

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL RESPECTFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WHO ARE THE
TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND.





CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR.....	3	04 STRATEGIC PLANNING	36
MUSWELLBROOK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	5	UNLOCKING THE OPPORTUNITY	37
COMMUNITY VISION.....	8	STRATEGIC PLANNING RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS	38
LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING	9	EMPLOYMENT LAND STRATEGY.....	39
LOCATION.....	10	RURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS.....	40
INFRASTRUCTURE	12	HOUSING STRATEGY	40
ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE	13	SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION.....	42
STATE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT.....	16	05 MAJOR PROJECTS	44
THE SIX CITIES REGION	16	THE MUSWELLBROOK TOWN CENTRE	45
HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041	16	TOWN CENTRE – POCKET PARK.....	46
01 REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE	18	REGIONAL ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE.....	47
AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION (ARTC)	19	MUSWELLBROOK REGIONAL ARTS CENTRE.....	48
MUSWELLBROOK BYPASS.....	19	WOLLOMBI PRECINCT.....	49
PORT OF NEWCASTLE	20	RESOURCE, RECOVERY AND RECYCLING PRECINCT.....	50
NEWCASTLE AIRPORT.....	20	DENMAN TOURIST PARK	51
02 INDUSTRIAL CLOSURES	22	06 STATE GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES	52
CLOSURES	23	MUSWELLBROOK BYPASS.....	53
MINING EMPLOYMENT.....	24	RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES.....	53
THE CHALLENGE.....	25	COAL ROAD	54
MUSWELLBROOK COAL.....	27	BIMBADEEN DRIVE INTERSECTION.....	54
AGL.....	28	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	55
03 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	30	SANDY HOLLOW PIPELINE	56
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	31	GLENBAWN DAM TO MUSWELLBROOK PIPELINE	56
HUNTER INNOVATION PRECINCT	33	MUSWELLBROOK HOSPITAL	58
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CENTRE	34		
STEM INNOVATION LAB	35		



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Muswellbrook Shire is home to more than 16,500 residents, our community is young and hardworking, we are proud of our history in mining and energy generation and are surrounded by magical landscapes that have been the backdrop of indigenous stories for millions of years.

We love our sport, equine pursuits and viticulture and are the birth place of the Australian Cattle Dog. Our local producers are trailblazers, founded in our agricultural roots and are now growing our tourism potential.

Denman will mark the bicentennial of its gazettal as a town in 2033. As we head towards this milestone with pride and optimism, our economy and our community will significantly shift.

Our future is bright.

As key regional centre we are positioning the region as a renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, circular economy, agriculture and tourism powerhouse as we move towards a net zero economy.

Council is investing in our community's future, identifying and progressing opportunities to build economic resilience and create jobs. Council has made a significant investment in projects and initiatives which will inspire future generations, prepare business for new opportunities and leverage our lifestyle advantages.

Council are focused on improving liveability and our natural advantages. Muswellbrook offers a comparatively affordable lifestyle with diverse housing options from town living to lifestyle properties.

Our community has access to regional sporting and recreational facilities with the opening of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre and redevelopment of Olympic Park.

Council is supporting the growth of Denman as a residential and tourist destination, approving new housing developments and the creation of the Denman Tourist Park and Mountain Bike Track.

Council is ensuring all members of our community have improved access to health care, transportation, services, education and housing to improve their quality of life and opportunity.



“OUR LOCAL PRODUCERS ARE TRAILBLAZERS, FOUNDED IN OUR AGRICULTURAL ROOTS AND ARE NOW GROWING OUR TOURISM POTENTIAL.”

CR STEVE REYNOLDS, MAYOR MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

Rockin' the Brook

MUSWELLBROOK 2023



MUSWELLBROOK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Muswellbrook has a proud indigenous heritage with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands people representing 11% of our population. We are an inclusive and diverse community that aims to provide equal and equitable opportunities for all, through access to education, social and health services.

Our economy is changing as the world embraces more sustainable ways of living, reducing our impact on the earth and protecting future generations from the effects of climate change, and economic and political conflict.

Muswellbrook and the Hunter Region is at the forefront of this economic shift.

We have a long history in energy generation with two of the State's base load power generators and by production, is the largest coal mining area in Australia, exporting 25% of NSW's thermal coal.

2023 saw the closure of AGL's Liddell Power plant and the final coal extracted from Muswellbrook Coal after 115 years of operation. BHP has announced the closure of its Mt Arthur coal mine in 2030 and Bayswater is set to close before 2035 as a result of global companies adjusting their portfolios and operations away from fossil fuel and carbon generation.

As our economy transitions, the Shire is well placed to leverage existing infrastructure, location, industry capability and pioneering spirit to position the region as a key centre of renewable energy production, clean technology, innovation and advanced manufacturing as we move towards a Net Zero economy.

In partnership with State and Federal Governments we are actively identifying and progressing opportunities to assist in this transition and are a 'living laboratory' of transition initiatives, including renewable energy, energy storage and distribution, the growth of feedstocks and processing associated with bio-fuels, STEM education initiatives and labour force re-skilling.

This document outlines the key opportunities to work with Muswellbrook Shire Council to make NSW a great place to work, live, invest and visit.





Education

Highest year of
school completed

Muswellbrook LGA

31.92%

completed Year 12
or equivalent

NSW

56.91%

completed Year 12
or equivalent

Hunter region

42.98%

completed Year 12
or equivalent



Indigenous

Muswellbrook LGA

11.6%

NSW

3.49%

SEIFA Score

547

Local
Government
areas in Australia

121 LGA's disadvantaged

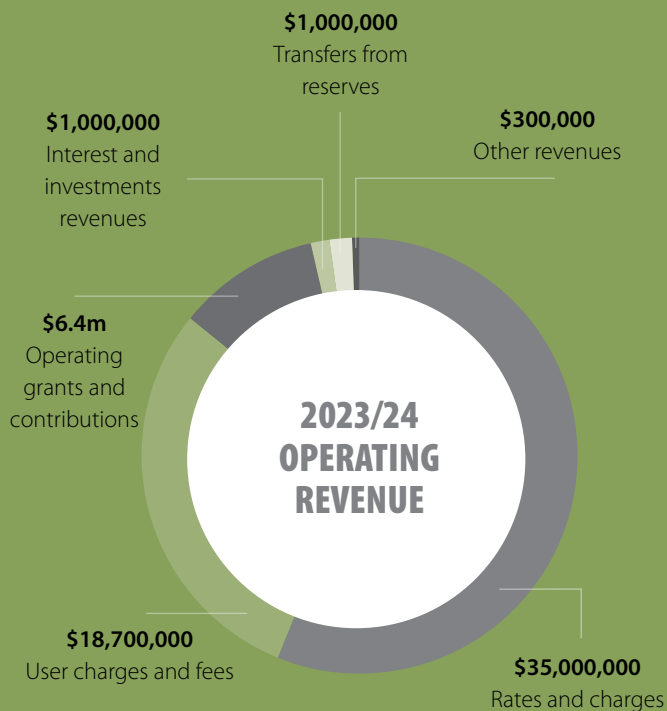
425 LGA's more advantaged



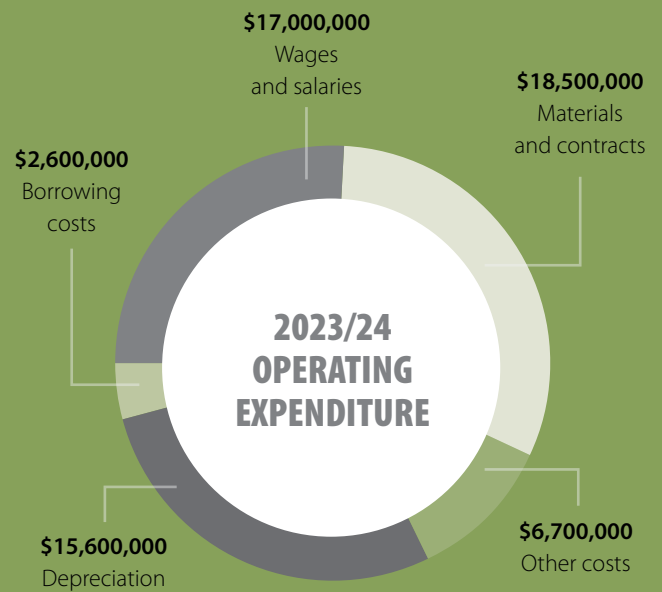
Muswellbrook ranked
122

SEIFA index of disadvantage

KEY STATIST



**TOTAL
REVENUE OF
\$62.4m**



**OPERATING
EXPENSES OF
\$60.2m**



Population
16,357

Female
48.7%

Male
51.3%



4,222 average number
of children per families
with children 1.9



Medium weekly household income
\$1,628



All private dwellings
7,298
average number of people
per household 2.5



Medium monthly mortgage
repayments
\$1,517
medium weekly rent
\$300

ICS

COMMUNITY VISION

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



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Local Governments, especially regional Council's, rely on the support, resources and grants from State Government to provide the level of service and community facility to support our regional communities.

Muswellbrook is one of the most mining impacted communities in NSW and together with Singleton Shire contribute a combined 43% of NSW coal mining output which amounted to more than \$18 billion in 2021.

We are seeking long term commitment and an equal share from the NSW government which recognises the importance of mining to the NSW economy and provides certainty for the future of mining communities.

Muswellbrook Shire has received a variety of grant funds from government to deliver projects and infrastructure to future proof our community.

LEADERSHIP

In partnership with State and Federal Government, Muswellbrook Shire Council will continue to collaborate to achieve governments strategic objectives through the following projects:

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

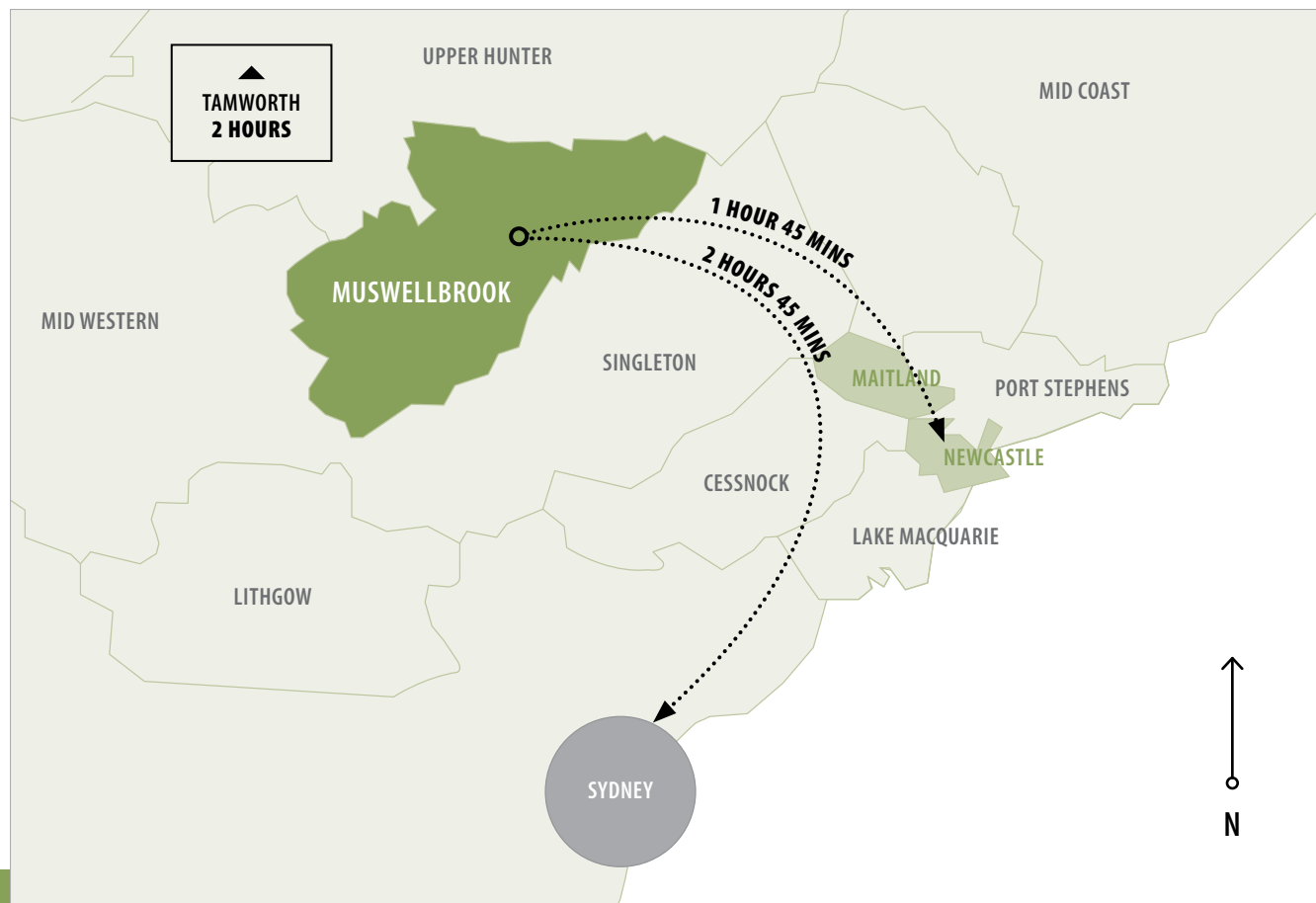
Muswellbrook will lead and enable the delivery of green energy to the grid, through wind and solar projects, the Santos Hunter Gas Pipeline and Pumped Hydro, battery storage and hydrogen generation.

We are committed to working with Energy Co. to deliver on the Hunter Renewable Energy Zone and with the Department of Regional NSW on the AGL Liddel and Bayswater transition.

A summary of grant funding is provided in Appendix 1.



LOCATION





TOP 5 PRIORITIES

In continuing to partner with State Government and to achieve NSW strategic priorities, Muswellbrook Shire Council have identified five priorities for the Shire to ensure the economic resilience and wellbeing of our community.



01

Upgrade water infrastructure to unlock housing and industry



02

Bring forward employment land to attract new industry and replace mining and energy jobs



03

Prioritise regional health care services including mental health



04

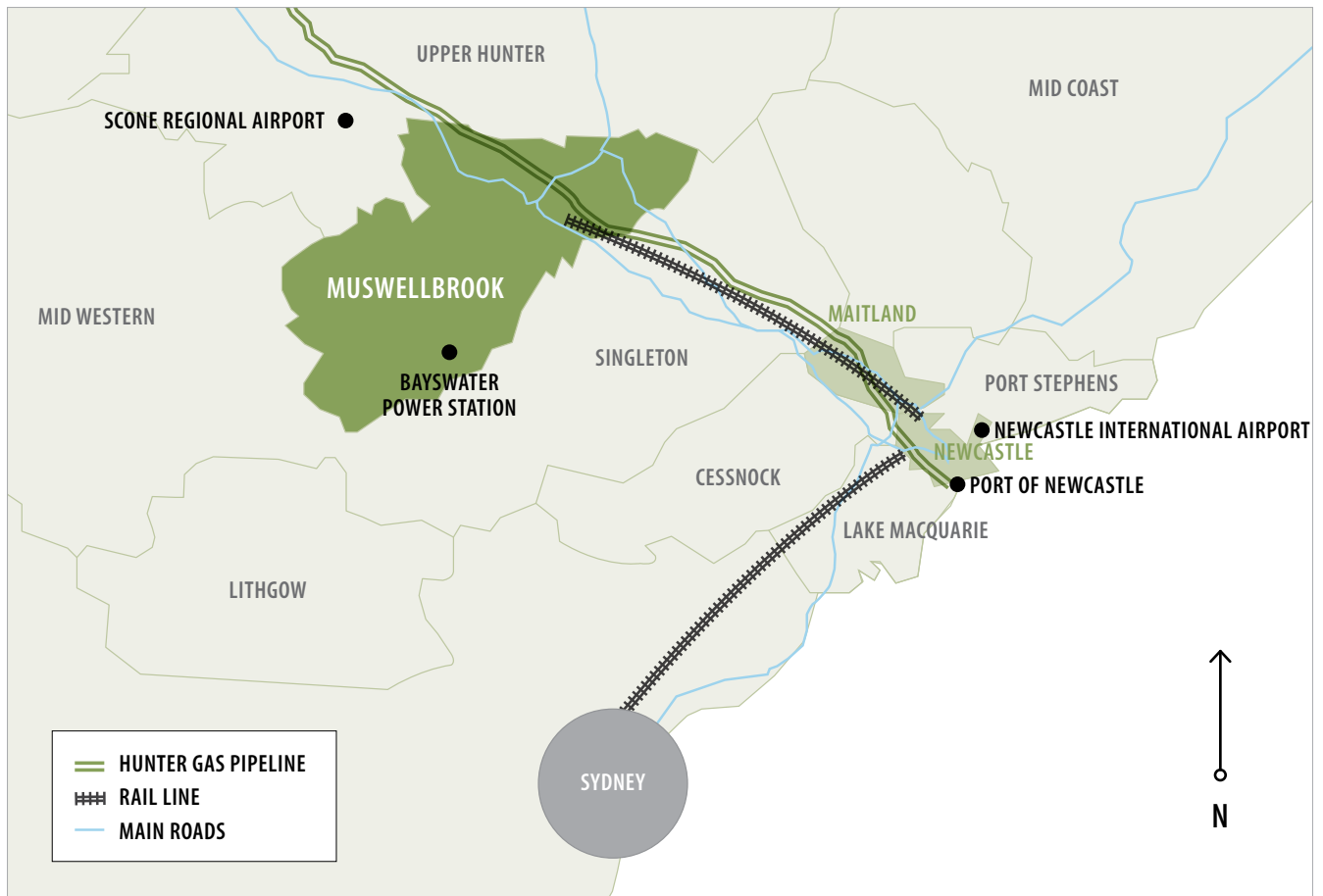
Resolve road infrastructure constraints to transport renewable energy infrastructure to Renewable Energy Zones



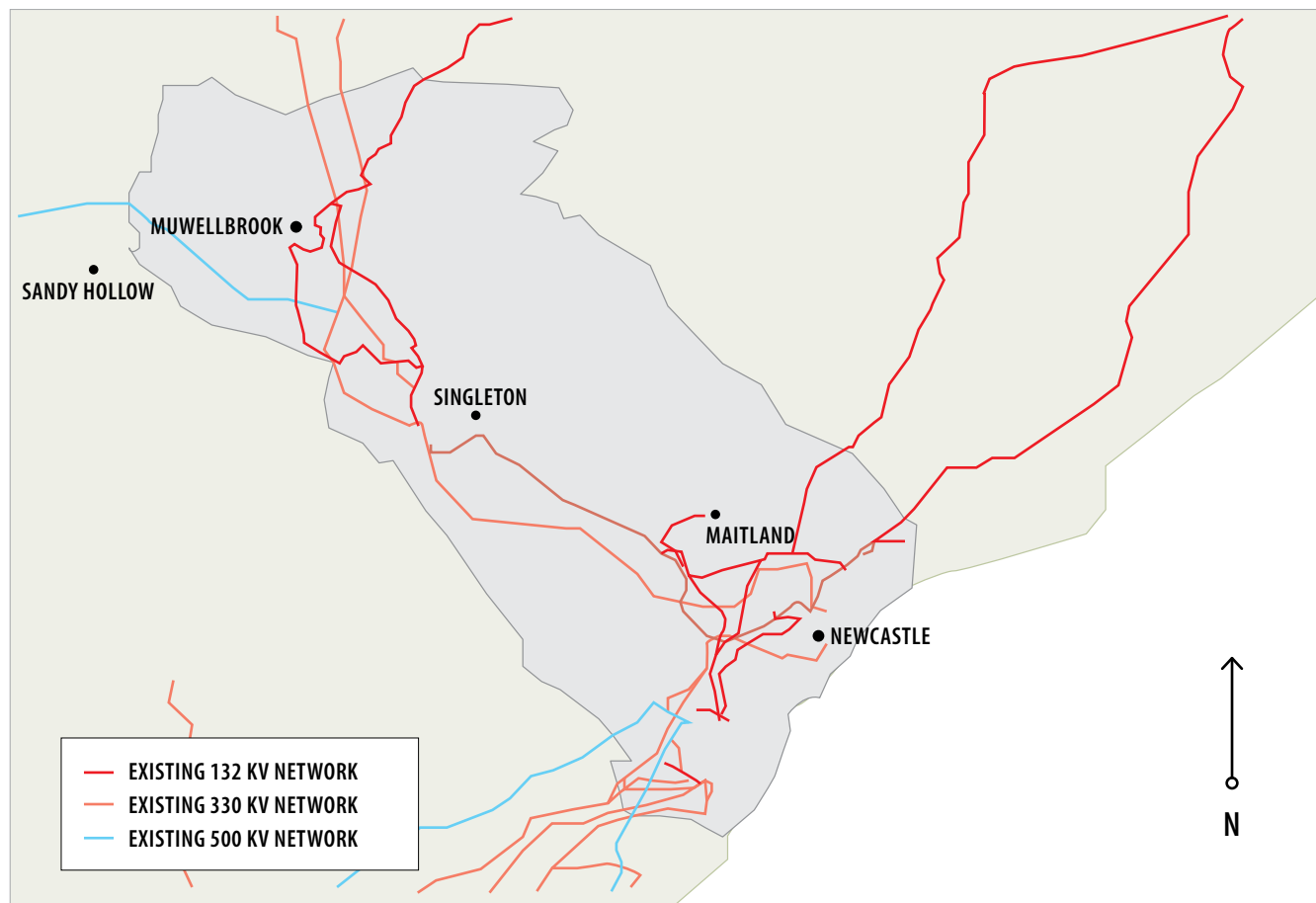
05

Plan for short term accommodation needs of construction workforce with long term benefit

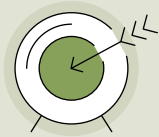
INFRASTRUCTURE



ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE



THE ADVANT



EMPLOYMENT

Demand for employment
Skilled and available workforce



TRAINING

University of Newcastle
- Upper Hunter Campus
Hunter TAFE



SUPPORT

Leading Chamber
of Commerce
Women in Business



LOCATION

Central location with
easy access to Sydney,
Newcastle, New England,
Mid Coast and Mid West



EDUCATION

Public, Catholic
and private Schools



INFRASTRUCTURE

5G
NBN to the premises
Electricity 4640 MWa
Water
Road and Rail

AGE



ENVIRONMENT

Hunter River
43% National Park
Nature reserves



HEALTH

Muswellbrook Hospital



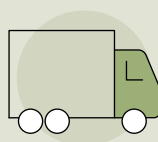
ARTS UPPER HUNTER

Muswellbrook
Regional Art Gallery
Upper Hunter
Conservatorium of Music
Blue Heeler Film Festival



HOUSING

Sustainable living
Urban and lifestyle
living options



TRANSPORT

Rail – Capacity 224mtpa
65 loaded Trains
Upgraded New England Highway
Access to Newcastle Airport
and Scone Regional Airport
Port of Newcastle



SPORTING

Olympic Park Regional
Sports Precinct
Muswellbrook Race Club
Muswellbrook Aquatic
and Fitness Centre

STATE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

THE SIX CITIES REGION

Delivering global competitiveness and local liveability. The Six Cities Region includes the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City.

The Commission proposes that the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City innovation district is likely to be centred around renewable energy, net zero emissions and military sustainment as well as defence and aerospace alongside advanced manufacturing emerging industries.

Muswellbrook is located on the edge of the Six Cities Region. As heavy industry and intensive agriculture is pushed out by urban growth, companies are looking for large land holdings, with good access to transport infrastructure, green energy and an able workforce that has long term tenure.

With large tracts of mining and buffer lands, Muswellbrook is ideal to accommodate heavy industry, waste and recycling, renewable energy production, intensive agriculture and other high impact industries without the threat of encroachment from residential development.

Muswellbrook is an important enabler of the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle Six Cities Region providing:

- Water and food security
- Large scale heavy industry and manufacturing and jobs
- Renewable energy production
- Transportation, storage and logistics

HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041

VISION - The leading regional economy in Australia, connected to and caring for Country, with a vibrant metropolitan city and sustainable 15-minute neighbourhoods at its heart.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:**
Diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity
- **OBJECTIVE 2:**
Ensure economic self-determination for Aboriginal communities
- **OBJECTIVE 3:**
Create a 15 minute region made up of mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant local communities
- **OBJECTIVE 4:**
Plan for "Nimble Neighbourhoods", diverse housing and sequenced development
- **OBJECTIVE 5:**
Increase green infrastructure and quality public spaces and improve the natural environment
- **OBJECTIVE 6:**
Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure
- **OBJECTIVE 7:**
Plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities
- **OBJECTIVE 8:**
Build an inter-connected and globally focused Hunter



01

**REGIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE**



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION (ARTC)

The Hunter Valley rail network is an integral part of the world's largest coal export supply chain. Nearly all export coal shipped through Newcastle is transported by rail across this network for shipping from Port Waratah or Kooragang Island.

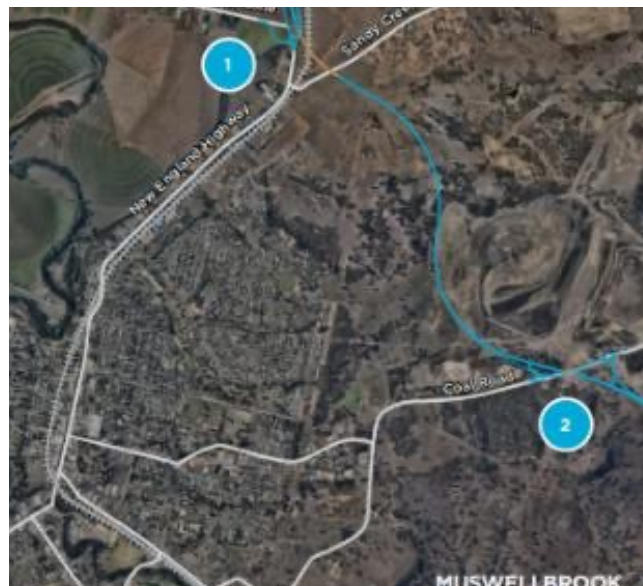
ARTC was contracted to export coal volumes of 198.9 mtpa in Q1 2022. These volumes will gradually decline, falling to 135 mtpa in 2030.

Contracted volumes include up to 8.8 mtpa of domestic coal with this volume declining to 5 mtpa in 2026.

As at 2021 contracted volumes and train sizes, an average of around 64 loaded trains need to be operated each day of the year, or one train every 22 minutes.

Capacity planning makes provision for this number of trains to peak at up to 87 per day, though in practice capacity exists for this to peak at even higher rates.

The average weight per train was approximately 8,488 in 2021 and the average coal price was \$371US/\$570AU a tonne in 2022.



MUSWELLBROOK BYPASS

State and Federal governments have committed \$340 million to deliver the Muswellbrook Bypass. This project has been several years in planning and once complete will reduce travel times (5–7 minutes), improve freight efficiency, road safety and livability of the town.

The New England Highway carries between 11,000 to 20,000 vehicles through Muswellbrook each day, with approximately 14% or nearly 3,000 being heavy vehicles.

The bypass will result in improved street amenity, reduced on-street traffic noise and impact on roads from heavy vehicle movements which will lead to the following opportunities for Muswellbrook to attract visitors to the town centre:

- Improved access to Muswellbrook Hospital and emergency service agencies
- New entry statements, public art and wayfinding
- Access to Muswellbrook Coal site for future industrial uses
- On street outdoor dining experiences
- Town centre beautification works

This increase in economic opportunity within the town could expand business activity and employment.

Construction scheduled to commence 2026 and open in 2028.



PORT OF NEWCASTLE

The Port of Newcastle is the largest deep water port on the east coast and is focused on building Australia's prosperity with responsible, integrated and innovative supply chain solutions.

As part of achieving this vision the port has established a Clean Energy Precinct to position the Hunter region as a clean energy powerhouse.

With trade worth about \$71 billion each year to the national economy, Port of Newcastle enables Australian businesses to successfully compete in international markets.

The port currently handles 4,697 ship movements and 166 million tonnes of cargo annually. With a deepwater shipping channel operating at 50% of its capacity, significant port land available and enviable access to national rail and road infrastructure, Port of Newcastle is positioned to further underpin the future prosperity of the Hunter, NSW and Australia.



NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

Newcastle Airport is critical economic infrastructure which will assist to position the region as a global tourism destination and super charge our export capability.

- Code E Runway Upgrade
 - long range and wide bodied aircraft
 - \$65M for runway
 - \$12.7B - \$6.2B in visitor economy and \$6.5B in additional freight activity
- Terminal Upgrade
 - long range and wide bodied aircraft
 - \$55M for international terminal expansion
 - \$12.7B - \$6.2B in visitor economy and \$6.5B in additional freight activity
- Astra Aerolab



02 INDUSTRIAL CLOSURES

CLOSURES

Muswellbrook's mining industry will contract and energy generation is in transition.

Planning for future industries need to happen now so that the community can see a future.

3822 JOBS

directly
impacted in the
next 8 years

MARCH 2023

**Idemitsu
Muswellbrook Coal**

APRIL 2023

Liddell Power Station

Q3 2023

Liddell Coal Mine

2040 – 2050

**Maxwell,
Mount Pleasant and
Bengalla Coal Mines**

2035

**Bayswater
Power Station**

2030

**Dartbrook,
Mount Arthur and
Mangoola Coal Mines**





MINING EMPLOYMENT



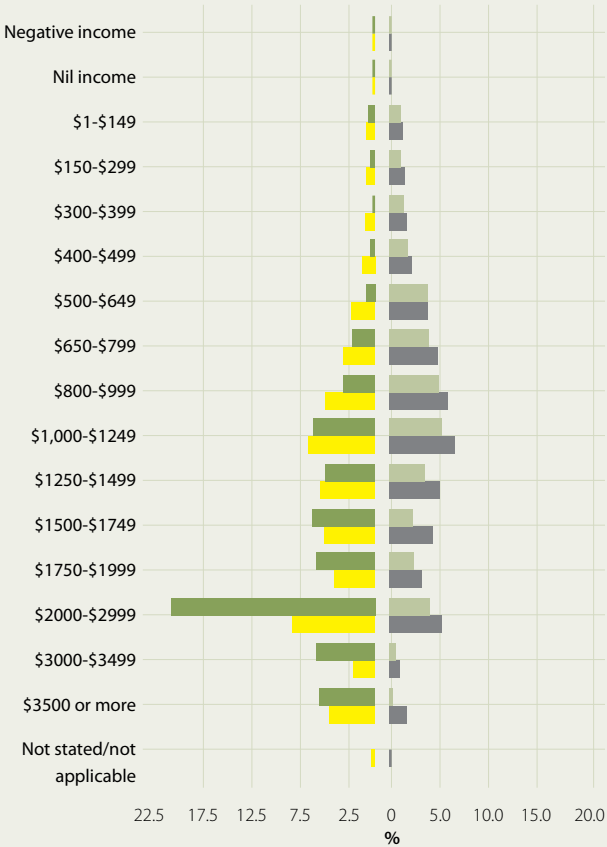
11,341 jobs
in Muswellbrook

63.6% full time **24.7%** part time **5.5%** unemployment

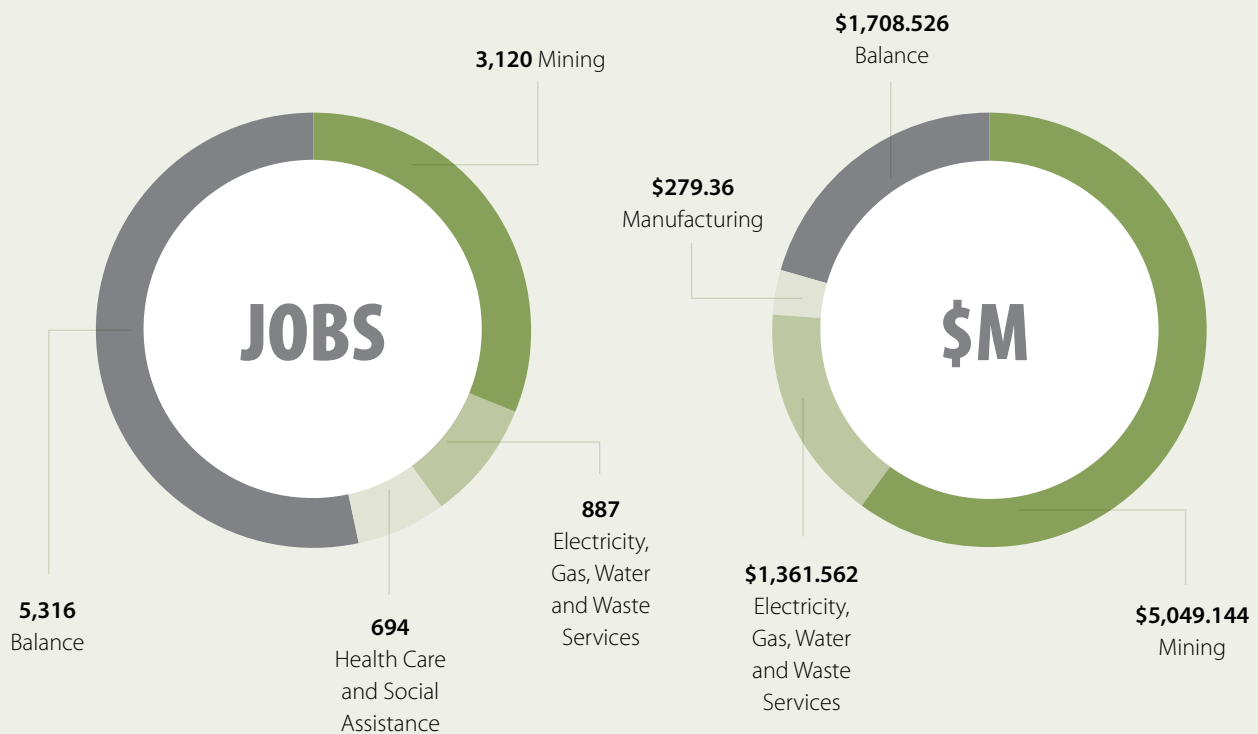
5,910
work and live in
Muswellbrook



Workforce Breakdown



THE CHALLENGE



NEARLY 40% OF ALL JOB'S MINING AND ELECTRICITY

OVER 75% GRP OUTPUT FROM MINING AND ELECTRICITY



MUSWELLBROOK LGA
3,120 MINING JOBS 33.1%
OF ALL JOBS - 11,341



HUNTER REGION
14,255 MINING JOBS 4.8%
OF ALL JOBS



1 MINING JOB
= 0.82 SUPPLY
AND CONSUMPTION JOB



MEDIAN AGE
37



MUSWELLBROOK LGA
22.15% EMPLOYED
IN MINING



STRATEGIC LAND USE OPPORTUNITIES

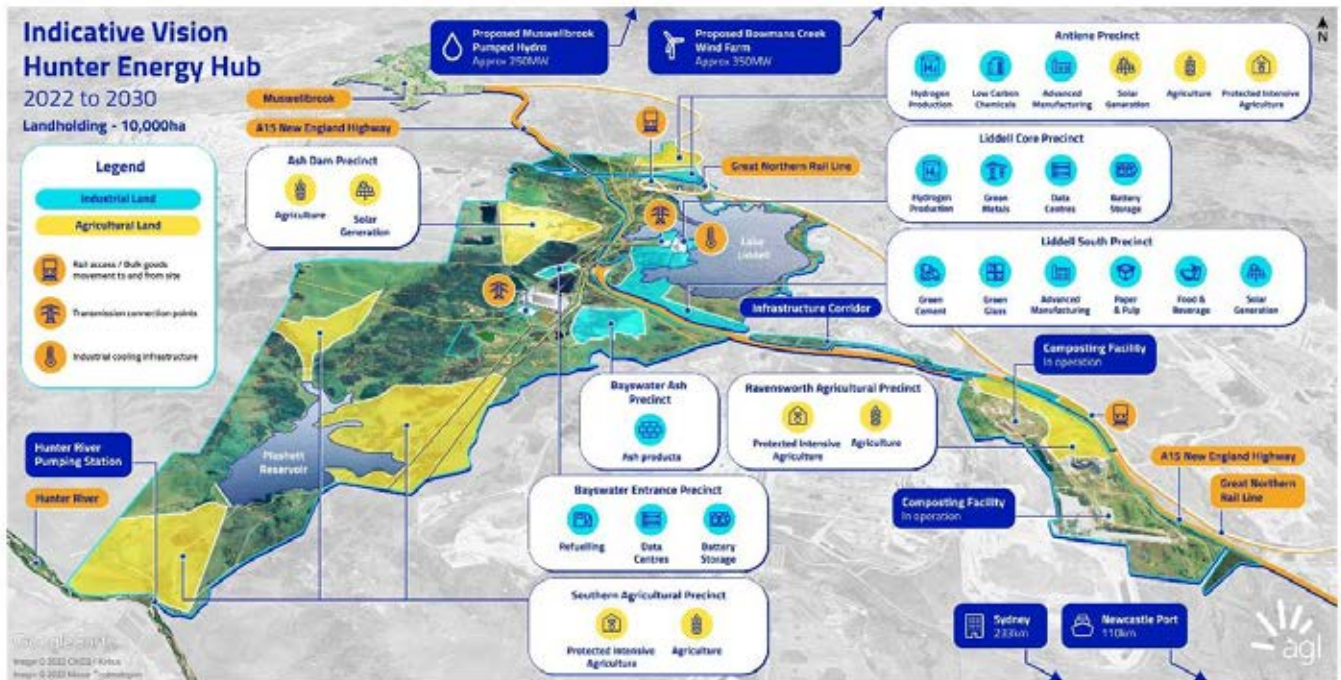


MUSWELLBROOK COAL

Muswellbrook Shire Council is working closely with Muswellbrook Coal to undertake master planning of the site.

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

- Closed March 2023
- Master Plan Concept – Solar, AGL Pumped Hydro, battery storage, industrial land
- Bypass Resumption
- Hunter Gas Pipeline
- EnergyCo lines



AGL

Opened in 1971, the Liddell Power Station has played a critical role in powering homes and businesses across the state and has made a significant contribution to the Upper Hunter in terms of employment and economic growth but it is also part of our culture and history.

Liddell closed on 28 April 2023.

ALG plans to repurpose the site as the Hunter Energy Hub and is an example of AGL's climate transition plan in action.

Plans are underway to build a 500 MW grid-scale battery, a feasibility study into a hydrogen facility is under way, and they are exploring opportunities with solar, wind, and waste-to-energy industry partners, as well as a number of future industry opportunities.

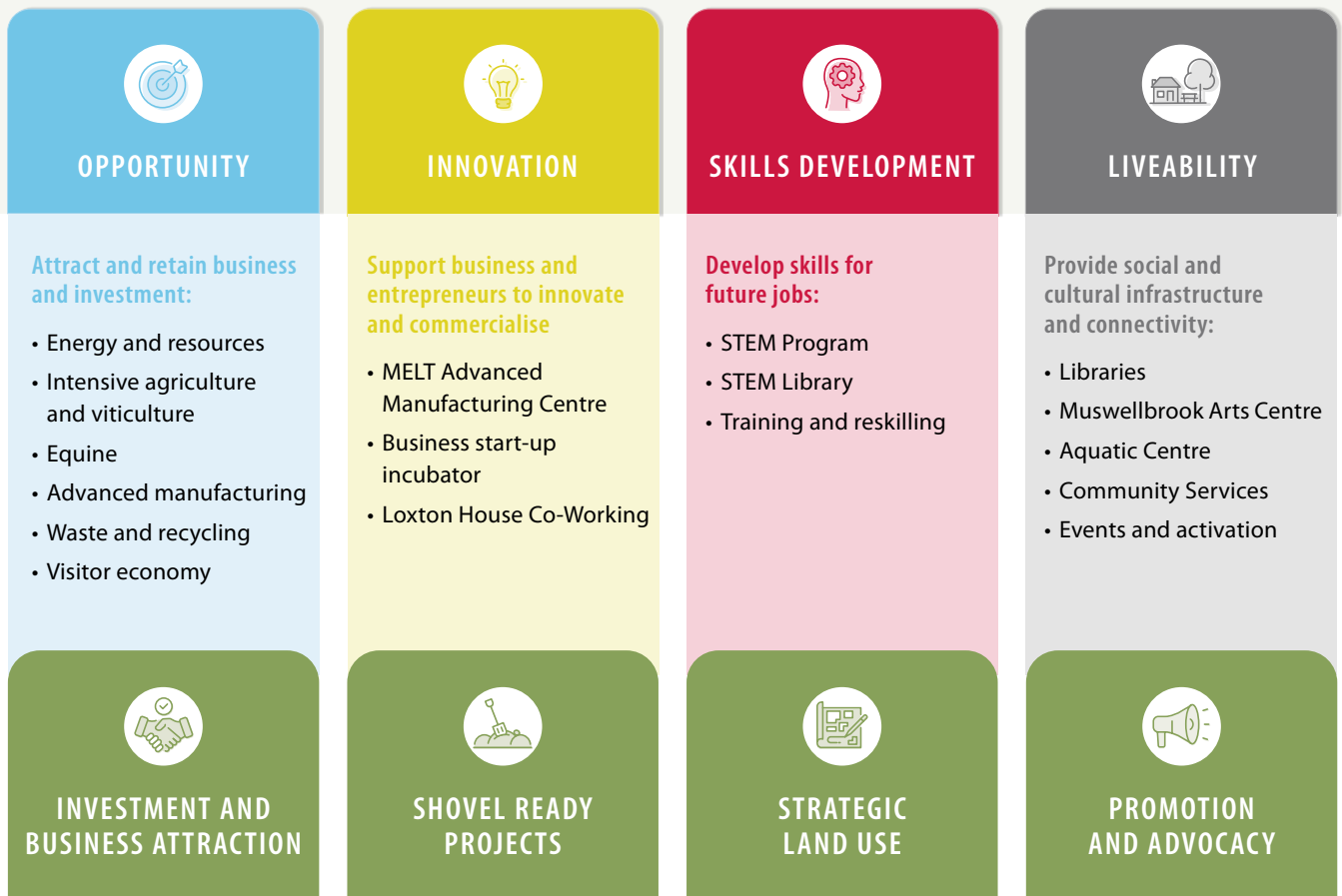


03

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

ENABLE A PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT ECONOMY







HUNTER INNOVATION PRECINCT

Muswellbrook, as a regional centre for the Hunter and New England catchments, has established itself as a centre of educational excellence in the Upper Hunter. It is strategically positioned for the efficient and effective provision of education and vocational training for both existing and emerging industries.

Council has invested in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as part of the town centre redevelopment as a catalyst for education excellence, innovation and industry linkages. The Hunter Innovation Precinct includes the Hunter TAFE, the University of Newcastle, Muswellbrook Library, and the Donald Horne Building, incorporating the STEM Innovation Lab and Melt Advanced Manufacturing Centre.

Driven by the community's expectations, Council is working with industry and the research sector to maximise emerging opportunities. These partnerships provide education pathways for students, offer collaborative research opportunities with established and emerging industry and facilitate the diversification of the Shire's economy.

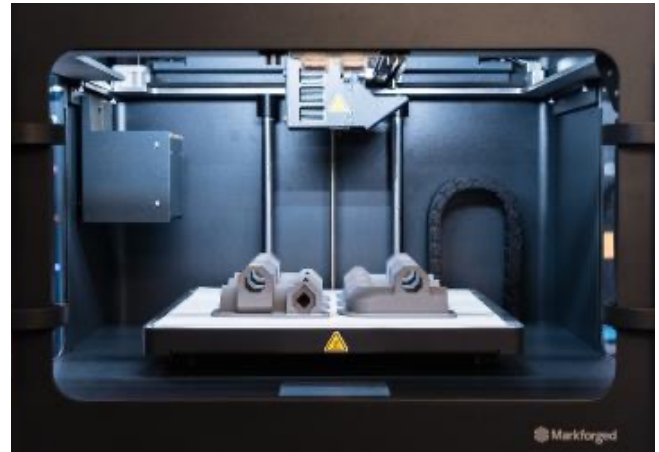
- Donald Horne Building
 - MELT Advanced Manufacturing Centre
 - STEM Innovation Lab
- University of Newcastle – Pathways Program, NIER and Hydrogen readiness
- Loxton House Co Working Space
 - Business Incubator – Start Up – Scale Up Program
- Hunter TAFE
- Muswellbrook Library

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CENTRE

The MELT Advanced Manufacturing Centre provides local businesses and entrepreneurs access to the latest technologies, 3D scanners and metal, fibre and plastic 3D printers among other manufacturing equipment and expertise.

Access to this facility will speed up the design and prototyping process and expedite products to market. By leveraging other activities and relationships with businesses, including AGL's Energy Hub and ETHTEC Hunter Pilot Biorefinery, we will support business scale up and provide real-world testing.

- 10 year agreement – The Melt
- 200m2 advanced manufacturing and prototyping space
- Technical Specialist onsite to help startups, SME and students
- Business and Clean Tech acceleration programs



STEM INNOVATION LAB

The Challenge: Fostering the value of educational attainment

The STEM Innovation Lab and its bespoke STEM programs could have regional reach and measurable impact on other schools and communities if there was further funding to expand the program beyond Muswellbrook Shire.

Focus on STEM

Muswellbrook Shire Council has already invested in a purpose built STEM Innovation Lab that will allow primary and secondary schools to access a range of bespoke STEM programs.

STEM education provides students with the tools and mentorship to develop STEM soft skills like problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication.

STEM education helps prepare our youth to meet the needs of a rapidly changing employment market. Meeting immediate skills gaps and future industry demands and providing opportunities that are not traditionally available in regional areas.

Muswellbrook Shire Council has employed a dedicated STEM teacher to deliver the four focus areas of the STEM Innovation Lab.

“INVESTING IN EDUCATION GIVES GOVERNMENTS POSITIVE PUBLIC RETURNS AT EVERY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, INCLUDING AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL.

HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION AND CARE HAS LONG-TERM SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS, INCLUDING SUPPORTING LEARNING IN LATER GRADES, INCREASING EQUITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY, AND REDUCING POVERTY.”

Where

Muswellbrook is a living laboratory of innovation initiatives - including renewable energy, storage and distribution, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and biotechnology.

Coupled with STEM education and labour force re-skilling, we are embracing opportunities to create jobs.

With our partners in government, industry and private enterprise, we are investing in our existing and future workforce through STEM education.

Primary and secondary schools have access to a purpose-built STEM Innovation Lab in the Hunter Innovation Precinct.

It provides students with the tools and mentorship to develop STEM soft skills like problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication.

We are preparing our young people to meet the needs of a rapidly changing employment market. Meeting immediate skills gaps and future industry demands, and providing opportunities that are not traditionally available in regional areas.

What

THE BESPOKE STEM PROGRAM FOCUSES ON

ROBOTICS (MECHATRONICS)

As the gateway to coding and STEM subjects, where students learn applied knowledge, it's a fun and engaging way to learn a variety of STEM hard and soft skills using cutting-edge technology.

AERONAUTICS

Brings together STEM disciplines where students discover the joy of flight. With a renewed focus on aviation, space exploration, aircraft design, aerodynamics and manufacturing, future generation will have the power to discover new frontiers.

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN / COMPUTER AIDED MANUFACTURING (CAD / CAM)

Shedding the shed-speak of engineers and designers. Advanced manufacturing technology and digital tools develop creativity and design skills through spatial thinking and problem solving.

DESIGN THINKING CHALLENGE (MINISTEAM TASK)

A powerful approach to creating innovative solutions for real world problems and searching for a more sustainable future. This challenge will develop soft technical skills, critical thinking, creativity and prototyping whilst encouraging outside, resilience and entrepreneurial ways of working.

CODING

As students learn to code, they transform from a user of technology into a maker of technology. Coding is a fun and stimulating activity as students develop their understanding of how computers, games, and websites work.

How

THE STEM INNOVATION LAB FOCUSES ON

01 RESPOND STEM PROGRAMS

Tailored and responsive programs to develop soft skills for the jobs of the future and encourage students to aspire to careers in STEM.

Aim

Primary Schools (Y5-6)
Secondary Schools (Y7-8)

02 CO-TEACHING

Changing culture and fostering collaboration by providing schools with opportunities to build capacity of local teachers in effectively implementing and teaching STEM.

Primary and Secondary School Teachers

- Professional development sessions for groups of teachers in the STEM Innovation Lab
- Networking events
- Coordinating
- Regional initiatives

03 COMPETITIONS

Test, challenge and promote the region by involving students from different walks of life to meet and learn from others, make new friends, and provide opportunities for students to stretch and grow.

Primary and Secondary

- State Best Challenge
- Science and Engineering Challenge
- Velocity Challenge
- Entrepreneurial Competition
- and heaps more...

04 INDUSTRY LINKAGES

Provide job ready skills, industry expertise and mentorship by linking students to industry opportunities. Participants give students access to real world experiences and aligns with passions and interests.

Secondary (Y9-12)

- Careers Expo (Speed Dating)
- Career ready events in partnership with industry, TAFE, UNI

“EDUCATION CONTRIBUTES TO GREATER PRODUCTIVITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND FOSTERS INNOVATIVE IDEAS LEADING TO MORE AND BETTER JOBS.”

04 STRATEGIC PLANNING

UNLOCKING THE OPPORTUNITY

There is currently no clear pathway for the future use of mining impacted land to transition to future employment generating land. The objective is to attract new large scale industry to the region and provide future job opportunities to replace existing mining and energy generation jobs.

The issue of future land use is complex, with a number of different state government departments, regulators and community having an interest.

To unlock this opportunity Council is calling for:

- 01 Planning Pathway**
Certainty of planning process and nimbleness in timing.
- 02 Infrastructure**
Use of existing mining and transport infrastructure to support the attraction of export capable future industries.
- 03 Authority**
Coordination of stakeholders, investors, agencies and decision makers at a regional level, leveraging local opportunities and resolving local challenges.
- 04 Industry**
Precinct approach to fund enabling trunk infrastructure to unlock industrial land and sign off planning approvals.
- 05 Liveability**
Regionally significant health care and mental health services, housing, retail and recreation.



STRATEGIC PLANNING RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Regional council's are struggling to secure technical expertise and funding to carry out the critical strategic planning work that needs to be undertaken to ensure the future economic and social stability of regional NSW.

State Government has a vested interest in the success of Regional NSW and in supporting the planning direction.

Muswellbrook Shire Council requires funding to:

- Update the Housing Strategy
- Develop a Rural and Environmental Lands Strategy
- Plan and update water infrastructure
- Investigate the use of mining voids water for Green Hydrogen / water supply
- Implement the actions of the Employment Land Strategy
- Update contributions plans
- Infrastructure Planning
 - develop priority infrastructure plans and asset planning / maintenance
- Biodiversity certification
 - certainty to attract new industry
- Develop an Active Transport Strategy to improve cycleways, footpaths and urban heat reduction



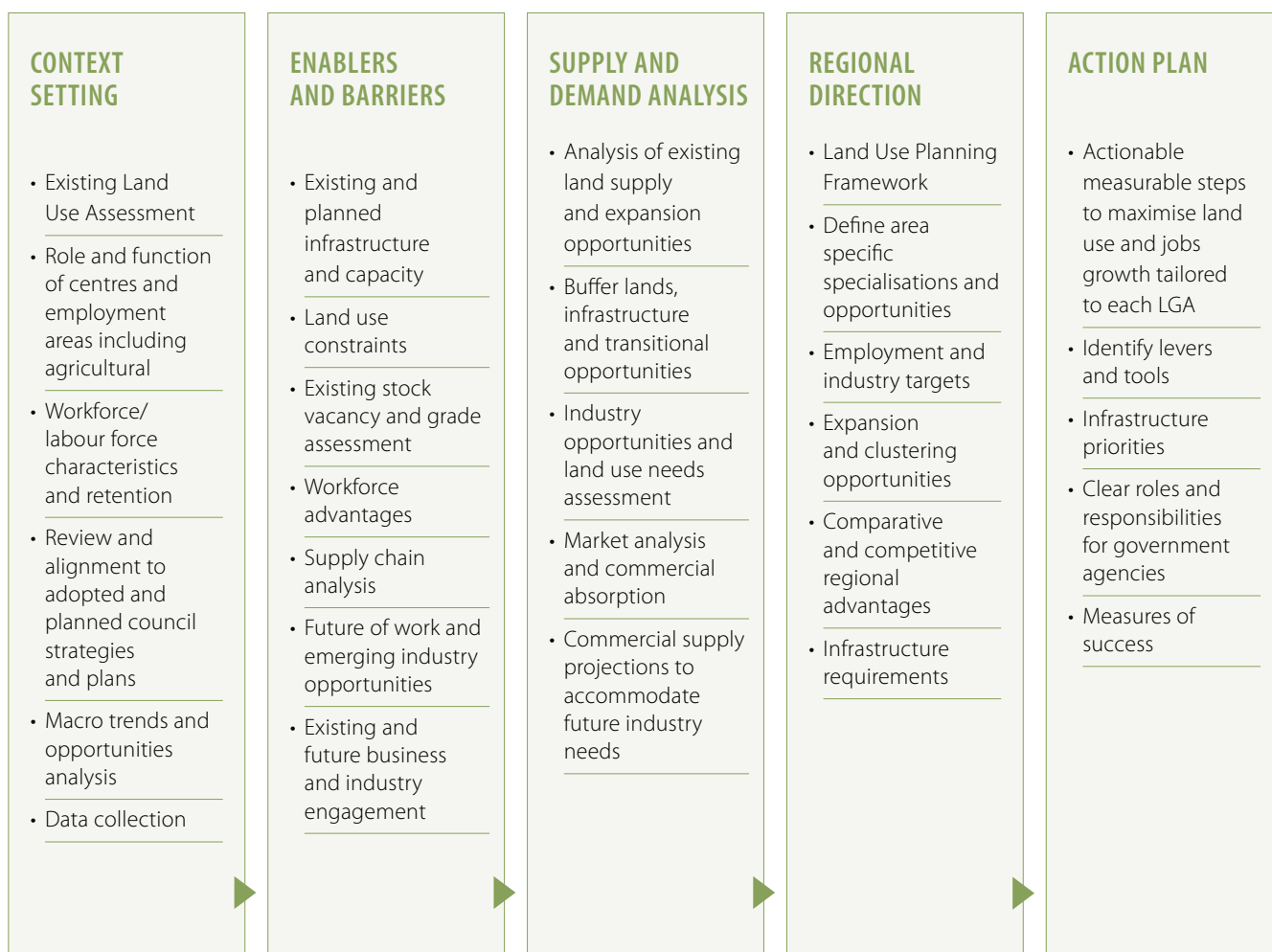
**POSITION THE REGION FOR FUTURE
INVESTMENT AND PRIORITIES
INFRASTRUCTURE**

EMPLOYMENT LAND STRATEGY

Muswellbrook Shire, Singleton Shire, Upper Hunter Shire and Dungog Shire Council's in collaboration with State Government

The strategy will inform each Council's strategic planning documents and economic development strategies.

Objective: Develop an Employment Land Strategy which defines the opportunities for the Upper Hunter Region, identifies key land use and economic actions and measures.



Regionally the strategy will result in:

- Considered and sequential development and release of industrial land, commercial and retail development, and agricultural and tourism industry growth which meets the needs of business
- Clearly defined pathways for the future use of mining and power station buffer lands
- Leveraging existing competitive advantages and both hard and soft infrastructure assets
- Attracting both private and public investment
- Retaining and growing jobs as the structure of the economy changes
- Positioning the region for opportunities in renewable energy, tourism, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing as well as population serving professions and niche industries
- Improved productivity and innovation
- Supply chain security and identified clustering opportunities
- Increased export capability

RURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS

- Scenic Landscape study to identify key rural and environmental character areas.
- Environmental Lands study to identify areas of significant vegetation, and locations with high potential for establishment of biodiversity corridors.
- Rural and Agricultural Lands Study to identify agricultural land and associated water sources suitable for equine, viticulture and emerging agri-businesses.

HOUSING STRATEGY

Infrastructure barriers to delivering housing:

Transport infrastructure e.g. Bimbadeen intersection

Sewer – connection and treatment

Water – upgrade required to water infrastructure



**RESIDENTIAL LOTS
CONSTRUCTED 2020 TO DATE:**

**EASTBROOK LINKS MUSWELLBROOK
STAGES 14 – 18: 170 LOTS**

**NORTHVIEW ESTATE MUSWELLBROOK
STAGES 4 – 7: 150 LOTS**

**IRONBARK RIDGE
MUSWELLBROOK: 140 LOTS**

DENMAN: 50 LOTS



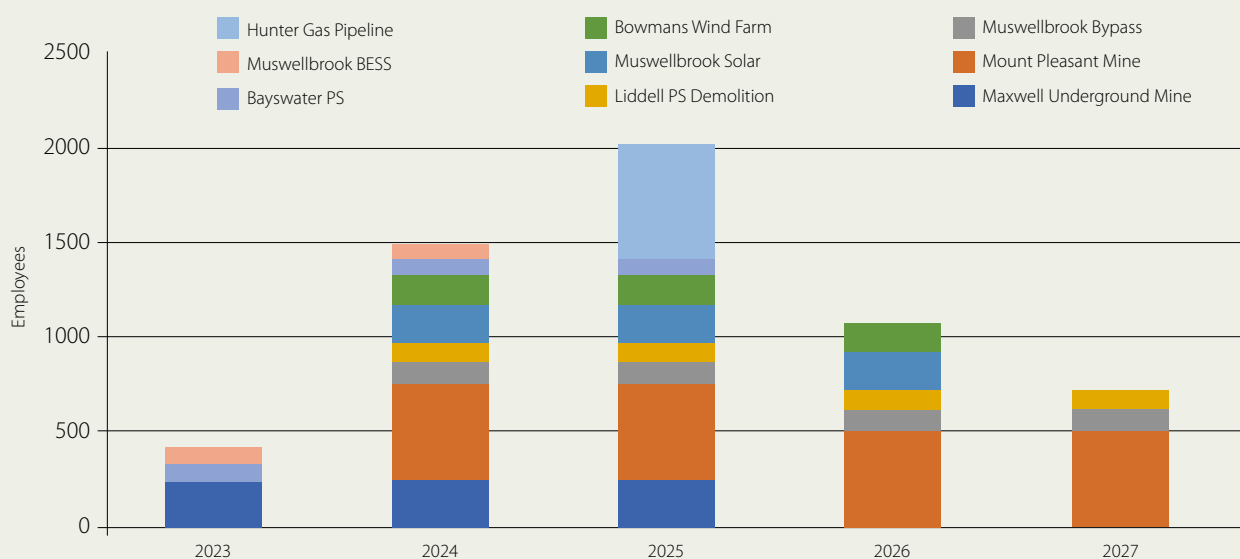
SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION

Muswellbrook's critical immediate issue is providing short term accommodation for the thousands of temporary construction workers require to build the following State Significant Developments.

- Muswellbrook Shire Council would like to work with State Government to develop a solution to the short term accommodation issue and provide long term economic benefit to the community.
- Muswellbrook is ideally located 2 hours from Tamworth, 3 hours from Narrabri in the west and 3 hours from Sydney and 2 hours from Newcastle in the East. It is connected via rail to the Newcastle Port and future Inland rail.
- Council owns a strategically important site in South Muswellbrook and other sites and there is an opportunity to use this site as a catalyst to create a Renewable Intermodal Transport Hub similar to Bromelton Transport Hub but focused on delivering a net zero freight network.



Indicative SSD/SSI Temporary Construction Workforce





05

MAJOR PROJECTS

THE MUSWELLBROOK TOWN CENTRE

The Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy was adopted by Council in 2017.

It guides Council on the redevelopment of the Muswellbrook Town Centre as a Regional Centre for the Upper Hunter.

Concept designs have been prepared for streetscape improvements. This encompasses the Bridge Street footpaths and pedestrian crossing and laneways to enable a compliant level transition.

A concept has been prepared for the future development of a pocket park and small car park off Brook Street, on land known as 98 – 108 Bridge Street.





REGIONAL ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

The Regional Entertainment Centre is the final piece of the town centre to be fully funded.

- Will provide facilities and opportunities for regional communities not previously available, including 400 seat theatre and community studio.
- The proposed community studio is a flexible performance venue for dance schools, theatre groups, and a large meeting space for community groups including a commercial kitchen and amenities to cater for related activities and allow for flexible scheduling of performances alongside the theatre.

Estimated Cost: \$20M part funded expected completion by 2027.



MUSWELLBROOK REGIONAL ARTS CENTRE

The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre presents travelling exhibitions, local exhibitions and three significant art prizes; the Muswellbrook Art Prize and the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize both promote the gallery on a national scale, the Viola Bromley Art Prize cultivates visual arts for local audiences.

- These acquisitive prizes drive the growth and development of the Muswellbrook Shire Art and the Max Watters Collections.
- The collections comprise more than 1500 works of art and are valued at over \$5.4million.
- Improvements to the housing of the collections in an environmentally controlled manner is essential to protect and preserve this fine and significant collection.
- The reconfiguration of the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre will improve participation and access to the Gallery by addressing a number of functional and design objectives.
- The project involves the removal of the existing stainless-steel entry and enclosing part of the existing structure with glazing.
- The project will celebrate the connection to the heritage building and create an additional 80m2 of space for both the Arts Centre (exhibition space and space for workshops, classes, performances, artist talks and other activities) and café and improve visual and physical connections.

Estimated Cost: \$1.5M unfunded.

WOLLOMBI PRECINCT

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

- Wollombi Park is designed to accommodate a wide range of community activities with a primary focus on families and teenagers and is central to residences in the Wollombi Road precinct.
- Stage 4 – Pump track \$480,000 is funded and can be delivered independently.
- The unfunded components of the plan include:
 - New access road and car parking
 - Multipurpose playing court areas



- Basketball court and murals
- Adventure Playground
- Picnic shelters and BBQs
- Pedestrian paths and lighting
- Avenue and park tree plantings, and bush regeneration

- Oval and irrigation
- Public amenities
- Parkour facility

Estimated Cost: \$10.1M unfunded.

35 WOLLOMBI ROAD SUBDIVISION

STREETSCAPE AND ACCESS ROAD

Alignment of the proposed access road through the site in accordance with the following DCP objectives and controls:

- Junctions along residential streets are spaced to create safe and convenient vehicle movements.
- The street network is to facilitate walking and cycling within the neighbourhood and to local activity centres.
- The street network is to be orientated where practical, to provide efficient access for dwellings.
- The street network is to take into account existing topography and existing open space systems and natural constraints.

Streets are to be designed to allow on street car parking.

Road reserve width is to be maximised to enable on street parking, provide width standard 20, 1m and 0.5m road reserve 1.5m path.

OBJECTIVES

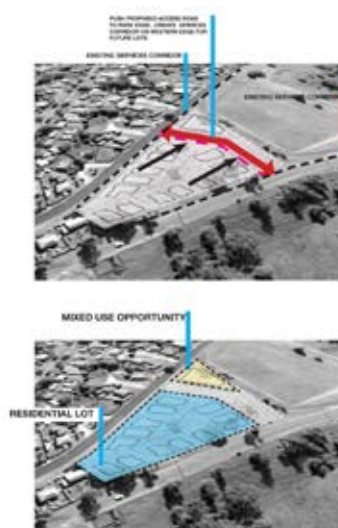
Site configuration and access are in achieving with the relevant DCP objectives and controls:

- Lot sizes and configurations are to be achieved with the existing area within 10m height limitations, following from controls each for will create opportunities for varied single story housing typology.
- Lots are to be configured to account for significant natural landscape elements and tree canopy on valley corridors and are designed to minimise adverse visual impact.
- Site design and building heighting responds to the existing character and form, appearing to be limited to single building and roofline.
- Storage setbacks adhere to the 4.5m rule.
- Maximum lot area is to be limited.
- 70% of the total site area is to be developed and screening between lots.

MIXED USE

Concepts indicate lot size 1100sqm for redevelopment of mixed-use residential cores, retail, cafe and food opportunities.

- Concepts suggest various possible off street parking opportunities - most reserve could be adjusted allow angled parking 90° or 45°.
- Building setbacks within site to be 10m (to be achieved) screened driveway treatment also accommodates trees.



35 WOLLOMBI ROAD SUBDIVISION

There is a opportunity to improve access to services, public transport and safety by providing high quality public and low cost housing.

RESOURCE, RECOVERY AND RECYCLING PRECINCT

Muswellbrook Shire is taking a leadership role on waste and recycling issues. It is collaborating with other Hunter councils to develop a regional response to leverage waste and recycling opportunities and will continue to advocate for improved service delivery and better outcomes for the environment.

In line with government legislation, council is preparing for the introduction of Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) and seeking expressions of interest to manage the FOGO waste.

To facilitate improved waste services, Council is committed to the construction of a Community Infrastructure Depot facility including administration, stores, and workshop and associated infrastructure. The facility is located at the Muswellbrook Waste Management Facility as part of an integrated circular economy precinct for resource recovery and recycling.

The integration of a consolidated Community Infrastructure Depot with the Muswellbrook Waste Management Facility will ensure efficient, effective, and innovative reuse of waste resources for the construction, maintenance and operation of community infrastructure and services.

The project will see approximately 1150 sqm of building/ additional associated infrastructure accommodating a range of

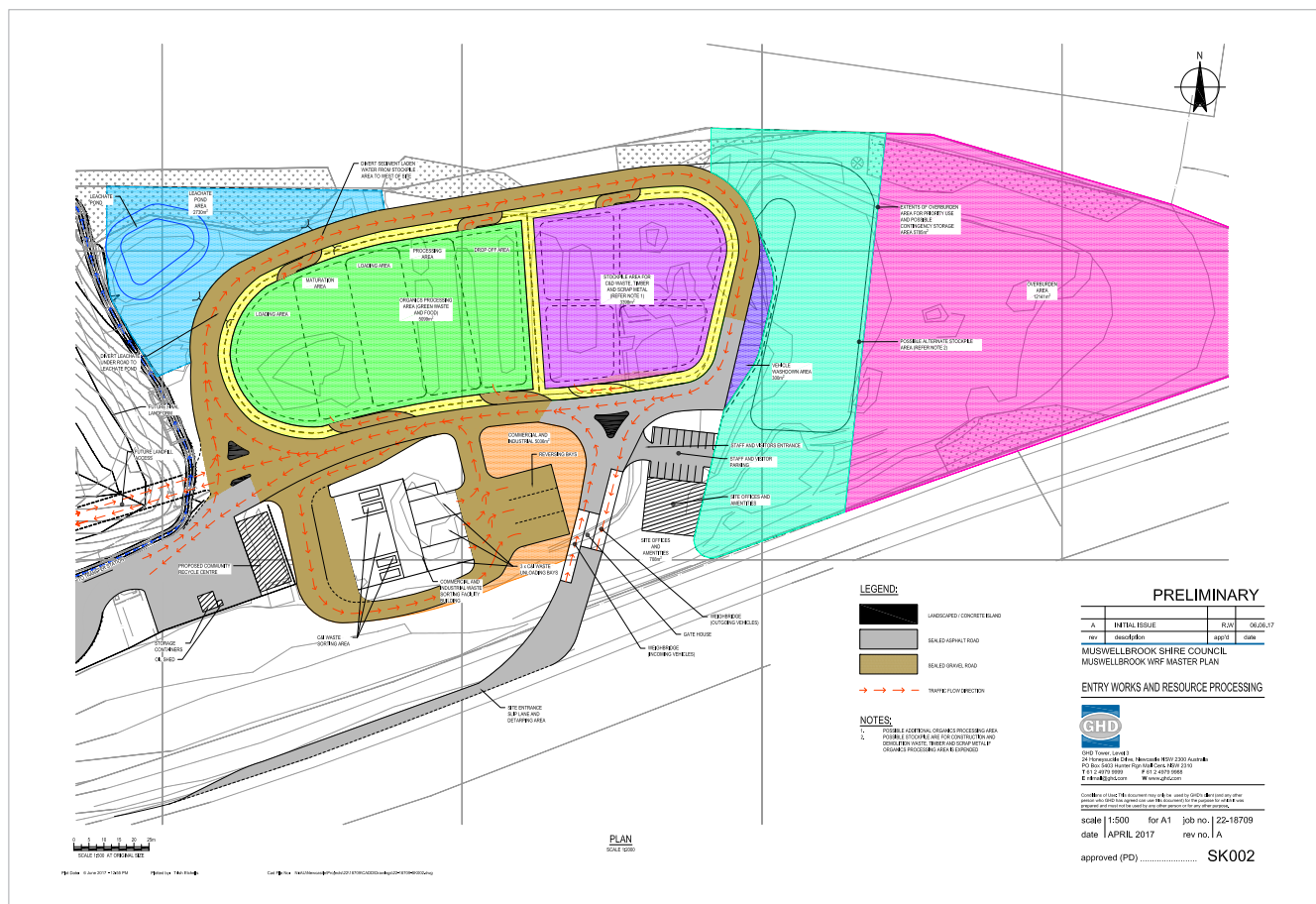
technical/professional/administrative/operational staff across Council's community infrastructure operations including waste management, water, wastewater networks, civil, and parks/gardens.

The contribution of the Community Infrastructure Depot will provide the critical demand part of the circular economy precinct dedicated to resource recovery/recycling. Recycling operations will include but not limited to reuse of roadbase material, brick/ building rubble for road subgrades, green waste for mulch and composted soil in parks/ gardens, recycled water/stormwater, and trialling new approaches to reduce waste and increase recycling.

We are also seeking funding commitment to deliver recycling infrastructure and for 100% of the waste levy to be returned to local governments for community waste minimisation and recycling programs.

Estimated Cost: \$8M

Partial funding: \$3.2M





DENMAN TOURIST PARK

Denman is the shire's key tourist destination offering great food and wine and heritage charm.

- Its rolling green hills and rock escarpment backdrop are home to the largest thoroughbred horse stud in the southern hemisphere and is at the basecamp for the Wollemi National Park which cannot currently be accessed from the Upper Hunter.
- Denman is a burgeoning tourist destination and with continued investment has the opportunity to develop into a quintessential Australian country town destination.
- The continued investment in Denman is based on the Denman Recreation Area Masterplan (2018) and builds on the existing recreational facilities in the Denman Recreation Reserve which includes golf, tennis, swimming, indoor sports stadium, football grounds, cricket pitch, RV dump point and Heritage Village.
- Denman Recreation Reserve will benefit from funding to develop three mountain bike trails around the Denman Lookout and upgrades to the camping facilities.
- Continued investment in the recreation reserve and promotion of Denman is required to encourage more visitation and increase the length of stay.

Estimated project total \$10.5M+

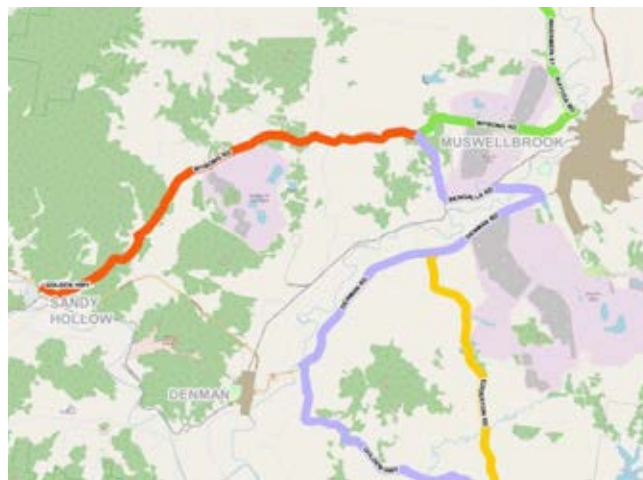
Stage 1 - Funded \$2.2M Resources for regions for civil works.

Stage 2 - Unfunded \$5M for enabling infrastructure.

Stage 3 - Unfunded \$3M construction of Tourist Park.

06

**STATE GOVERNMENT
PRIORITIES**



MUSWELLBROOK BYPASS

State and Federal governments have committed \$340 million to deliver the Muswellbrook Bypass. This project has been several years in planning and once complete will reduce travel times, freight efficiency and improve road safety.

- The New England Highway carries between 11,000 to 20,000 vehicles through Muswellbrook each day, with approximately 13 per cent of those movements being heavy vehicles.
- The investment in this critical transport infrastructure will result in improved liveability for the town but we need to plan for how visitors and passers-by continue to visit the town.
- The bypass will result in improved street amenity, reduced on-street traffic noise and reduced impact on roads from heavy vehicle movements which will lead to the following opportunities for Muswellbrook:
 - New entry statements
 - Access to Muswellbrook Coal site for future industrial uses
 - On street outdoor dining experiences
 - Town centre beautification works
 - Improved public art and wayfinding

RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES

Muswellbrook is a pinch point in the activation of NSW Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) to secure wholesale energy supply and support NSW and Australia's net-zero ambitions.

- Oversized wind and solar REZ infrastructure is required to travel from NSW ports to the REZ using Muswellbrook Shire's local roads. An upgrade of Wybong and Kayuga Roads to state standard is required until a new crossing of the Hunter River at Denman permits movements to Central West Orana and the Bypass permits movements to New England Renewable Energy Zones.
- These traffic movements will impact road infrastructure, community safety and Council resources.
- We are requesting to enter into an agreement with State Government to undertake the repair and maintenance of impacted local roads or find alternative transport route options.
- State Government needs to take ownership of these local roads:
 - Thomas Mitchell Drive
 - Kayuga Road
 - Bylong Valley Way
 - Bell and Victoria Streets
 - Wybong Valley Way
 - Bengalla Link Road
- 2,265 approx. Over Size Over Mass (OSOM) (blade) movements proposed through the Muswellbrook LGA to Central West-Orana REZ.
- Use of is a constraint caused by the Denman Road bridge crossing of the Hunter River (height limit restricted) and the Muswellbrook Railway underpass.



COAL ROAD

The second bypass exit will join Coal Road and be the main entrance to the centre of Muswellbrook.

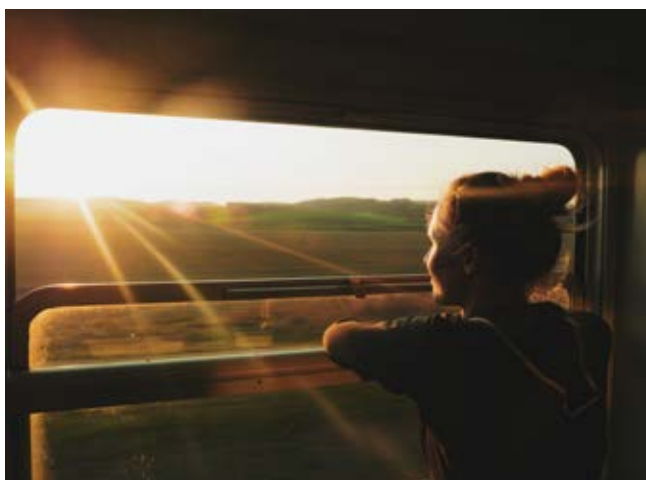
- Coal Road is designated as a local road.
- Preferred route options for the link road between the Coal Road exit from the new bypass to the Muswellbrook CBD have been considered with the preferred route – Option A being presented and endorsed by Council.
- Further detailed design on the preferred route option is required to refine alignment and finalise costings.
- Council has not budgeted for, nor could cover the cost of, the infrastructure required to construct the road as the main entrance to Muswellbrook CBD.
- In the lengthy planning for the bypass there has been strong advocacy from emergency services to have direct access to the centre of town and the 9km bypass to attend accidents and incidents on the highway.
- Emergency services planning for new facilities has taken in to account future access to the highway and has planned their new infrastructure to benefit from the bypass including the hospital expansion and new fire station.
- The exit and link road will facilitate access to Council's Waste Transfer Station to provide regional services directly from the highway.



BIMBADEEN DRIVE INTERSECTION

Delivering housing in regional areas is a key priority for the State and Council.

- To unlock key residential subdivisions in East Brook Links and Iron Bark Ridge, approx. 1200 lots, in accordance with the adopted housing strategy, the construction of an intersection at Bimbadeen Drive and New England Highway is required to enable the release of land for housing.
- TfNSW seeking traffic signals - this is a state road.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Access to reliable and frequent public transport is a critical enabler to improve access to education and training, services and employment for our community.

- The current train timetable has one passenger service and it is unreliable.
- We are seeking commitment to permanently fund an increased level of service, especially increased frequency of train services to provide enhanced links from Muswellbrook and Scone to Newcastle and the Lower Hunter. One goal is for Upper Hunter students to be able to access tertiary education in Newcastle while continuing to live in the Upper Hunter.

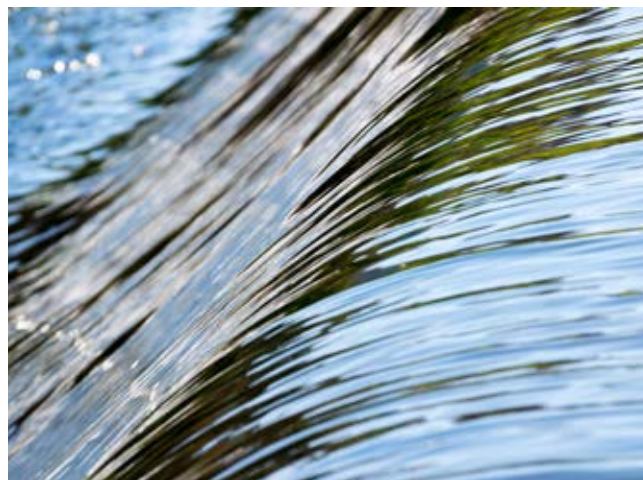




SANDY HOLLOW PIPELINE

Working with NSW Government to plan and secure funding to construct a pipeline from Denman Water Treatment Plant to Sandy Hollow.

- The upgrade of the Denman Water treatment plant will increase capacity and enhance the plant's, ability to produce high quality potable water consistent with NSW Health requirements.
- Will facilitate growing industrial and residential development.
- The project is ready to proceed with detailed costing prepared in late 2022.
- Once full funding is secured there is an 18 month construction period.
- Possible future extension to Merriwa to enhance water security for the western sector of Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shires.
- Part funded.



GLENBAWN DAM TO MUSWELLBROOK PIPELINE

The Glenbawn to Muswellbrook pipeline and water treatment plant is a collaborative project between Muswellbrook Shire and Upper Hunter Shire Council's.

- The pipeline will connect the Glenbawn Dam to the Muswellbrook Reservoir to ensure a secure water allocation for Scone, Aberdeen, Muswellbrook and other communities.
- The project proposes to construct a new Water Treatment Plant at Brushy Hill in the Upper Hunter Shire to provide high quality potable water which meets the NSW Health guidelines.
- The joint water treatment plant will be scalable to accommodate future residential and industrial growth across the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shires.
- Since 1983 Upper Hunter Shire has been planning to upgrade their water treatment plant and have purchased land on Gundy Road to facilitate this. However, a new joint facility would have positive benefits for both Shires and reduce operating costs over the long term.
- Given the labour shortages in the region, reducing the need to duplicate operational staff is a clear advantage with the Muswellbrook Shire having existing skilled operational staff and proven ability to deliver clean safe water to the community.
- Estimated cost \$50M unfunded.





MUSWELLBROOK HOSPITAL

The NSW Government committed \$45 million to redevelop the Muswellbrook Hospital.

Since this time construction costs have escalated and Stage 3 is no longer fully funded.

Muswellbrook Hospital serves a large regional population and is developing as a first-class district hospital.

Stage 3 focuses on consolidating all acute clinical services into one building, a new 26-bed inpatient unit, two palliative care beds, a four-bed maternity unit and two birthing suites.

Benefits

The project will:

- Enable contemporary models of care and facilitate efficient, digitally enabled and sustainable service delivery
- Consolidate maternity services to ensure the best care for local mothers and their babies
- Enhance and provide culturally inclusive, patient, family and carer centred facilities to meet the health needs of the community now, and into the future.

Scope

This project includes:

- Relocating maternity and inpatient units into the main hospital facility which will consolidate all acute clinical services into one building
- Fitting out existing shell space with a new operating suite
- Relocating the central sterilising services department into a refurbished space
- New staff accommodation on the hospital campus
- Relocating and refurbishing community health into the main hospital building.

Staffing

Council has identified a number of healthcare needs for the community, including but not limited to, GP services, maternity, obstetric and paediatric facilities and adult and youth mental health services.

Mental Health Services

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

Our community's livelihood will be impacted by mine and powerplant closures which will result in job losses and addition stress on local families and mental wellbeing. This is the greatest mental health challenge facing our community which we are under resourced and serviced to deal with.



“MUSWELLBROOK HOSPITAL UPGRADE AND IMPROVED MATERNITY SERVICES IS WONDERFUL BUT IT WON’T BE ANY GOOD WITHOUT A WORKFORCE TO OPERATE IT.

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE HAS A MEDICAL WORKFORCE SHORTAGE AND MUST REMAIN A HIGH PRIORITY AREA UNDER THE DISTRIBUTION PRIORITY AREA (DPA) FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND OBSTETRICIANS AND BE ELIGIBLE FOR VISITING MEDICAL OFFICERS (VMO’S). THE DPA STATUS FOR GP’S IS UPDATED EVERY YEAR.

IN 2021 AFTER MUCH LOBBYING, MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE MOVED TO HIGH PRIORITY. WE NEED TO RETAIN A HIGH PRIORITY RATING UNTIL THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL STAFF IS ADDRESSED.”

MAYOR STEVE REYNOLDS





muswellbrook
shire council

For more information:

Mayor Cr Steve Reynolds

P: 02 6549 3700

E: steven.reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Derek Finnigan

General Manager

P: 0419 465 572

E: derek.finnigan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au