer associations
- community, sporting and environmental groups
- community agencies that provide services to and/or advocate for people in the local area
- business and industry associations
- developers and investors
- neighbouring councils and regional bodies
- government agencies
- local members (state and federal).

Muswellbrook Shire is the main centre for power generation and thermal coal extraction in New South Wales. With six thermal coal mines and two coal fired power stations situated in the local government area, employment in the Shire is dominated by these two significant industries.

Muswellbrook Shire is a welcoming community offering all the cultural, recreational, educational and community facilities that you would expect to find in 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 Census all persons population for Muswellbrook (LGA) in 2021 was 16,357 people (ABS). This is up from 16,086 in 2016.

The average population of the Muswellbrook LGA has reflected the ebbs and flows of the mining industry. Annual population growth from 2006 to 2016, was 5.3% - a steady rise for a regional area. The majority of this growth was concentrated in Muswellbrook, which accounted for around half the growth. However, the 2021 census showed that growth overall since 2016 has only been 1.7%.

The 2021 census indicated that Muswellbrook Shire has a relatively high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples residing in the community at 11.7%. This compares with the 3.4% NSW State average.

We are a young community.

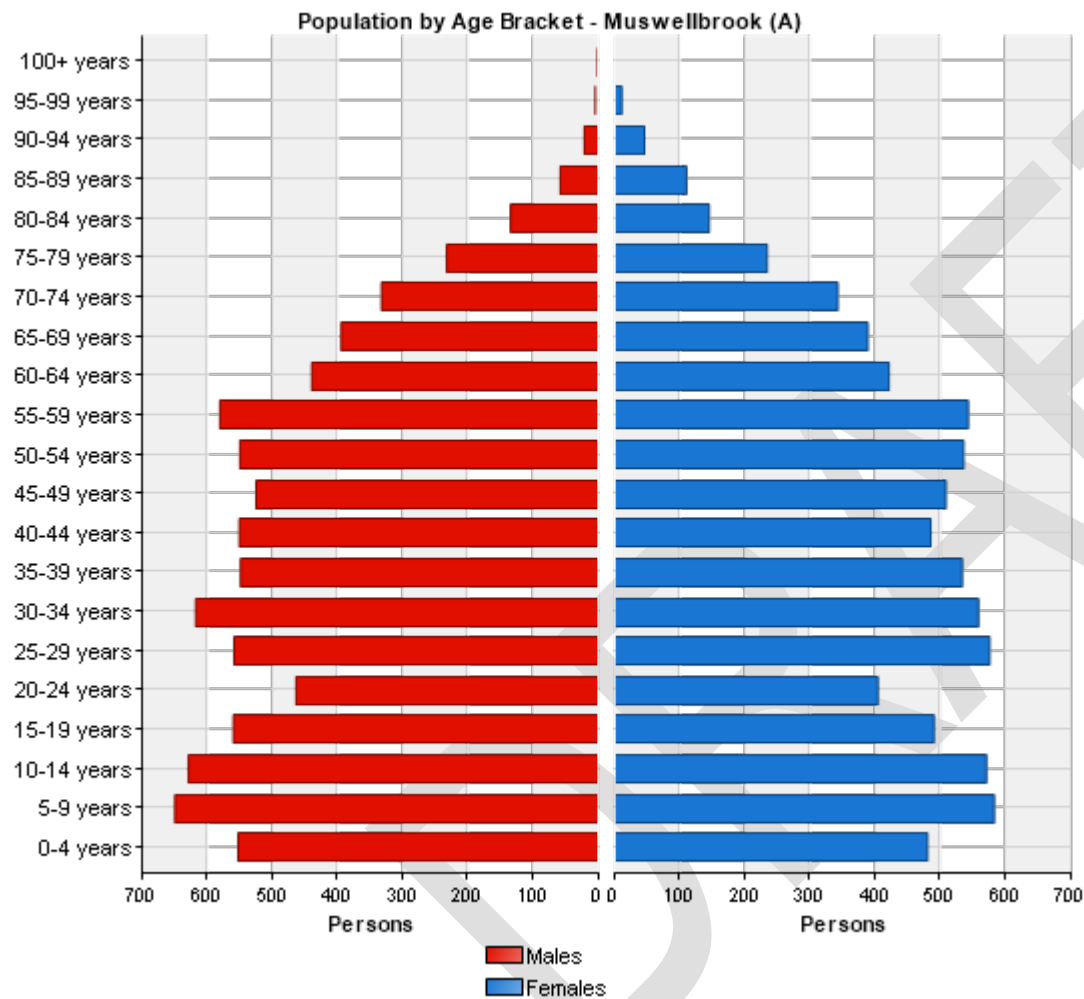
Muswellbrook Shire tends to be a younger community with the median age of people being 37 years (NSW:39).

The ratio of men to women in 2016 it was 51.3% male and 48.7% female and remained the same in 2021 (NSW:M49.4 and F50.6).

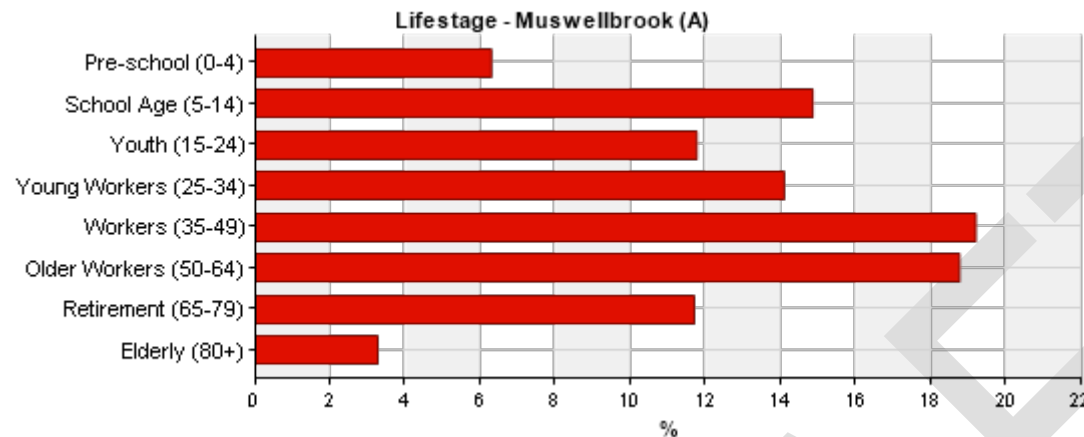
To find out more about Muswellbrook Shire's Community Profile visit: www.communityprofile.com.au/muswellbrook

Table 3: Key socio-demographic indicators for Muswellbrook Shire

Indicator	Latest information
Estimated Residential Population:	16,357
Total population increase (2016–2021):	271 people
Land Area (ha):	340,488.41
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:	1,908 people or 11.7%
People born in Australia:	13,871 people or 84.8%
Median Age:	37 years
Median Weekly Personal Income:	\$769 (\$39,988 pa)
Smoothed unemployment rate:	5%
Gross Regional Product (\$M):	\$4,534.322
Per Hectare Gross Regional Product (\$K):	\$13.317
Per Capita Gross Regional Product (\$K):	\$281.880
Per Worker Gross Regional Product (\$K):	\$452.663

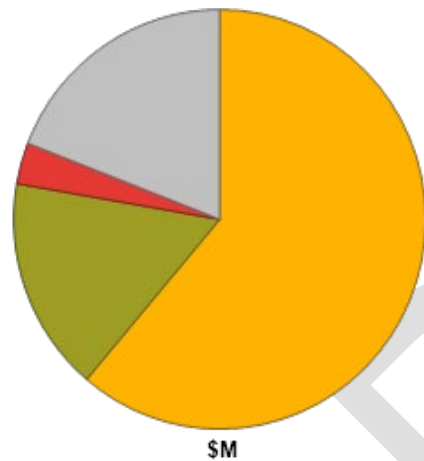


The single largest five-year age cohort in Muswellbrook Shire is "5-9 years" with 1,229 people representing 7.5% of the population. The median age is 37 years and the overall proportion of males to females is 51.3% male and 48.7% female.



Understanding the population by life stage within Muswellbrook Shire provides valuable insights into the region's requirements for amenity, services, infrastructure, investment and education and employment opportunities. The largest life stage group in the Shire is "Workers (35-49)" representing 19.2% percent of the overall population.

Output - Muswellbrook (A) (2021 Release 2)



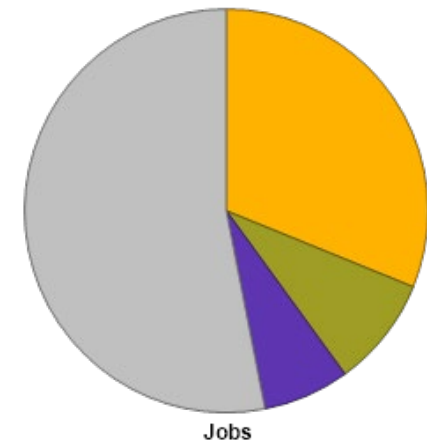
Total output is estimated at \$9,060.164 million (left)

Total employment is estimated at 10,017 jobs (right)

- Mining \$5,543.536
- Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services \$1,498.231
- Manufacturing \$288.957
- Balance \$1,729.439

REMPPLAN

Employment - Muswellbrook (A) (2021 Release 2)



- Mining 3,120
- Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services 887
- Health Care & Social Assistance 694
- Balance 5,316

REMPPLAN



Figure 4: Muswellbrook Shire and Denman Children's Centre partnership

2.2 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

There are many factors that could make it difficult for people to participate in engagement initiatives including, but not limited to physical health, language, isolation (technological, physical and social), digital access and knowledge, distrust, lack of time and lack of awareness.

Council acknowledges these barriers and is committed to making engagement opportunities inclusive and accessible by:

- ✓ ensuring a variety of engagement methods are available;
- ✓ avoiding technical jargon and using easy to understand language;
- ✓ considering age-appropriate engagement and participation activities;
- ✓ promoting engagement opportunities via multiple channels to get the word out;
- ✓ providing information in multiple, accessible formats and ensuring venues are accessible;
- ✓ exploring opportunities for staggered or combined engagement opportunities to reduce engagement overload;
- ✓ defining the level of influence feedback can have on an outcome and explaining how and why decisions are made; and
- ✓ reporting back to engagement participants and the broader community on outcomes and results of engagement activities.



Figure 5: Muswellbrook's AFL Pride Match, September 2022
Picture: Ivan Skaines, Newcastle Pride.

2.3 PREFERRED METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

The level of engagement adopted by Council will depend on the scale and size of the plan, policy or program being proposed. For example, engagement to support development of the Community Strategic Plan will include activities to engage the whole community, whereas engagement about a local sporting field upgrade would likely be limited to within a few kilometres of the site and targeted activities with user groups.

Council will refer to the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2) to assist with determining the most appropriate type of engagement to employ, in response to the level of influence on the outcome that community input can have:

Table 4: [International Association for Public Participation Spectrum \(IAP2\)](#)

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions	To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood	To partner with the public in each aspect of decision-making	To place final decision- making in the hands of the public
PROMISE	<i>“We will keep you informed”</i>	<i>“We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns”</i>	<i>“We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made”</i>	<i>“We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible”</i>	<i>“We will implement what you decide”</i>
EXAMPLE	Website	Public Exhibition	Public Forums	User Groups	Community Panel

Table 5: Preferred methods of engagement

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT MODE		IN PRACTICE
	Inform	Website & social media	Provide information via: Council's website, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube)
		Advertisements, public notices, signs & letters	May include: an invitation to participate in engagement; describing a project; outlining how people can find information; advising how to make a comment or be involved outlining the timeframe for consultation
		Admin Centre & Libraries	Information may be accessed during public exhibition periods at Council's Admin Centre and Libraries
	Involve & Consult	Community meetings & forums	Meetings (in person, online or hybrid) with community members and stakeholders to provide an opportunity to work through an issue or gather feedback on particular aspects of a project.
		Council meetings	Community members can participate in Council's formal meeting process prior to a decision being made, as per Council's Code of Meeting Practice. This may include speaking Public Participation.
		Public exhibitions	The exhibition process seeks online or written community and stakeholder feedback on a plan, development application, policy or project.
		Surveys	Using market research software for telephone, online and offline surveys, such as the biennial Community Satisfaction Survey.
		Listening Posts	A face-to-face opportunity for the community to attend a Listening Post pop-up stall to gather information and provide feedback on an issue or project/policy-related decision.
	Collaborate & Empower	Community reference & user groups	Community reference and user groups may meet with staff, Councillors, or others to work through an issue, determine a decision for a project, policy or plan and provide advice.
		Council committees	Council may establish committees in accordance with relevant laws and Council policies. Membership can be made up of Councillors, Council staff, external agencies and skilled community members.
		Community Panel	Using a deliberative democracy approach, Community Panels may be convened for in-depth consideration of an issue by a demographically representative cross-section of the community, empowered to make well-informed final decisions, for implementation by Council.



Figure 6: Science and Engineering Challenge, Muswellbrook, April 2022.
Picture: Mathew Perry

3 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND TIMEFRAMES

The following table explains how we will engage with our community and stakeholders in relation to Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents and other relevant plans, strategies and policies, so that our community understands what to expect from us.

WHAT	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	WHEN	HOW	EXHIBITION PERIOD
Community Strategic Plan: identifies the community's priorities and aspirations for the future - minimum time frame of 10 years.	Empower	Reviewed every four years at the start of each new Council term	<p>Following extensive community engagement the draft CSP is publicly exhibited on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft CSP prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p>	28 days
Resourcing Strategy: explains how Council will allocate resources towards achievement of Council's responsibilities in the Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program. Consists of three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Financial Plan • Workforce Management Plan • Asset Management Plan. 	Consult	Reviewed every four years at the start of each new Council term	<p>The draft Resourcing Strategy (10-year Long Term Financial Plan, 10-year Asset Management Plan and 4-year Work Force Management Plan) is publicly exhibited on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft Resourcing Strategy prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p>	28 days

WHAT	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	WHEN	HOW	EXHIBITION PERIOD
<p>Delivery Program: the Councillors' four-year plan that is the point of reference for all activities undertaken by Council during its term of office, in delivering the Community's priorities and aspirations outlined in the Community Strategic Plan</p>	Consult	Reviewed every four years at the start of each new Council term	<p>The draft Delivery Program is publicly exhibited on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft Delivery Program prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p>	28 days
<p>Community Engagement Strategy: supports the development of all Council plans, policies, programs and key activities. This includes those relating to Integrated Planning & Reporting, as well as strategic plans and programs required under other legislation.</p>	Involve	Reviewed every four years at the start of each new Council term	<p>Following extensive community engagement the draft CES is publicly exhibited on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft CES prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p>	28 days
<p>Council's annual Operational Plan, budget and fees and charges: a sub-plan of the Delivery Program, it identifies actions, projects and programs that Council will be undertaking within the current financial year.</p> <p>The Operational Plan includes the Statement of Revenue Policy (Annual Budget and Fees & Charges).</p>	Consult	Adopted before the start of each financial year	<p>The draft Operational Plan is publicly exhibited on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>The exhibition will be accompanied by a map showing where the various rates will apply within the local government area.</p> <p>The Operational Plan will include a detailed budget for the activities to be undertaken in that year.</p>	28 days

WHAT	ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	WHEN	HOW	EXHIBITION PERIOD
			<p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft Operational Plan prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p> <p>Council must post a copy of its Operational Plan on its website within 28 days after the plan is adopted.</p>	
Council's other applicable long-term strategic plans	Involve	As required	<p>Public exhibition on Council's website and in hardcopy at Council's Administration Centre and Library branches.</p> <p>Council will accept and consider any submissions made on the draft strategies and plans prior to adoption.</p> <p>Council may promote the public exhibition period via paid newspaper advertising and/or on Council's website and social media.</p>	28 days
Key Council policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Meeting Practice • Code of Conduct • Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors Policy • Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy • others as required 	Inform	Reviewed at least once every four-year term of Council	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	28 days or 42 days as legislated or by Council resolution.



Figure 7: Grant announcement at Olympic Park, January 2022
Picture: Mathew Perry, Muswellbrook Chronicle.

3.2 NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE EP&A ACT

Council's Community Participation Plan outlines the exhibition and notification requirements under the EP&A Act. This is available for viewing and downloading on Council's website at <https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/policies/>

3.3 RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Council's Community Engagement Strategy and engagement activities are supported via:

- Council resources (time, money and people) allocated in annual operational plans and budgets;
- our Community database of over 500 residents, ratepayers, workers, business operators, students, and interested people who engage with Council via online surveys and panels to provide input on a range of issues and feedback on plans, strategies and policies;
- Council staff with specialist engagement and communications knowledge, experience and qualifications;
- external research organisations and community profile databases;
- professional local and state government organisations and networks.



Figure 8: Muswellbrook Shire 2022 Community Panel

4 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

4.1 TOOLS AND STAKEHOLDERS

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

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE - TOOLS	WHY WE ENGAGE
General Community including workers and students from outside the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Council Meetings– Council's Websites– Council's social media– Publications– Community Panel– Events & ceremonies– Council offices– Annual Report– The Mayor's Column– The Mayor's radio spot– Surveys– Forums– Public exhibition– Signage– Advertising– Listening Posts	The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council provides leadership, partnership, representation, information, efficient, effective and appropriate services and facilities.

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE - TOOLS	WHY WE ENGAGE
Ratepayers	All of the above plus: – Rates notices	Ratepayers contribute knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council generates sustainable growth and return to the community.
Community and sporting organisations	All of the above plus: – Grants programs – Sustainability Hub	The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council provides civic leadership, partnership, representation and efficient, effective and appropriate services, facilities and events.
Muswellbrook business and industry community	All of the above plus: – Participation in MCCI breakfasts – Other publications – Meetings	The local business and industry community provides employment and economic growth.
		Council provides guidance, support and opportunity.
Visitors	– Council's Websites – Social media – Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre – Upper Hunter Country Visitor Guide	Visitors bring economic benefits to the Shire including more local employment opportunities.
		Council provides facilities, resources, partnerships and networks.

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE - TOOLS	WHY WE ENGAGE
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Council's Websites – Media releases – Media alerts and briefings – Interviews – Paid advertising 	The media raises the community's awareness of services, facilities, events and issues of importance.
		Council contributes content and comment for publication and broadcast.
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Council's Websites – Social media – Formal meetings – Correspondence – Forums and Conferences – Hunter Joint Organisation 	The Federal and NSW State Governments provide partnerships, funding and network opportunities.
		Council provides resources, partnerships and networks.
Council Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Magpie Newsletters – General Manager's Newsletter – General Manager's Forums – Manex – Managers' Meetings – Toolbox talks – Posters – Intranet – Email – Staff events and training – Staff Awards 	Staff members contribute valuable knowledge, skills and labour for our operations.
		Council provides employment, training opportunities and flexible and supportive work arrangements.



Figure 9: Collecting feedback on the draft Muswellbrook Shire 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan

5 MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

5.1 METHODS FOR CAPTURING FEEDBACK ABOUT ENGAGEMENT

Activities	Measures	Key Performance Indicators
Community Satisfaction Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Quantity of responses– Representative of resident population demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 400 responses received
Public Exhibition submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Quantity of responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 5 responses received
Listening Posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of people engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 100 people engaged
Community Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Representative of resident population demographics– Decisions implemented by Council– Verbal and/or written feedback from participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– All demographics included– 100% of decisions implemented– 75% positive feedback
Sporting Committee and user group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of User Group meetings attended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 19 meetings held
Blue Heeler Film Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of entries in competition– Number of attendees at festival– Facebook followers (2022 benchmark: 853)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 100 entries– 100 attendees– Increasing followers
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of workshops held– Verbal and/or written feedback from stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 100 responses
Council Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of followers (2022 benchmark: 10,177)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increasing followers
Council Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Website page visits (2022 benchmark 344,515)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increasing website visits
Council Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of gallery attendees per meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 5 gallery attendees
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Number of visits (2022 benchmark 40,190)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increasing visits



Figure 10: Opening of the Denman Lookout Nature Walk
Picture: Denman Public School

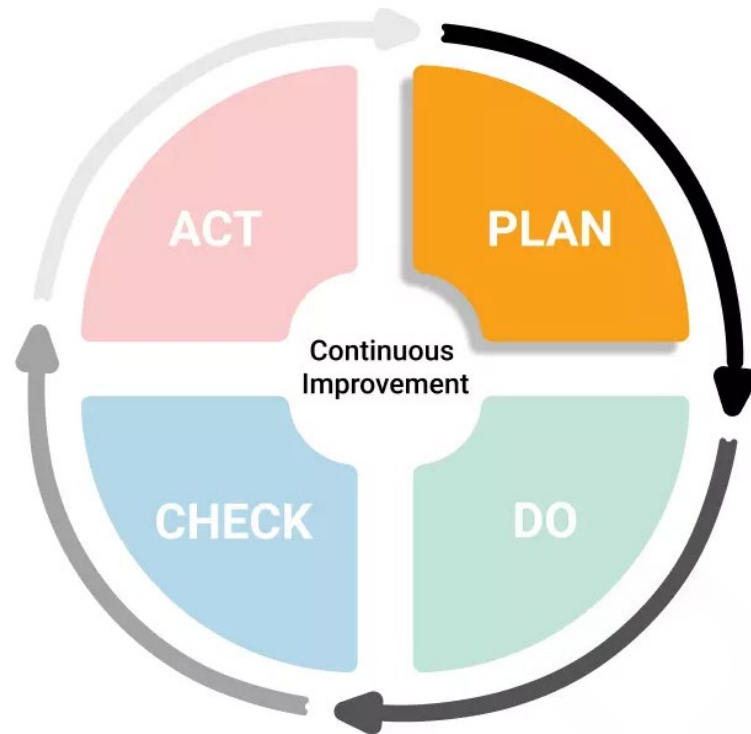


Figure 11: Continuous Improvement Framework

5.2 ON-GOING IMPROVEMENT

Council will evaluate our community engagement activities against the following areas so that we can adjust our engagement approach if required and improve future engagement:

Process - How well was the engagement designed and implemented?

Relevance - Was the engagement appropriate and did the community respond to the engagement process?

Reach – Have we been inclusive - did we reach those affected and/or interested in the outcome?

Outcomes - Did we achieve the engagement objectives?

This strategy will be reviewed within three months of local government elections, as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan, or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.



Figure 12: National Reconciliation Week, Simpson Park, Muswellbrook June 2022.
Picture: Mathew Perry, Muswellbrook Chronicle.

6 APPENDIX - MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL STAKEHOLDERS

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

1st Denman Scout Group

Arts Upper Hunter

Australian Local Government Association

Australian Photographic Society

Belltrees School

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 & District Senior Cricket Club

Denman Amateur Swimming Club

Denman Basketball

Denman Chamber of Commerce

Denman Children's Centre

Denman Community Garden

Denman Craft Shop

Denman Golf Club

Denman Junior Cricket Association

Denman Junior Rugby League

Denman Little Athletics

Denman Pony Club

Denman Public School

Denman Rugby League Club

Denman Sandy Hollow JRLC

Denman Squash Club

Denman St Joseph's Primary School

Denman Volunteer Centre

Department of Communities & Justice

Destination NSW

Drug & Alcohol Health Services

Glen Gallic Shooting Club

Goodstart Early Learning Centre

Healthy and Well Upper Hunter

Hunter Joint Organisation Group Entities (including associated entity Strategic Services Australia)
Hunter Research Foundation
Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM (HSLT)
Integrated Living Australia
Liddell Transition and Community Dialogue Group
Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee (run by BHP)
Local Government NSW
Local Government Professionals
MOOSH
Muscle Creek Landcare
Muswellbrook 2nd Scout Group
Muswellbrook AFL Club
Muswellbrook Amateur Athletics
Muswellbrook Amateur Cycle Club
Muswellbrook Amateur RSL Youth Swimming
Muswellbrook Basketball
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Muswellbrook Childcare Centre
Muswellbrook Croquet Club
Muswellbrook District Junior Rugby League Club
Muswellbrook Girl Guides
Muswellbrook Golf Club

Muswellbrook High School
Muswellbrook Junior Cricket Club
Muswellbrook Junior Rugby League
Muswellbrook Little Athletics Club
Muswellbrook Men's Shed
Muswellbrook Netball Association
Muswellbrook Park Tennis Club
Muswellbrook Physical Culture
Muswellbrook Preschool
Muswellbrook Public School
Muswellbrook Senior Rugby League Club
Muswellbrook South School
Muswellbrook Squash Club
Muswellbrook Touch Football
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 State Emergency Services
NSW Water Directorate
Olympic Park Tennis Club Inc
Pacific Brook Christian School
Penguin Community Garden Club

Planning Institute of Australia (NSW division)
Polly Farmer
Regional Arts NSW
Resilience NSW
Richard Gill National Music Academy
Royal Lifesaving NSW
Sandy Hollow Progress Association
St Nicholas Early Education
Standards Australia
State Library NSW
StateCover
Statewide Mutual
TAFE NSW
The Brook Cricket Club
Tilly's Childcare Centre
Transcare Services
University of Newcastle
University of Newcastle – School of Creative Industries
Upper Hunter Community Drug Action Team

Upper Hunter Community Services
Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
Upper Hunter Country Tourism
Upper Hunter Domestic Violence Service
Upper Hunter Economic Development Corporation
Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Party
Upper Hunter Homeless Services
Upper Hunter Homeless Support
Upper Hunter Landcare
Upper Hunter Local Drug Action Team
Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (coordinated by NSW Minerals Council)
Upper Hunter Show
Upper Hunter Water Alliance
Upper Hunter Youth Services
Valley Mountain Bikers
Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council
Warrior Disability Services

DRAFT