

# Narrabri Shire 2023 - 2032



*Vibrant,  
Sustainable  
and  
Diverse*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



NARRABRI SHIRE COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND, THE KAMILAROI PEOPLE AND PAYS RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE AND EXTENDS OUR RESPECT TO ALL FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN NARRABRI SHIRE.



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**Disclaimer**

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**Document History**

| MEETING DATE    | DESCRIPTION                    | RESOLUTION      |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 22 August 2023  | Endorsed for Public Exhibition | MINUTE 217/2023 |
| 31 October 2023 | Adopted                        | MINUTE 286/2023 |

# FROM THE MAYOR



Narrabri Shire is rich with economic strength and opportunity. Richly endowed with natural resources and strategically located on key transport corridors, the Shire has a diverse and resilient economy, underpinned by thriving agriculture and mining sectors, world-class research industries and a growing manufacturing sector. Looking ahead, the future of the Shire is strong, with major investments set to provide further economic and job opportunities for our community.

The construction and operation of Inland Rail, the Narrabri Special Activation Precinct (currently under investigation) and the Northern NSW Inland Port will provide opportunities for existing industries to flourish and new industries and businesses to emerge. Across our Shire and its localities, such as Narrabri, Boggabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata, Edgeroi and Baan Baa, government and industry are investing to grow our economy. This will provide job opportunities for residents across the Shire and promote the Shire as a vibrant and attractive place to live and work.

The Shire's 2023-2032 Economic Development Strategy aims to establish the framework that Council will use to harness these economic opportunities, and to proactively address the challenges that we face. The Strategy, informed by extensive consultation with government, business and community stakeholders, focusses on five key outcomes:

**1. Diverse, resilient and sustainable** – Narrabri Shire maintains a diverse, resilient and sustainable economy, where the community continues to thrive in the face of economic change and climate impacts.

**2. Connectivity and location** – Narrabri Shire harnesses its physical and digital connectivity to attract more investment and provide greater opportunities for local businesses and workers.

**3. Land supply** – Diverse, affordable and sustainable housing and land is available in the short- and long-term to meet the needs of residents and businesses, and to support growth opportunities in Narrabri Shire.

**4. Capability and capacity** – The Narrabri Shire community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses can operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.

**5. People and place** – High-quality public and community services are available to support broad workforce participation and diverse cohorts, and to ensure that Narrabri Shire is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work.

With these outcomes in mind, Council has developed a set of practical priorities and actions, which are designed to address the economic opportunities and challenges for our Shire, including through direct action and engagement with the State and Federal Governments.

Thank you for your involvement in and support of the 2023-2032 Economic Development Strategy, as we continue to work towards a vibrant, sustainable and diversified economy for Narrabri Shire.

– Darrell Tiemens, Mayor



# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

**YOUR COUNCIL'S VISION:** To facilitate the growth and development of a vibrant, sustainable and diversified economy that value adds to the Region's resources and provides a quality of living environment and prosperous future for all residents and communities.

| OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES   | STRATEGIC OUTCOMES   | STRATEGIC PRIORITIES  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITY 1:</b><br/>Narrabri Shire has a diverse range of competitive industries that enables it to more effectively navigate economic, climate and policy challenges.</p>                                | <p><b>OUTCOME 1:</b><br/><b>Diverse, resilient, sustainable</b><br/>Narrabri Shire maintains a diverse, resilient and sustainable economy, where the community continues to thrive in the face of economic change and climate impacts.</p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Support a resilient, competitive and sustainable agricultural and business sector</li> <li>1.2 Attract competitive energy and mining industries that are sensitive to surrounding land use and support sustainable economic growth</li> <li>1.3 Enhance business and economic resilience through renewable energy initiatives</li> <li>1.4 Support and promote entrepreneurship that leverages and complements Narrabri Shire's economic opportunities, existing specialisations and endowments.</li> </ul>      |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITY 2:</b><br/>Narrabri Shire is strategically located with efficient access to key domestic markets and international gateways. Future investments will further strengthen this.</p>                | <p><b>OUTCOME 2:</b><br/><b>Connectivity and location</b><br/>Narrabri Shire harnesses its physical and digital connectivity to attract more investment and provide greater opportunities for local businesses and workers.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Leverage investment in Inland Rail and existing transport corridors to drive economic competitiveness and industry attraction</li> <li>2.2 Enhance the safety and resilience of local transport infrastructure to support access for people and goods</li> <li>2.3 Ensure fast, reliable digital connectivity for businesses, services and residents.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>CHALLENGE 1:</b><br/>Housing, industrial and commercial land supply shortages prevent Narrabri Shire from harnessing the full growth potential offered by its natural resources, workforce and industry.</p> | <p><b>OUTCOME 3:</b><br/><b>Land supply</b><br/>Diverse, affordable and sustainable housing and land is available in the short- and long-term to meet the needs of residents and businesses, and to support growth opportunities in Narrabri Shire.</p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Support the efficient, adequate and sustainable provision of residential land and accommodation for workforce sustainability and affordable living</li> <li>3.2 Deliver adequate, efficient and sustainable land releases for industrial and commercial purposes.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>CHALLENGE 2:</b><br/>There is a mismatch between labour supply and demand, exacerbating critical labour shortages across local trades, essential skills and other key industries.</p>                        | <p><b>OUTCOME 4:</b><br/><b>Capability and capacity</b><br/>The Narrabri Shire community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses are able to operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.</p>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in skilled roles, trades and population-serving industries</li> <li>4.2 Support training opportunities and career pathways for young workers</li> <li>4.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries</li> <li>4.4 Enable access to high-quality education opportunities in Narrabri Shire</li> <li>4.5 Support the growth of local First Nations workforce opportunities.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>CHALLENGE 3:</b><br/>The quality and resilience of public and community services is constrained by the lack of workforce supply and local infrastructure.</p>  | <p><b>OUTCOME 5:</b><br/><b>People and place</b><br/>High-quality public and community services are available to support broad workforce participation and diverse cohorts, and to ensure that Narrabri is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Attract essential workers and population-serving businesses to support the liveability of Narrabri Shire</li> <li>5.2 Provide modern, high-quality community infrastructure that provides diverse recreational opportunities for citizens, workers and visitors.</li> <li>5.3 Invest in natural and cultural attractions to support the growth of the visitor economy and retention of workers.</li> <li>5.4 Attract new retail and support local businesses to drive regional economic opportunities</li> </ul> |

**An overview of what this Strategy means for communities across Narrabri Shire**

This Strategy has been developed for the benefit of the entire Narrabri Shire, which means delivering tangible outcomes for communities across the Shire that specifically address their needs. The table below provides a summary of the economic development outcomes this Strategy aims to achieve for our communities and their surrounds in response to their specific needs.



# NARRABRI

- Facilitating an increase in housing and industrial land to support the growth of the local economy
- Improving the breadth of education opportunities available in Narrabri, building its status as a key regional education hub
- Helping to attract key population-serving workers to make it easier for businesses to attract and retain staff
- Improving community infrastructure and services, enhancing Narrabri’s status as an attractive place to live and invest



# BOGGABRI & BAAN BAA

- Facilitating an increase in housing to ensure the town can continue to attract and retain workers
- Making it more attractive for young people to stay by improving access to education and trade opportunities in the Shire
- Supporting greater industrial land supply to enable local businesses to expand and to attract new businesses
- Supporting local community events and investing in natural and cultural attractions to strengthen the visitor economy

# WEE WAA



- More housing to make it easier to attract and retain critical workers, particularly for value-added agriculture and research
- Harnessing the agricultural production and research strengths of the area to attract more high-skilled workers and students
- Facilitating improvements in road infrastructure to ensure reliable and resilient access for the Wee Waa community
- Attracting new retail and supporting local businesses to increase and enhance the vibrancy of the main centre

- Facilitating improvements in transport and digital connectivity to enhance business and economic resiliency
- Working with local businesses to support opportunities for participation in Shire events
- Leveraging significant infrastructure investments (e.g., Inland Rail) to create better market access for producers in the area
- Increasing investment in natural and cultural attractions to strengthen the visitor economy

# PILLIGA & GWABEGAR

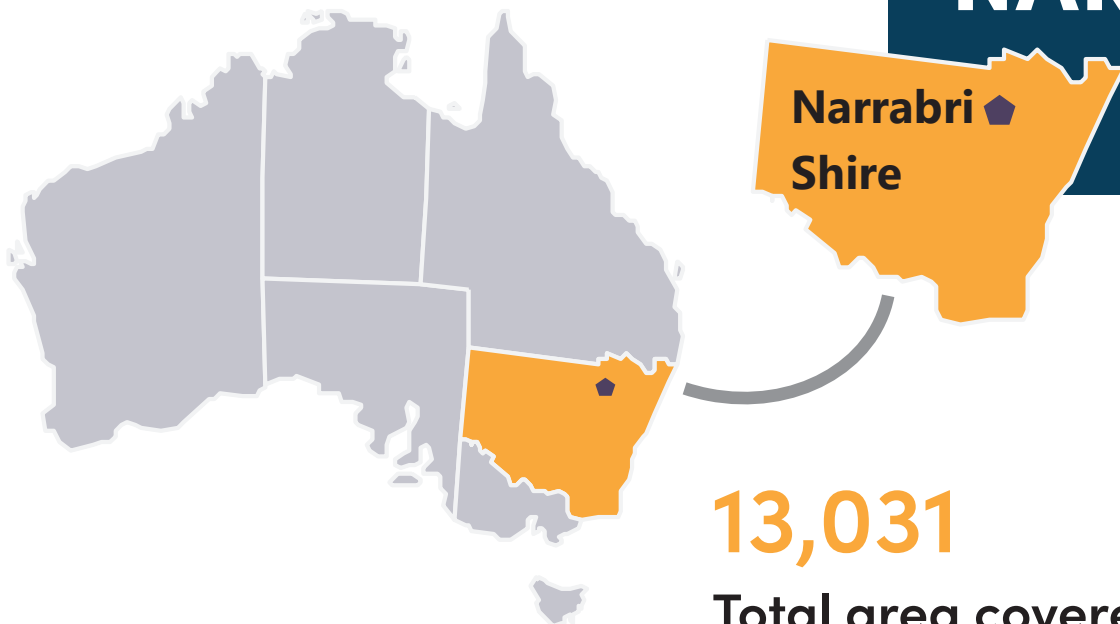
- Supporting improvements in transport and digital connectivity to enhance business and economic resiliency
- Working with local businesses to support opportunities for participation in Shire events
- Leveraging significant infrastructure investments (e.g., Inland Rail) to create better market access for producers in the area
- Increasing investment in natural and cultural attractions to strengthen the visitor economy

# BELLATA & EDGEROI





# ABOUT NARRABRI SHIRE



13,031

Total area covered (km<sup>2</sup>)

Source: REMPLAN 2023

## Strategically located between the export gateways of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne

The 13th largest Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW and strategically located in the Upper North West of NSW, Narrabri Shire spans an area of over 13,000km<sup>2</sup>, including townships such as Narrabri, Boggabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata, Edgeroi and Baan Baa. The Shire’s strategic position at the intersection of key north-south and east-west transport corridors provides our residents and businesses with direct access to the key markets and international gateways of Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane and Melbourne.

Naturally endowed with fertile agricultural land, resources and a diverse environment, the dynamic agricultural, mining and tourism sectors underpin our economic diversity and resilience. The Shire also boasts a range of other industries that include world-class research institutes, manufacturing and processing facilities, as well as retail services that support a prosperous regional economy.

Planned or in-train investments are set to provide further opportunities for our existing industries, support the attraction of new ones and provide more opportunity for our communities, including:

- The delivery of the 1,700km Inland Rail project, which will provide a direct rail connection between Narrabri and markets and international gateways in Brisbane and Melbourne.
- The potential Narrabri Special Activation Precinct (SAP) (under investigation), which will target growth in energy-intensive manufacturing, value-add agricultural production, recycling, and freight and logistics.
- The completion of the Wee Waa High School redevelopment by Schools Infrastructure NSW, which will provide new learning spaces, sports facilities and a new Indigenous cultural centre.
- New accommodation for visiting healthcare workers at the Boggabri Multi-Purpose Service, to provide better access to healthcare for residents.
- The Northern NSW Inland Port (N2IP), which will capitalise on the strategic connectivity to Brisbane and Melbourne that Inland Rail will deliver. It will provide an integrated industrial park and logistics precinct to connect local businesses with Inland Rail as well as road and rail connections to Newcastle and Sydney.

# NARRABRI SHIRE LOCALITIES IN FOCUS

**NARRABRI** | The township of Narrabri is home to 7,327 people and is the Shire's major services and administration hub, home to key retailers, the Shire's regional airport and Council. The township's strategic location at the junction of the Kamilaroi and Newell Highways, as well as key rail lines, means it is a key logistics hub – a position that will be enhanced with the completion of Inland Rail. Coal mining and grain growing are the top employment industries.

**BOGGABRI AND BAAN BAA** | With a population of 1,188, the township of Boggabri lies along the Kamilaroi Highway, by the Namoi River and Nandewar Range. The town is supported by a strong agriculture base of wheat, wool, beef cattle and cotton farming, and is in proximity to significant coal deposits. Coal mining is the major employer for the township, with over 20% of people working in this sector. This is largely through the Boggabri Coal Mine, which has been in operation since 2006. Baan Baa is located to the southeast along the Kamilaroi Highway just outside Boggabri with 165 people calling it home. The township has a similar industry base to Boggabri.

**WEE WAA** | Wee Waa has a population of 2,034 people, making it the second most populous town in the Shire. Wee Waa is located west of Narrabri, within the lower Namoi Valley along the Kamilaroi Highway. Famously known as Australia's cotton capital, the township has rich agricultural lands, used for cotton production as well as wheat and rice. Around 20% of employment is centred around the cotton industry, with the township being recognised around the country for its expertise in the industry.

**PILLIGA AND GWABEGAR** | Pilliga is a town of 138 residents, located on the edge of the Pilliga State Forest. To the south of Pilliga and within the State Forest lies Gwabegar where 124 people reside. The major industry of the two towns is agriculture, with beef farming and grain growing as key sectors.

**BELLATA AND EDGEROI** | Bellata and Edgeroi are both located along the Newell Highway north of the Narrabri township and are home to 238 and 96 people, respectively. Situated atop the Great Artesian Basin, the townships are located among fertile agricultural land, with the sector supporting the majority of the workforce. Both towns are also located along the Inland Rail alignment, with the section of the line near the townships already being upgraded and operational.



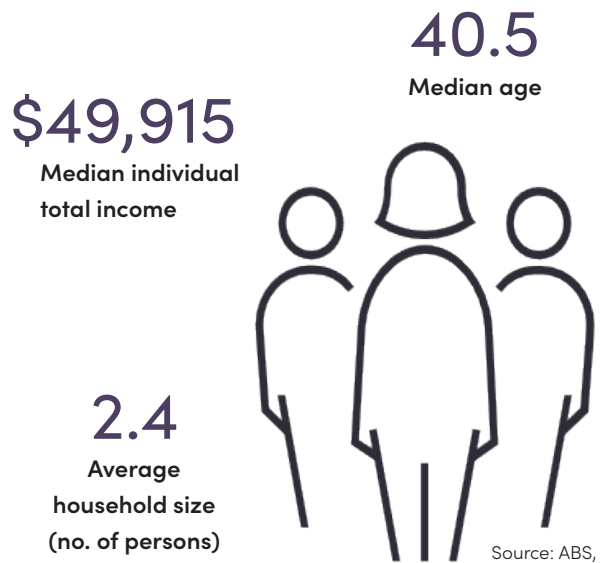
# OUR PEOPLE

## A close-knit community that underpins a dynamic economy

As of 2021, the Shire is home to an estimated 12,809 residents.<sup>1</sup> This permanent population is supplemented by a transient workforce within the resources sector. This forms a substantial fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in-drive-out (DIDO) workforce.<sup>2</sup>

In the six years to 2021, the Shire’s residential population has remained largely consistent.<sup>1</sup> The NSW Department of Planning and Environment projects the population of Narrabri Shire to remain relatively stable to 2041 (with a forecast change from 12,809 residents in 2021 to 12,102 residents in 2041).<sup>3</sup> While this population trend is consistent with many LGAs in regional NSW, recently announced or anticipated major projects and investments are expected to boost the local workforce and regenerate local population growth.<sup>4</sup> The significant investment in the Shire through the Narrabri SAP (under investigation) has the potential to increase population projections, as new businesses attract more workers to the Shire over the next 10 years.

## THE AVERAGE NARRABRI SHIRE RESIDENT



**12,809**  
Population (2021)



<sup>1</sup> ABS, Region summary: Narrabri, 2023  
<sup>2</sup> REMPLAN, 2023  
<sup>3</sup> NSW Government, 2021 Planning Projections: Narrabri, 2021  
<sup>4</sup> NSW Government, Global forces shaping our regional economies, 2023



# AN ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT OF NARRABRI SHIRE

## A strong and resilient economy, underpinned by a diverse set of industries

Narrabri Shire has a diverse economy. Due to its location on the Great Artesian Basin, the Shire has access to vast natural resources, including extensive irrigation, coal and gas reserves. Access to these resources has underpinned the Shire’s economy, particularly through the agriculture and mining industries.



**\$1.838 billion**

Gross Regional Product (2022)

Source: REMPLAN, 2023



**6,949**

Total employment (2022)

Source: REMPLAN, 2023

**Top four industries by output (2022)** Source: REMPLAN, 2023

**1**  
MINING



**2**  
AGRICULTURE



**3**  
CONSTRUCTION



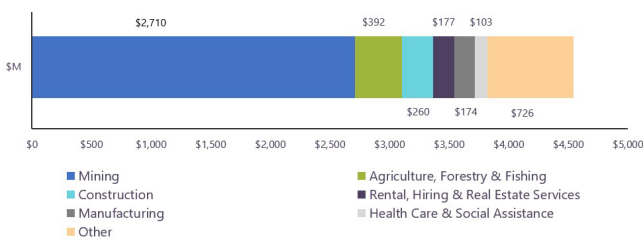
**4**  
RENTAL, HIRING  
AND REAL ESTATE



The Shire has undergone significant growth in recent years with the expansion of mining across the Region. In the past 14 years, the Gross Regional Product (GRP) has almost tripled, from \$673 million in 2008 to \$1.838 billion in 2022.<sup>5</sup> This represents an average growth rate of 9.4% per annum. Net regional exports contribute approximately 47% to total GRP – driven by export-focussed agriculture and mining industries.<sup>5</sup>

The top four industries by output are 1) mining, 2) agriculture, 3) construction and 4) rental, hiring and real estate services. The diversification of the Shire’s industry base provides resilience during times of drought or changing economic conditions.

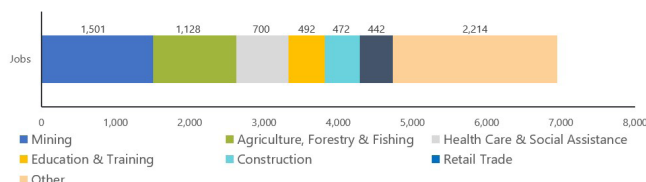
**Figure 1. Industry-wide output in 2022 (\$ million)**



Source: REMPLAN 2023<sup>6</sup>

Approximately 7,000 workers were employed in the Shire, as of 2021. This employment is concentrated in the agricultural and mining sectors, as outlined in Figure 2. Healthcare and social assistance as well as education and training industries also provide significant employment opportunities in the Shire, having a lower monetary value but being labour-intensive industries.

**Figure 2. Industry-wide workforce in 2022**



Source: REMPLAN 2023

Mining is a capital-intensive sector, producing high output per person employed. The industry workforce is dominated by FIFO and DIDO workers from surrounding LGAs and further afield who are not captured in local employment statistics. Second in output and employment to mining is the agriculture industry. While it remains the second largest employer in the Shire, the total number of jobs supported by the agriculture sector has declined in recent decades.<sup>7</sup> The two main factors driving this long-term decline are technological improvements that have reduced reliance on labour, and the consolidation of smaller farms into larger farms.<sup>8</sup> While the agriculture and mining sectors have created opportunities for the workforce and regional economy, the industries are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, fluctuations in global markets and government policy – each of which could have a significant impact on the local labour force.<sup>9</sup>

The Shire also has a strong secondary agricultural sector, which includes cotton gins, cotton seed storage and distribution facilities, cotton, grain, legume storage warehouses and agricultural research facilities. These sub-sectors make a significant contribution to Narrabri Shire, drawing on local agriculture and labour resources and promoting the area for further investment. Value-adding businesses, including those in large and small-scale manufacturing, recycling and timber processing facilities, construction and trades and retail, accommodation and food services, also play a key role supporting the local economy and community.

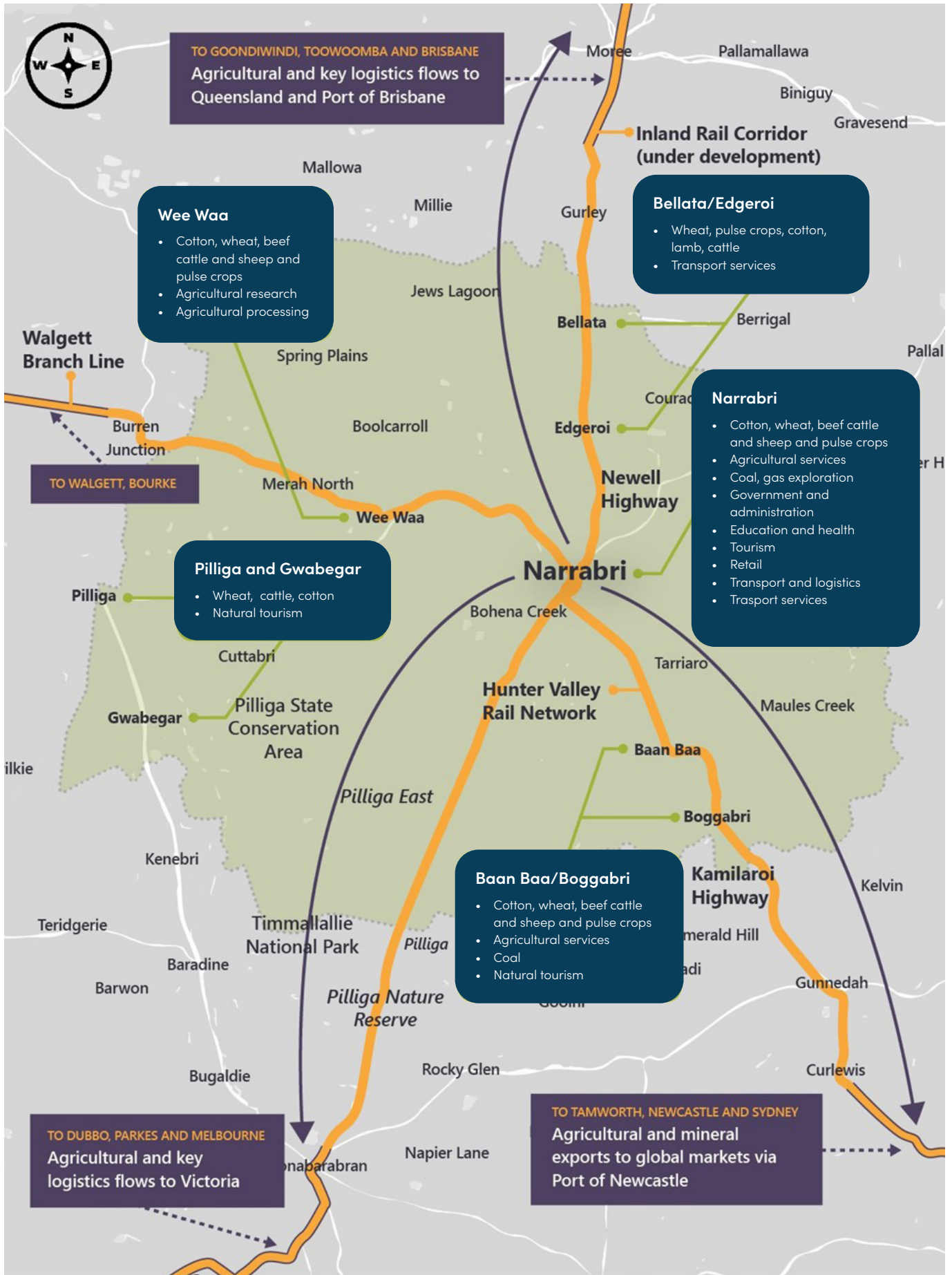
Narrabri Shire has several key growth opportunities. With major investments including Inland Rail, the Wee Waa High School Redevelopment (which will include an Indigenous cultural centre as well as an agricultural centre), Narrabri Gas Project and N2IP, there is considerable opportunity for new industries to leverage these commitments and invest in Narrabri Shire. Additionally, a SAP for Narrabri is under investigation in collaboration with the NSW Government. It is being developed with the purpose of attracting further jobs and investment to the region, capitalising on its natural resources, skilled workforce and proximity to key transport corridors.

<sup>5</sup> REMPLAN 2023

<sup>6</sup> ‘Other’ includes all remaining industries of the Narrabri economy including (but not limited to), Public administration & Safety, Transport, Postal and Warehousing, Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services, Education & Training, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

<sup>7</sup> ABS, Regional Summary: Narrabri, 2021

<sup>8</sup> Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, ARBES insights, 2023



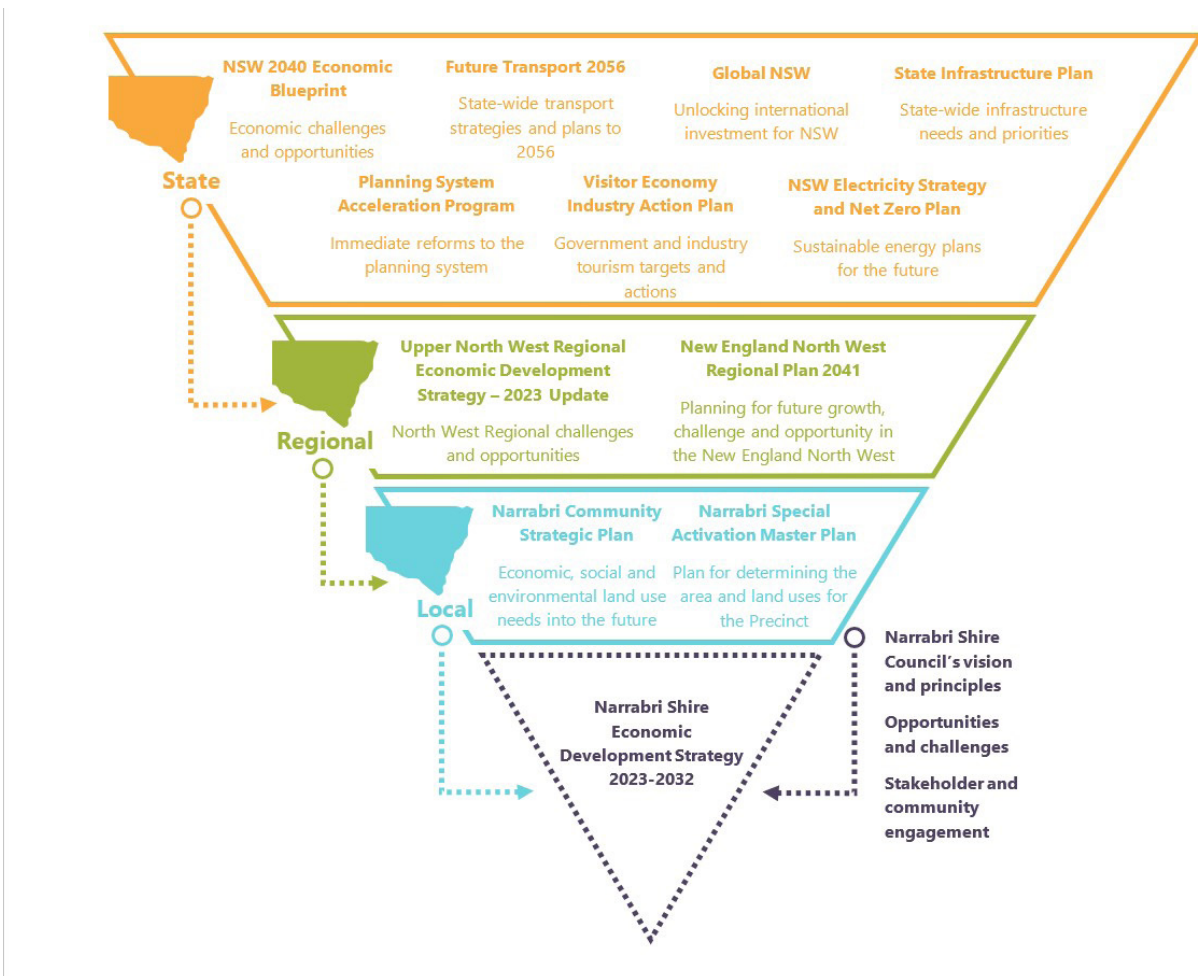
LEGEND: ■ Key Transport Corridor   Local Government Area (LGA) ■ Key Townships ■ Key Destinations

# CONTEXT FOR THE NARRABRI SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Narrabri Shire Economic Development Strategy sits under and aligns with other local, regional and state plans and strategies.

The Narrabri Shire Economic Development Strategy 2023-2032 sits within an ecosystem of local, regional and state plans and strategies that guide economic development in NSW and the Shire. These plans and strategies outline economic challenges and opportunities (and associated actions) at each jurisdictional level. The alignment of the Shire’s strategy with these existing plans is outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Related policies and strategies



The strategic outcomes and priorities within this Strategy are also aligned to key economic development objectives outlined in relevant local, regional and state planning and strategy documents. This allows for consistency and collaboration across jurisdictional levels and strategies in achieving the Shire’s economic development objectives.

**Table 1. Strategic alignment with State Government policies and strategies**

| Strategic Priorities (refer to page 5)  | NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint | Future Transport 2056 | Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan | Planning System Acceleration Program | NSW Electricity Strategy and Net Zero Plan | State Infrastructure Plan |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1.1 Support a resilient, competitive and sustainable agricultural and business sector   | ✓                           |                       |                                      |                                      | ✓  | ✓                         |
| 1.2 Attract competitive energy and mining industries that are sensitive to surrounding land use and support sustainable economic growth                   | ✓                           |                       |                                      |                                      | ✓  |                           |
| 1.3 Enhance business and economic resilience through renewable energy initiatives   | ✓                           | ✓                     |                                      |                                      | ✓  |                           |
| 1.4 Support and promote entrepreneurship that leverages and complements Narrabri Shire's economic opportunities, existing specialisations and endowments. | ✓                           |                       |                                      |                                      |  |                           |
| 2.1 Leverage investment in Inland Rail and existing transport corridors to drive economic competitiveness and industry attraction                         |                             | ✓                     |                                      |                                      |  | ✓                         |
| 2.2 Enhance the safety and resilience of local transport infrastructure to support access for people and goods  | ✓                           | ✓                     | ✓                                    |                                      |  | ✓                         |
| 2.3 Ensure fast, reliable digital connectivity for businesses, services and residents   | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    |                                      |  | ✓                         |
| 3.1 Support the efficient, adequate and sustainable provision of residential land and accommodation for workforce sustainability and affordable living    | ✓                           |                       |                                      | ✓                                    |  |                           |
| 3.2 Deliver adequate, efficient and sustainable land releases for industrial and commercial purposes  |                             |                       | ✓                                    | ✓                                    |  | ✓                         |
| 4.1 Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in skilled roles, trades and population-serving industries  | ✓                           | ✓                     | ✓                                    |                                      |  |                           |
| 4.2 Support training opportunities and career pathways for young workers  | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    |                                      |  |                           |
| 4.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries   |                             |                       |                                      |                                      |  |                           |
| 4.4 Enable access to high-quality education opportunities in Narrabri Shire   | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    |                                      |  | ✓                         |
| 4.5 Support the growth of local First Nations workforce opportunities   | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    |                                      |  |                           |
| 5.1 Attract essential workers and population-serving businesses to support the liveability of the Narrabri Shire  |                             |                       | ✓                                    |                                      |  |                           |
| 5.2 Provide modern, high-quality community infrastructure that provides diverse recreational opportunities for citizens, workers and visitors.            | ✓                           | ✓                     | ✓                                    | ✓                                    |  | ✓                         |
| 5.3 Invest in natural and cultural attractions to support the growth of the visitor economy and retention of workers.                                     | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    | ✓                                    |  | ✓                         |
| 5.4 Attract new retail and support local businesses to drive regional economic opportunities  | ✓                           |                       | ✓                                    | ✓                                    |  |                           |



**Table 2: Strategic alignment with regional policies and strategies**

| Narrabri Shire priorities   | Upper North West Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 update | New England North West Regional Plan 2041 | Narrabri Community Strategic Plan | Narrabri Special Activation Master Plan |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 Support a resilient, competitive and sustainable agricultural and business sector   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 | ✓                                       |
| 1.2 Attract competitive energy and mining industries that are sensitive to surrounding land use and support sustainable economic growth                   | ✓   | ✓   |                                   | ✓                                       |
| 1.3 Enhance business and economic resilience through renewable energy initiatives   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 1.4 Support and promote entrepreneurship that leverages and complements Narrabri Shire's economic opportunities, existing specialisations and endowments. | ✓   |   |                                   | ✓                                       |
| 2.1 Leverage investment in Inland Rail and existing transport corridors to drive economic competitiveness and industry attraction                         | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 | ✓                                       |
| 2.2 Enhance the safety and resilience of local transport infrastructure to support access for people and goods  | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 2.3 Ensure fast, reliable digital connectivity for businesses, services and residents   | ✓   |   | ✓                                 |   |
| 3.1 Support the efficient, adequate and sustainable provision of residential land and accommodation for workforce sustainability and affordable living    | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 3.2 Deliver adequate, efficient and sustainable land releases for industrial and commercial purposes  |   | ✓   |                                   | ✓                                       |
| 4.1 Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in skilled roles, trades and population-serving industries  | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 | ✓                                       |
| 4.2 Support training opportunities and career pathways for young workers  |   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 4.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries   |   |   |                                   |   |
| 4.4 Enable access to high-quality education opportunities in Narrabri Shire   |   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 4.5 Support the growth of local First Nations workforce opportunities   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 5.1 Attract essential workers and population-serving businesses to support the liveability of the Narrabri Shire  | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 5.2 Provide modern, high-quality community infrastructure that provides diverse recreational opportunities for citizens, workers and visitors.            | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 5.3 Invest in natural and cultural attractions to support the growth of the visitor economy and retention of workers.                                     | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 |   |
| 5.4 Attract new retail and support local businesses to drive regional economic opportunities  | ✓   | ✓   | ✓                                 | ✓                                       |

# DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NARRABRI SHIRE

## Economic development will drive opportunity for industry, businesses and the local community

What is economic development and why is it important for Narrabri Shire?

Economic development refers to the growth of a vibrant, diverse and sustainable economy, by driving growth in business and industry, and providing opportunities for local residents to improve their quality of life.

### How can Council support economic development?

Narrabri Shire Council is dedicated to promoting economic development through an action-orientated

and collaborative approach. Community, business and industry engagement and partnership will be key in implementing Council’s strategic priorities for economic development.

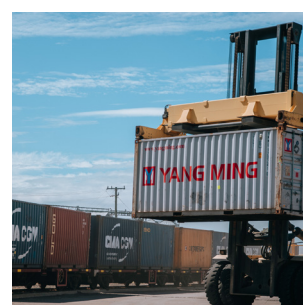
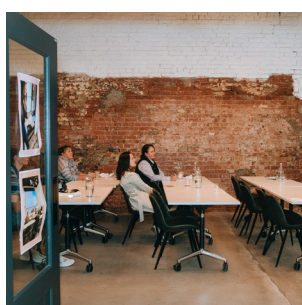
Council is limited in the extent to which it has the financial resources or powers to address all priorities through direct actions. Therefore, in addition to direct actions within its control and capacity, advocacy and consultation with State and Federal Governments is critical for Council to deliver on the priorities outlined in this strategy. Council will focus on delivering actions to drive economic development across four areas.

**SUPPORTING  
EXISTING BUSINESS  
AND INDUSTRY**

**ATTRACTING NEW  
BUSINESS AND  
INDUSTRY**

**ADVOCATING TO  
GOVERNMENT**

**PROMOTING THE  
SHIRE**





# SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Supporting the needs of existing business and industry in the Shire will be a key priority of Narrabri Shire Council to ensure that current businesses and industry are provided the opportunities and backing to grow and thrive. Council will facilitate this by: engaging with local businesses and investors on growth opportunities and providing appropriate support; facilitating connections and knowledge-sharing between business and workers through industry forums; leading or supporting events, seminars and other training programs; providing information to workers and businesses to understand local training and business opportunities; and investing in local infrastructure to support connectivity for people and goods.

## SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN ACTION:

### Business concierge service

The Economic Development department of Narrabri Shire Council offers a business concierge service and assists existing and new businesses with a range of information and support. Economic Development staff are on-hand to provide valuable and practical information, advice, contacts and referrals to facilitate economic growth in Narrabri Shire.

### The Exchange Business Activator (TEBA) Program

Narrabri Shire Council has supported small businesses by delivering a comprehensive 18-month business support program, TEBA. A partnership with The Exchange Narrabri and the University of New England's Smart Region Incubator (UNE SRI), TEBA has been designed to enable continued economic recovery in the Shire by providing expert support for established and emerging local businesses in order to build confidence, capability and growth. TEBA aims to deliver a legacy of economic recovery, community resilience and job creation in line with local and regional strategies.

The program featured a comprehensive schedule of capacity-building, networking, and development opportunities for established and emerging businesses in the Shire, ultimately welcoming 680 participants across 58 events during 2022 and 2023. Narrabri Shire Council's TEBA program was awarded the 2023 LGNSW RH Dougherty Award for Innovation in Special Events in August 2023.

# ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY



Creating and supporting a business environment that is inviting and attractive for new businesses and industry is a focus of Narrabri Shire Council. Achieving this includes funding campaigns and investment incentives, while partnering with local business to identify and promote new and existing opportunities for investment. Further, capitalising on the benefits of infrastructure investment will allow Council to drive business attraction to the Shire. Involvement from Council also includes funding new services and infrastructure, such as local roads and community infrastructure, as well as working with all levels of government and industry to ensure adequate housing supply to attract and retain workers.

## ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN ACTION: FACILITATING NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE SHIRE

Narrabri Shire Council's Economic Development team facilitated a national department store to establish an outlet in Narrabri Shire. Initial meetings were held with the organisation where information around population, economic output and future infrastructure and development projects were discussed. This progressed to identifying sites that were of suitable size, zoned correctly and positioned in an appropriate location for the community and business.

Internally, the Economic Development team engaged with all relevant areas of Council, inclusive of Design, Planning, Roads and Engineering, to determine whether there were any aspects of the proposal that could eliminate a site. Regular conversations were held with the business contact, providing information required to support their internal business case to establish the outlet.

Economic Development offers to any party looking to invest in Narrabri Shire, a pre-development application meeting with Council. This allows both parties to meet and understand each other's requirements. Council's specialist staff from Planning, Design and Engineering provide suggestions and input to draft development applications. This means cost and time savings for businesses when they lodge development applications. It ensures that Council staff have a thorough understanding of proposals.

The Economic Development team continues to assist businesses throughout the development process by answering questions or addressing issues that are raised. This dialogue supports effective and efficient consideration of development applications by Council.

From being the first point of contact for a new development as well as a facilitator between Council and investors, the Economic Development team's role is to achieve positive outcomes for the Narrabri Shire community and ensure the Shire is an attractive place to do business.



# ADVOCATING TO GOVERNMENT

Narrabri Shire Council plays a substantial role in advocating for the economic and financial needs of the Shire to both Federal and State Government. It is acknowledged that there are areas beyond the remit or capacity of Council that require engagement and collaboration with other levels of government. This includes: advocating for investment in larger-scale community infrastructure to support economic growth; identifying and advocating for major economic development priorities in the Shire; and ensuring economic and investment policy at all levels of government is addressing the needs of the Shire.

## ADVOCATING TO GOVERNMENT IN ACTION: NORTHERN NSW INLAND PORT (N2IP)

In May 2017, Narrabri Council presented to the NSW Government a vision for an industrial estate to support economic growth in the Shire. A formal request for business case funding was subsequently made by Council, resulting in the successful receipt of grant funding in December 2017. In early 2018, a Steering Committee was created, and tender documents established, with Council engaging specialists to undertake a business case for what is now the N2IP project.

In mid-2018, Council identified and began negotiations on two blocks of land, totalling 240 hectares, which ultimately became sites 1 and 2 of N2IP. In mid-2019, Council received the final Strategic Business Case. This informed Council’s decision to purchase a further 130 hectares of land adjoining the original 240 hectares. In 2020, Council applied for and was successful in attracting \$16.8 million in grants funds from the State Government and \$7.8 million from the Australian Government to invest in enabling infrastructure for the N2IP site.

N2IP will accommodate a range of industries and will appeal to existing businesses wanting to expand and new companies looking to invest in a thriving community.



# PROMOTING THE SHIRE

Promotion of the Shire is an important role of Council. It means highlighting the Shire as an attractive place to live, work and invest, including partnering with the community and local businesses on key promotion initiatives. Promotion is essential to showcasing the Shire's strengths and supporting opportunities for the local workforce, business and industry.

## **PROMOTING THE SHIRE IN ACTION:**

### **Promoting Narrabri Shire as a tourism destination**

Narrabri Shire Council has promoted the Shire through various initiatives. These include hosting displays at the Newcastle, Sydney and Brisbane Caravan and Camping shows, facilitating a Travel OZ TV show for Narrabri Shire and supporting editorial features in 'We Are Explorers', 'Downtown', 'Country Style' and 'Caravanning Australia' magazines. Council has developed unique local merchandise ranges, including Pink Slug and Cotton Seed Oil. Council is also a member of the Kamilaroi Highway and Great Artesian Drive tourism groups that delivery marketing campaigns and promote the Shire.

### **Development of business marketing materials**

Narrabri Shire Council has developed numerous resources and materials to promote the Shire as a strong, diverse and welcoming place for business and community. Examples of these include:

- The recent upgrade of Council's corporate website
- The recent upgrade of Council's explore Narrabri website to include information for 'Tree-Changers'
- The Narrabri Shire Economic Snapshot with REMPLAN economic and community statistics profiles
- Development of business case studies including a large video and imagery asset library.

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES SHAPING NARRABRI SHIRE



Harnessing the Shire's strengths and addressing key challenges will unlock growth opportunities. The strategic outcomes, priorities and actions that this strategy articulates aim to address these strengths and challenges.

# DIVERSE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

## OPPORTUNITY

# 1

**Opportunity 1: Narrabri Shire has a diverse range of competitive industries that enables it to more effectively navigate economic, climate and policy challenges.**

The Shire's economic output and workforce is predominately focused around agriculture and mining. Mining is a key industry for Narrabri, Baan Baa and Boggabri, while agriculture – also critical to the preceding communities – is key for the Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata and Edgeroi communities and their surrounds. However, the Shire also includes a diverse range of other industries, including manufacturing, recycling, research, construction and a range of retail, accommodation and food services that support the community. This diversity provides resilience during economic shocks, such as drought, floods and, recently, COVID-19, providing stable employment opportunities for residents.

Narrabri Shire's endowments of agriculture and mining, both of which are vulnerable to climate change and evolving government priorities, underpins the need for ongoing economic diversification while supporting existing industries. Future-proofing the Shire by attracting new industries, particularly those with a renewable or circular economy focus will be critical. Supporting existing business growth and resilience as well as driving entrepreneurship and innovation will be key to unlocking our Shire's potential. Investments in Inland Rail, the Narrabri SAP (under investigation) and N2IP will aid this diversification, adding to the Shire's economic



### THE VIEW ON THE GROUND...

*"Job stability in the Shire is connected to the diversity of industry.*

*There are a number of large-scale projects that will draw potential businesses to the region (e.g. Inland Rail, Narrabri Gas Project and N2IP).*

*The Shire has a diverse offering of small retail businesses that service the Shire and attract visitors to the towns.*

*The tourism and events sectors are recovering from COVID-19 but present several opportunities to attract people to the Shire."*

### COUNCIL INITIATIVES TO DATE ...

- In April 2020, Council established the Small Business Liaison Officer role to support and facilitate small business development and growth
- In June 2021, Council successfully obtained funding from the Australian Government for the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program – Round 3 for the 'Business Improvement Program'
- Council supported the Agtech Showcase and Field Day, the Illuminate Entrepreneurial Challenge, Business Resilience Workshop and Upskilling Program and Christmas activation projects to support economic diversification, sustainability and resilience.



# CONNECTIVITY AND LOCATION

## OPPORTUNITY

# 2



**Opportunity 2:** Narrabri Shire is strategically located with efficient access to key domestic markets and international gateways. Future investments will further strengthen this.

Narrabri Shire and its townships are strategically located along or in proximity to key transport routes connecting to Brisbane, Melbourne, Newcastle and Sydney. This gives the Shire an advantage in attracting and retaining businesses that rely on efficient access to domestic and international markets via road and rail.

The Shire’s geographic advantages will be harnessed by planned investments, including Inland Rail, the SAP (under investigation) and N2IP, which will enhance and leverage connectivity to Brisbane, Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne to support new and existing industries. These investments will provide opportunities for local industries across Narrabri Shire’s townships, supporting greater market access for producers and businesses.

For Narrabri Shire to harness its competitive geographic advantage and connectivity for the benefit of the community and industry, ongoing infrastructure investment will be a key priority. This includes new connections, such as Inland Rail, as well as upgrading and maintaining existing connections, including flood-proofing key roads and enhancing access for road and rail freight.

### THE VIEW ON THE GROUND...

*"There are a number of new industries being drawn to the Shire because of its strategic location.*

*There is opportunity for the Shire to actively engage and attract specific industries that can utilise the strong rail and road infrastructure and benefit from new investments such as the Narrabri Gas Project.*

*The Shire can utilise its strategic position along the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways to encourage people to stop and spend in the Narrabri Shire."*

### COUNCIL INITIATIVES TO DATE ...

- Council successfully obtained a \$16.8m grant from the NSW Government to enable delivery of supporting infrastructure for N2IP. Council also obtained \$7.8m from the Australian Government to support delivery of a rail siding for N2IP
- Council purchased water access licences to support future N2IP businesses
- Council delivered a \$3.6m upgrade of Millie Road to improve safety and reliability outcomes for people and goods moving between Bellata and Rowena.

<sup>9</sup> Narrabri Shire Council, Introduction to Narrabri Shire

# LAND SUPPLY

## CHALLENGE

# 1

**Challenge 1: Housing, industrial and commercial land supply shortages prevent Narrabri Shire from harnessing the full growth potential offered by its natural resources, workforce and industry.**

Across Australia in both cities and regions, the housing supply shortage is an increasingly critical economic challenge. While there has been significant growth in housing, industrial and commercial land supply in recent years, this issue is also a challenge for townships across Narrabri Shire. Access to housing will be critical to support a growing local workforce. Housing shortages restrict the ability of local businesses to attract and retain people to live and work in the Shire.

A diverse supply of housing is needed to support the needs of permanent residents that remain in the Shire or move here for lifestyle and job opportunities, as well as the needs of the transient workforce (i.e., temporary accommodation for FIFO workers). An adequate supply of housing will also improve social connectedness among First Nations communities.

Addressing shortages in industrial and commercial land will also help to ensure that the expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new business to the Shire is not constrained.



### THE VIEW ON THE GROUND...

*"Increased cost of housing and rental properties is forcing potential Narrabri Shire residents to settle in surrounding areas.*

*The lack of short-term accommodation options is an impediment to industry and business growth.*

*Flood plains and zoning are key constraint to accessing more residential and commercial land.*

*There is a lack of available commercial land and properties available across Narrabri Shire to support business growth."*

### COUNCIL INITIATIVES TO DATE ...

- Council purchased 374 hectares of land in Narrabri for rezoning for commercial and industrial land use
- Council has actively participated in the NSW Regional Housing Study, being led by Regional NSW, to advocate for housing supply improvements in the Shire
- Council has contributed to detailed strategic planning on a new residential growth corridor in the Shire.

# CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

## CHALLENGE

# 2



**Challenge 2:** There is a mismatch between labour supply and demand, exacerbating critical labour shortages across local trades, essential skills and other key industries.

Consistent with trends across Australia, the Shire’s population is ageing. Emigration to other parts of Australia, particularly by young people, is impacting the local workforce, with shortages across all sectors.

Attracting and retaining the right workforce to meet the needs of local businesses and industry is impacted by a lack of visibility of local training pathways for school leavers, the need to travel afield for many training opportunities and housing shortages. A lack of job-specific training has also been identified as a challenge for First Nations people to access to education and employment opportunities, particularly in emerging industries.

There is an opportunity to support and enhance training and career pathways for young people in local schools across the Shire as well as First Nations people through direct engagement with businesses in the Shire.

With upcoming projects, such as Inland Rail and N2IP, and the diversity of local businesses and industries, there are significant current and future demands for workers in the Shire. There are several opportunities to utilise the current working age population (e.g., through greater engagement with partners of mining workers, addressing childcare constraints in the community, school engagement, collaborating with First Nations community groups) as well as drawing a new workforce to the Shire (e.g., relocation grants, increased affordable housing supply).

### THE VIEW ON THE GROUND...

*"Businesses have struggled to find the skilled local workforce required to meet their business needs and are therefore forced to look outside the Shire for workers."*

*There are challenges in retaining young people in the region, with the outflow of young residents being a consistent issue.*

*Population trends such as an ageing population, declining population and an outflow of young people is impacting the size of the local workforce.*

*Investment in school leaver programs and apprenticeship opportunities could increase the interest of young people in the local workforce.*

*Relocation incentives could be a solution to some of the supply constraints the workforce is facing."*

### COUNCIL INITIATIVES TO DATE ...

- Council purchased 374 hectares of land in Narrabri for rezoning for commercial and industrial land use
- Council has actively participated in the NSW Regional Housing Study, being led by Regional NSW, to advocate for housing supply improvements in the Shire
- Council has contributed to detailed strategic planning on a new residential growth corridor in the Shire.

# PEOPLE AND PLACE

## CHALLENGE

# 3

**Challenge 3: The quality and resilience of public and community services is constrained by the lack of workforce supply and local infrastructure.**

Ongoing investment in high-quality public and community infrastructure is required to meet the needs of residents and ensure that the Shire remains an attractive place for people to live.

Narrabri Shire has high-quality public and community infrastructure, including hospitals, education and cultural centres and community sporting facilities. However, some of these are constrained in realising their potential due to labour force shortages.

The childcare and aged care sectors are facing significant labour force issues. The lack of childcare workers impacts other areas of employment by constraining parent’s ability to work. Further, aged care infrastructure and workforce to support the population demographic is a current challenge.

There are a significant number of tourism and event offerings across the Shire and an opportunity to increase and build on these. However, the rising costs associated with running events present barriers to this.

The public and community infrastructure and workforce challenges faced by the Shire can be addressed through intervention and investment. Addressing workforce supply issues and investing in community infrastructure and programs to provide more services and cultural attractions will increase the quality of offerings in the Shire. This will be key to ensuring that the needs of a diverse range of cohorts, including young residents and First Nations communities, are being met.



### THE VIEW ON THE GROUND...

*"Narrabri Shire, particularly Narrabri, has the infrastructure to support public and community events and services but the costs of running these events constrains the Shire.*

*There is a range of quality infrastructure to support the health, education and childcare industries, however labour constraints limit the ability of these industries to function.*

*There are significant impacts to the broader workforce from a lack of available childcare. It is constraining parents’ ability to work longer or more consistent hours.*

*There is a lack of recreational activities across the Shire to keep young people and families engaged!"*

### COUNCIL INITIATIVES TO DATE ...

- Council has supported the growth of the events and sporting calendar. This includes events like Narrabright, Santos Rugby Festival and the Narrabri Christmas main street activation. These events foster community cohesion and provide an opportunity to support local businesses
- Council worked with the NSW Government to obtain funding for an upgrade to the Boggabri Showground.
- Council completed the Narrabri CBD beautification project, which included accessing grant funding for property owners to paint façades, full road surface reconstruction and new gardens.
- Council has conducted a Shire-wide Child Care Needs Study.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a green John Deere combine harvester working in a cotton field. The harvester is partially obscured by the foreground cotton plants, which are in sharp focus. The background shows the clear blue sky and the upper part of the harvester's structure, including the grain elevator and the operator's cab. The John Deere logo is visible on the side of the harvester.

# STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES: THE NINE-YEAR KEY THEMED STRATEGY AREAS

Leveraging the Shire's strengths and opportunities to address challenges we face will enable Narrabri Shire to thrive and grow.

# 1. DIVERSE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Opportunity 1: Narrabri Shire has a diverse range of competitive industries that enables it to navigate more effectively economic, climate and policy challenges.

Outcome 1: Narrabri Shire maintains a diverse, resilient and sustainable economy, where the community continues to thrive in the face of economic change and climate impacts.

## Strategic priorities

- 1.1 Support a resilient, competitive and sustainable agricultural and business sector.
- 1.2 Attract competitive energy and mining industries that are sensitive to surrounding land use and support sustainable economic growth.
- 1.3 Enhance business and economic resilience through renewable energy initiatives.
- 1.4 Support and promote entrepreneurship that leverages and complements Narrabri Shire's economic opportunities, existing specialisations and endowments.

# 2. CONNECTIVITY AND LOCATION

Opportunity 2: Narrabri Shire is strategically located with efficient access to key domestic markets and international gateways. Future investments will further strengthen this.

Outcome 2: Narrabri Shire harnesses its physical and digital connectivity to attract more investment and provide greater opportunities for local businesses and workers.

## Strategic priorities

- 2.1 Leverage investment in Inland Rail and existing transport corridors to drive economic competitiveness and industry attraction.
- 2.2 Enhance the safety and resilience of local transport infrastructure to support access for people and goods.
- 2.3 Ensure fast, reliable digital connectivity for businesses, services and residents.



### 3. LAND SUPPLY

Challenge 1: Housing, industrial and commercial land supply shortages prevent Narrabri Shire from harnessing the full growth potential offered by its natural resources, workforce and industry.

Outcome 3: Diverse, affordable and sustainable housing and land is available in the short and long-term to meet the needs of residents and businesses, and to support growth opportunities in Narrabri Shire.

**Strategic priorities**

- 3.1 Support the efficient, adequate and sustainable provision of residential land and accommodation for workforce sustainability and affordable living.
- 3.2 Deliver adequate, efficient and sustainable land releases for industrial and commercial purposes.

### 4. CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

Challenge 2: There is a mismatch between labour supply and demand, exacerbating critical labour shortages across local trades, essential skills and other key industries.

Outcome: The Narrabri Shire community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses are able to operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.

**Strategic priorities**

- 4.1 Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in skilled roles, trades and population-serving industries.
- 4.2 Support training opportunities and career pathways for young workers.
- 4.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries.
- 4.4 Enable access to high-quality education opportunities in Narrabri Shire.
- 4.5 Support the growth of local First Nations workforce opportunities.

### 5. PEOPLE AND PLACE

Challenge 3: The quality and resilience of public and community services is constrained by the lack of workforce supply and local infrastructure.

Outcome: High-quality public and community services are available to support broad workforce participation and diverse cohorts, and to ensure that Narrabri is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work.

**Strategic priorities**

- 5.1 Attract essential workers and population-serving businesses to support the liveability of Narrabri Shire.
- 5.2 Provide modern, high-quality community infrastructure that provides diverse recreational opportunities for citizens, workers and visitors.
- 5.3 Invest in natural and cultural attractions to support the growth of the visitor economy and retention of workers.
- 5.4 Attract new retail and support local businesses to drive regional economic opportunities.

# A PLAN FOR ACTION



## To fulfill Narrabri Shire’s potential, we take an actions-based approach

This strategy outlines practical actions, linked to five strategic outcomes, that will be implemented by 2032. These actions have been informed by extensive engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners across the community, business and government agencies. The action plan will be reviewed annually to ensure progress is accurately tracked, while providing flexibility to address challenges and opportunities as they arise.

### Intervention, timeframes and achievement

Each action has been evaluated and categorised by the role that Narrabri Shire Council will play in facilitating this Strategy’s outcomes. This includes both direct (i.e., engaging directly with business or providing or facilitating a service through Council) and indirect (i.e., advocating to government agencies) action by Council. The specific role categories have been detailed on Page 16-19 and include:

The four categories of actions include:

**1. Supporting existing business and industry:** for example

engaging directly with businesses to understand needs and priorities and utilise this information to invest, support and advocate these needs

**2. Attracting new business and industry:** for example engaging with potential businesses to facilitate their development applications in the Narrabri Shire

**3. Advocating to government:** for example engaging with Federal or State Government to advocate the needs of local businesses, industries and enabling services to gain funding or support to achieve policy change or infrastructure upgrades that will facilitate economic development and growth

**4. Promoting the Shire:** for example undertaking marketing campaigns that advocate and promote the Shire as a place to both visit and live to attract people and businesses to the Shire.

When advocating to government, there are several key State and Federal government departments and agencies that will be engaged depending on the action requirements, as outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3. Key State and Federal Government agencies and departments for engagement**

| State                                      | Federal  |
|--|--|
| Department of Regional NSW                 | Department of Industry, Science and Resources  |
| NSW Department of Planning and Environment | Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry                                      |
| NSW Department of Education                | Department of Education  |
| NSW Department of Primary Industries       | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and Arts |
| Transport for NSW                          |  |



Each action in this Strategy has been further categorised by timeframe, responsible service area within Narrabri Shire Council, status and occurrence, to provide transparency and accountability regarding the implementation of the Strategy. These categories, detailed below, have been allocated to each action.

- 1. Timeframe** – to ensure that each action is implemented within the period of this Strategy and in line with Council resources, each action has a proposed timeframe, being either:
  - Short-term - implemented within 1-2 years
  - Medium-term - implemented within 3-5 years
  - Long-term - implemented within 6 - 9 years
  - Ongoing – implemented and actioned on an ongoing basis.
- 2. Responsible Narrabri Shire Council service area** – as detailed in Appendix A, each action has been allocated a responsible Narrabri Shire Council service area. The responsible service area will ensure that each action is carried out by the appropriate area within Council and accountability is assigned accordingly.
- 3. Status** – as detailed in Appendix A, each action has been classified by whether it requires further planning, is ready for implementation or is in-progress. This status relates to the readiness of each action, indicating the level of further development required (if any).
- 4. Occurrence** – as detailed in Appendix A, each action is classified as either ongoing or once-off. Actions classified as ongoing (e.g., providing information support to businesses) will occur throughout the 10-year period of the strategy, while once-off actions (e.g., supporting or funding a policy or infrastructure initiative) will occur once at the relevant time during the 10-year timeframe.



# 1. DIVERSE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Outcome 1: Narrabri Shire maintains a diverse, resilient and sustainable modern economy, where the community continues to thrive in the face of economic change and climate impacts.

## 1.1. Support a resilient, competitive, and sustainable agricultural and business sector

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>1.1.1: Action Overview</b> | Hold 'showcase' events with key agricultural businesses, research facilities and investors in the Region to enhance business-to-business connections in the Shire and market the Shire's agricultural capability and research. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.1.1: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | Ongoing             |
| <b>1.1.2: Action Overview</b> | Encourage primary producers across the Shire to participate in the NSW Farms of the Future initiative to obtain funding for technology adoption and integration.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.1.2: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>1.1.3: Action Overview</b> | Collaborate with The University of Sydney to explore campus expansion opportunities for the I.A. Watson Grains Research Centre to attract more students to the Shire.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.1.3: Alignment              |  | ✓                                    | ✓  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>1.1.4: Action Overview</b> | Advocate for financial incentives to support new technologies to increase the resilience of agricultural businesses.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.1.4: Alignment              |  |                                      | ✓  |                     | Ongoing             |

## 1.2. Attract competitive energy and mining industries that are sensitive to surrounding land use and support sustainable economic growth

|                               |  |  |   |  |         |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---------|
| <b>1.2.1: Action Overview</b> | Continue to work with the NSW Government to develop planning submissions that advocate for the community's best interests regarding the Narrabri Gas Project and Hunter Gas Pipeline.  |  |   |  |         |
| 1.2.1: Alignment              |  |  | ✓ |  | 1 - 2   |
| <b>1.2.2: Action Overview</b> | Engage with the resource sector regarding plans for mine life extensions, including opportunities for local infrastructure investment that will facilitate sustainable mine expansion. |  |   |  |         |
| 1.2.2: Alignment              | ✓  |  |   |  | Ongoing |

**1.3. Enhance business and economic resilience through renewable energy initiatives**

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry   | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>1.3.1: Action Overview</b> | Undertake a marketing and educational campaign for local businesses, outlining support for local businesses to identify and apply for State and Federal government programs or grant funding that can aid business growth and resilience. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.3.1: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>1.3.2: Action Overview</b> | Develop a Narrabri Shire Circular Economy Strategy to identify targeted initiatives to attract investment in key growth sectors - renewable energy, and recycling.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.3.2: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>1.3.3: Action Overview</b> | Develop a Shire-wide dedicated marketing campaign to educate local businesses around renewable energy solutions.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.3.3: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>1.3.4: Action Overview</b> | Advocate to State and Federal Governments for investment in electricity transmission infrastructure that will support the development of renewable energy projects in the Shire.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.3.4: Alignment              |   |                                      | ✓  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>1.3.5: Action Overview</b> | Investigate building upgrade incentives for local commercial property owners.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 1.3.5: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |

**1.4. Support and promote entrepreneurship that leverages and complements Narrabri Shire's economic opportunities, existing specialisations and endowments.**

|                               |  |   |  |   |       |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|-------|
| <b>1.4.1: Action Overview</b> | Identify key high value-adding agricultural and food processing businesses (e.g., manufacturing, packaging, consumer goods) and introduce fiscal incentive programs to attract these businesses to the Shire.  |   |  |   |       |
| 1.4.1: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  |   | 3 - 5 |
| <b>1.4.2: Action Overview</b> | Subject to approval of the SAP, undertake a targeted marketing campaign to attract high value-adding industries.   |   |  |   |       |
| 1.4.2: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | 1 - 2 |
| <b>1.4.3: Action Overview</b> | Through a promotional campaign, make the community more aware of the business concierge service Council currently offers.  |   |  |   |       |
| 1.4.3: Alignment              | ✓  |   |  |   | 1 - 2 |
| <b>1.4.4: Action Overview</b> | Identify specific locations across the Shire that can support new industries and businesses and engage with DPE to ensure that appropriate provision is made for industrial land in the revised Narrabri Shire Council Local Environment Plan (LEP). |   |  |   |       |
| 1.4.4: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  |   | 1 - 2 |
| <b>1.4.5: Action Overview</b> | Council to actively engage with the State and Federal Governments around the importance of providing clarity regarding timing of key capital projects.   |   |  |   |       |
| 1.4.5: Alignment              |  |   |  | ✓ | 6 - 9 |

# 2. CONNECTIVITY AND LOCATION

Outcome 2: Narrabri Shire harnesses its physical and digital connectivity to attract more investment and provide greater opportunities for local businesses and workers.

## 2.1 Leverage investment in Inland Rail and existing transport corridors to drive economic competitiveness and industry attraction

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry   | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>2.1.1: Action Overview</b> | Continue to engage with the Federal Government, ARTC and Inland Rail to advocate for the delivery of Inland Rail sooner and an optimal alignment at Narrabri. The alignment should facilitate efficient connections to existing railway lines and convenient access for both agricultural producers and businesses located at N2IP. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.1: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    | ✓  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>2.1.2: Action Overview</b> | Support funding applications to the State and Federal Governments for industry-led development of rail investment initiatives across the Shire.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.2: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    | ✓  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>2.1.3: Action Overview</b> | Continue to engage with the Federal Government, ARTC, Inland Rail and TfNSW to advocate for development of Inland Rail Interface Improvement Program initiatives at Narrabri.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.3: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    | ✓  |                     | 6 - 9               |
| <b>2.1.4: Action Overview</b> | Progress development of N2IP through Council investment in key enabling infrastructure.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.4: Alignment              |   | ✓                                    |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>2.1.5: Action Overview</b> | Review local planning and development potential around key transport corridors to ensure that existing and future industries can leverage opportunities from key infrastructure investments, including Inland Rail and the Newell Highway Upgrade (subject to approvals).   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.5: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>2.1.6: Action Overview</b> | Advocate to State and Federal Governments for upgrades to freight routes to support heavy vehicles.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.1.6: Alignment              |   |                                      | ✓  |                     | 6 - 9               |

## 2.2 Enhance the safety and resilience of local transport infrastructure to support access for people and goods

|                               |  |  |   |   |       |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|-------|
| <b>2.2.1: Action Overview</b> | Optimise funding programs and grants to seek funding for high priority roads across the Shire where significant safety issues exist.   |  |   |   |       |
| 2.2.1: Alignment              | ✓  |  | ✓ |   | 3 - 5 |
| <b>2.2.2: Action Overview</b> | Advocate to TfNSW for upgrades to the Kamilaroi Highway to provide a flood-immune road connection between Narrabri and Wee Waa.  |  |   |   |       |
| 2.2.2: Alignment              | ✓  |  | ✓ |   | 3 - 5 |
| <b>2.2.3: Action Overview</b> | Upgrade local wayfinding signage to key town services in Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri, to encourage more community and visitor awareness of facilities.  |  |   |   |       |
| 2.2.3: Alignment              | ✓  |  |   | ✓ | 1 - 2 |
| <b>2.2.4: Action Overview</b> | In partnership with TfNSW, advocate for investment in transport-related infrastructure, including heavy vehicle parking and facilities, near Narrabri to promote greater economic activity and safer movement of heavy vehicles. |  |   |   |       |
| 2.2.4: Alignment              | ✓  |  | ✓ |   | 3 - 5 |

**2.3 Ensure fast, reliable digital connectivity for businesses, services, and residents**

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry   | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>2.3.1: Action Overview</b> | Collaborate with NSW Telco Authority in the delivery and use of the Connectivity Index Tool to review existing coverage and identify the areas of greatest need within the Shire for upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure. Ensure that areas identified are future focused so that potential new business sites are supported. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.3.1: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    |  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>2.3.2: Action Overview</b> | Proactively seek government funding and advocate for the upgrade of NBN access for semi-rural properties and businesses across the Shire.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.3.2: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      | ✓  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>2.3.3: Action Overview</b> | Investigate free public Wi-Fi areas in key centres within the Shire to improve connectivity for visitors and equity of access for residents.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 2.3.3: Alignment              |   |                                      |  | ✓                   | 3 - 5               |

# 3. LAND SUPPLY

Outcome 3: Diverse, affordable and sustainable housing and land is available in the short- and long-term to meet the needs of residents and businesses, and to support the growth opportunities in Narrabri Shire.

## 3.1 Support the efficient, adequate, and sustainable provision of residential land and accommodation for workforce sustainability and affordable living

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>3.1.1: Action Overview</b> | Continue engagement with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to ensure the updated Narrabri Shire Council LEP supports adequate provision of residential, commercial and industrial land including a range of land sizes and affordable housing options, particularly near the major centres of Boggabri, Narrabri and Wee Waa. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 3.1.1: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    | ✓  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>3.1.2: Action Overview</b> | Engage with large local industry and businesses to assess their appetite to invest in short-term accommodation options for local workforces.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 3.1.2: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>3.1.3: Action Overview</b> | Advocate for inclusion of planning conditions on major projects to provide additional short-term accommodation prior to the commencement of construction.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 3.1.3: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    | ✓  | ✓                   | Ongoing             |
| <b>3.1.4: Action Overview</b> | Advocate for State and Federal funding to release and support new residential developments, including for the provision of affordable housing.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 3.1.4: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    | ✓  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |

## 3.2 Deliver adequate, efficient, and sustainable land releases for industrial and commercial purposes

|                               |  |   |  |  |       |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|--|-------|
| <b>3.2.1: Action Overview</b> | Subject to approval of the SAP, appoint a dedicated SAP Planning Officer within Council to be accountable for leading engagement with the DPE SAP team in relation to planning approvals relevant to the Narrabri SAP.               |   |  |  |       |
| 3.2.1: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  |  | 1 - 2 |
| <b>3.2.2: Action Overview</b> | Maintain ongoing communication with the DPE SAP team to ensure the Narrabri SAP Master Plan provides adequate space for projected growth in industrial land requirements near Narrabri   |   |  |  |       |
| 3.2.2: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  |  | 1 - 2 |
| <b>3.2.3 Action Overview</b>  | Utilise upcoming zoning changes under the Narrabri Shire Council LEP and Narrabri SAP by identifying and delivering commercial and/or industrial land opportunities/lots across the key townships of Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa. |   |  |  |       |
| 3.2.3: Alignment              |  | ✓ |  |  | 1 - 2 |

# 4. CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

Outcome 4: The Narrabri Shire community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses are able to operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.

## 4.1 Attract and retain a diverse workforce, including in skilled roles, trades and population-serving industries

|                                | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>4.1.1: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Host a seminar series for local businesses on relocation incentives.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.1: Alignment               | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.1.2: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Support business relocation initiatives by developing and distributing Council welcome packs and developing a program of Council-hosted community and networking events for new workers.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.2: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.1.3: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Work alongside key local industries to educate and upskill on the use of government relocation incentives to attract essential workers.</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.3: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.1.4: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Engage with and advocate to the Department of Home Affairs and Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland (RDA-NI) the needs of the Shire’s workforce to gain access to an increased number of migrant workers through concession on skills, language and age requirements.</b> |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.4: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.1.5: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Advocate to State and Federal Governments to support changes and funding for childcare, to address local childcare issues.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.5: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    | ✓  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.1.6: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Support the development of childcare in Narrabri Shire, by exploring Council incentives for accelerated development and operations.</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.6: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.1.7: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Engage with mining industry employers to provide upskilling and business knowledge training to the trades workforce, increasing resilience of their workforce to industry challenges.</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.7: Alignment               | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | 6 - 9               |
| <b>4.1.8: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Investigate new training facilities in the Shire that could be used to provide in-person training currently unavailable locally. Investigate and support expansion and upgrade of existing facilities in Narrabri Shire.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.8: Alignment               | ✓  | ✓                                    |  |                     | 6 - 9               |
| <b>4.1.9: Action Overview</b>  | <b>Advocate for additional high school education offerings in the Shire to provide further education options for local families</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.9: Alignment               |  |                                      | ✓  | ✓                   | 6 - 9               |
| <b>4.1.10: Action Overview</b> | <b>Create a technology investment grant scheme that is targeted to local businesses to acquire technologies that can address some of the workforce issues faced and increase productivity</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.10: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | 6 - 9               |
| <b>4.1.11: Action Overview</b> | <b>Engage with local community-led migrant networks and cultural groups to support activities and services to increase attraction of a culturally diverse population and workforce.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.11: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | Ongoing             |
| <b>4.1.12: Action Overview</b> | <b>Engage with immigration support service providers and organisations and advocate to government to improve local support pathways and resources aimed toward migrants in the Shire.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.1.12: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    | ✓  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |

4.2 Support training opportunities and career pathways for young workers

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>4.2.1: Action Overview</b> | Engage with a range of local businesses to explore opportunities for increasing apprenticeship and graduate programs. Facilitate connections with local schools, employment services and networks across the Shire to promote these opportunities.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.1: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.2.2: Action Overview</b> | Ensure continuation of The Exchange Business Activator (TEBA) program and partnership to deliver capacity and capability building events, workshops and upskilling opportunities for local business and community. Support expansion and growth opportunities through collaboration and funding advocacy to government where required. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.2: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      | ✓  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>4.2.3: Action Overview</b> | Support the local school career advisory programs to promote training opportunities and career pathways in local businesses and industries and TAFE to students and parents.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.3: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.2.4: Action Overview</b> | Advocate for the Education Pathway Program (EPP) to continue to operate in the Shire.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.4: Alignment              |  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.2.5: Action Overview</b> | Investigate and advocate to the State Government for a change in high-risk licence requirements that are currently not aligned to driving licence age requirements.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.5: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.2.6: Action Overview</b> | Support and promote the current TAFE offerings in Narrabri including the Vocational Education and Training Courses (TVET) and TAFE YES+.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.6: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.2.7: Action Overview</b> | Investigate and advocate to government for a frequent or permanent driving school within the Shire.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.2.7: Alignment              |  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |



4.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry   | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>4.3.1: Action Overview</b> | Partner with local business and industry associations to provide networking events for women seeking local career opportunities.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.1: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.3.2: Action Overview</b> | Develop and fund a local grant program that is specifically targeted towards female led businesses to ensure they have the required support to start-up and grow.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.2: Alignment              |   | ✓                                    |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.3.3: Action Overview</b> | Support annual Namoi Jobs and Trade Show to showcase apprenticeship and career opportunities in local businesses and industry across the Shire.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.3: Alignment              |   | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.3.4: Action Overview</b> | Encourage family day care and after school care developments across the Shire.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.4: Alignment              |   | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.3.5: Action Overview</b> | Support family day care providers with grant funding for start-up and delivery or expansion across the Shire.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.6: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    |  | ✓                   | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.3.6: Action Overview</b> | Support professional development opportunities for the early childhood education workforce to upskill and provide greater career opportunities.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.6: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.3.7: Action Overview</b> | Partner with local business and community groups to support the participation of First Nation women in training and business opportunities and encouraging their involvement in new development projects, including the consideration of gender impacts of such projects. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.7: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓                                    |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.3.8: Action Overview</b> | Support and fund local events that showcase career opportunities in local businesses and industry across the Shire, with a particular focus on opportunities for women, youth and First Nation people.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.3.8: Alignment              | ✓   |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |

#### 4.4 Enable access to high-quality education opportunities in Narrabri Shire

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>4.4.1: Action Overview</b> | Collaborate with existing tertiary education institutions, local schools and businesses in towns across the Shire to explore opportunities for new subjects / courses that will address skills shortages in the Shire. |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.1: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.4.2: Action Overview</b> | Engage with the CUC to support and advocate to the state and federal government for expansion of facilities and student learning support services and officers to improve regional tertiary education outcomes.        |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.2: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    |  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.4.3: Action Overview</b> | Advocate for the CUC to be upgraded to provide fast connectivity to increase online course capacity.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.3: Alignment              |  |                                      | ✓  |                     | 3 - 5               |
| <b>4.4.4: Action Overview</b> | Support the CUC in providing a greater number of in-person education and training opportunities to engage with individuals facing barriers to digital navigation.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.4: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.4.5: Action Overview</b> | Support local registered training organisations (RTOs) so that they can expand and onboard trainers/educators to provide a greater number of education programs locally.   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.5: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓                                    |  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>4.4.6: Action Overview</b> | Provide a local financial literacy program aimed at young people.  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 4.4.6: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  |                     | 1 - 2               |

#### 4.5 Support the growth of local First Nations workforce opportunities

|                               |   |   |  |   |       |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|-------|
| <b>4.5.1: Action Overview</b> | Identify existing funding and support pathways specifically targeted towards First Nation businesses. In collaboration with the First Nations Advisory Committee (to be established), education providers and First Nation Groups, develop a targeted marketing strategy to promote business opportunities and local assistance pathways. |   |  |   |       |
| 4.5.1: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓ |  |   | 1 - 2 |
| <b>4.5.2: Action Overview</b> | Identify and support First Nation business start-ups through local grant programs, advisers and business education programs.  |   |  |   |       |
| 4.5.2: Alignment              |   | ✓ |  |   | 1 - 2 |
| <b>4.5.3: Action Overview</b> | Ensure ongoing communication with a First Nations Advisory Committee (to be established) to identify their requirements for greater workforce inclusion.  |   |  |   |       |
| 4.5.3: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓ |  |   | 3 - 5 |
| <b>4.5.4: Action Overview</b> | In collaboration with local First Nation groups and education providers, support funding for the delivery of skills/personal development courses for young First Nation people of Narrabri Shire.   |   |  |   |       |
| 4.5.4: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓ |  | ✓ | 1 - 2 |

# 5. PEOPLE AND PLACE

Outcome 5: High-quality public and community services are available to support broad workforce participation and diverse cohorts, and to ensure that Narrabri is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work.

## 5.1 Attract essential workers and population-serving businesses to support the liveability of Narrabri Shire

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>5.1.1: Action Overview</b> | <b>Engage with local and regional essential services and providers (health, childcare, education) to understand their business models and specific workforce needs and investigate opportunities to address these in collaboration with the State and Federal Governments.</b> |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.1.1: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      | ✓  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>5.1.2: Action Overview</b> | <b>Support business relocation initiatives by developing and distributing Council welcome packs and developing a program of Council-hosted community and networking events for new workers.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.1.2: Alignment              |  |                                      | ✓  |                     | 1 - 2               |
| <b>5.1.3: Action Overview</b> | <b>Undertake an investment campaign, engaging directly with key industries outlining the opportunities available in the Shire and incentives to establish or enhance operations.</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.1.3: Alignment              |  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |

## 5.2 Provide modern, high-quality community infrastructure that provides diverse recreational opportunities for citizens, workers and visitors.

|                               |  |   |   |   |         |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---------|
| <b>5.2.1: Action Overview</b> | <b>Deliver ongoing investment in public spaces, community facilities and local high streets to support recreational opportunities for residents, facilitate a positive visitor experience and attract retail investment.</b>   |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.1: Alignment              | ✓  | ✓ |   | ✓ | Ongoing |
| <b>5.2.2: Action Overview</b> | <b>Partner with local companies, industry, business and community organisations to host business and community events.</b>   |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.2: Alignment              | ✓  |   |   | ✓ | Ongoing |
| <b>5.2.3: Action Overview</b> | <b>Identify areas within the Shire that can be utilised for development of recreational infrastructure and update the forward program of works.</b>  |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.3: Alignment              |  |   |   | ✓ | 1 - 2   |
| <b>5.2.4: Action Overview</b> | <b>Collaborate with the Department of Regional NSW to identify upcoming grants and funding opportunities that will assist Council to enhance or create new social and cultural infrastructure within the Shire.</b>  |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.4: Alignment              |  |   | ✓ | ✓ | Ongoing |
| <b>5.2.5: Action Overview</b> | <b>Undertake an Annual Event Activation Strategy to explore opportunities to enhance and grow the cultural, sporting and Christmas events calendar across the Shire, to provide more recreational opportunities for workers and visitors. Include the development of place activation strategies and plans to streamline community events organisation processes and improve event infrastructure for community use.</b> |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.5: Alignment              |  |   |   | ✓ | 1 - 2   |
| <b>5.2.6: Action Overview</b> | <b>Continue to progress the Narrabri Tourism and Cultural Precinct to provide an affordable and accessible community and performing arts space for residents.</b>  |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.6: Alignment              |  |   |   | ✓ | 3 - 5   |
| <b>5.2.7: Action Overview</b> | <b>Ensure that social infrastructure investment reflects the history and addresses the needs of First Nations people by establishing a First Nation Advisory Committee.</b>  |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.7: Alignment              | ✓  |   |   | ✓ | 1 - 2   |
| <b>5.2.8: Action Overview</b> | <b>Develop a Narrabri Shire Visitor Economy Strategy to identify targeted initiatives for tourism campaigns.</b>   |   |   |   |         |
| 5.2.8: Alignment              | ✓  |   |   | ✓ | 3 - 5   |

### 5.3 Invest in natural and cultural attractions to support the growth of the visitor economy and retention of workers.

|                               | Supporting existing businesses and industry  | Attracting new business and industry | Further investigate / advocate to government | Promoting the Shire | Implementation year |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>5.3.1: Action Overview</b> | <b>Invest in local wayfinding signage for natural and cultural attractions to provide greater ease of access to key attractions for visitors.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.3.1: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>5.3.2: Action Overview</b> | <b>Engage with accommodation providers to attract further investment in tourist accommodation to support the growth in the visitor economy.</b>  |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.3.2: Alignment              |  | ✓                                    |  |                     | Ongoing             |
| <b>5.3.3: Action Overview</b> | <b>Explore the development of additional camping sites in the Shire to service the tourism industry and increase affordable accommodation options for short-term visitors.</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.3.3: Alignment              |  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>5.3.4: Action Overview</b> | <b>Collaborate with State Government departments and agencies, including Destination NSW, Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW and NSW TrainLink to promote the Region's existing events (e.g., Narrabright) and natural attractions.</b> |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.3.4: Alignment              |  |                                      | ✓  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |
| <b>5.3.5: Action Overview</b> | <b>Create a Shire-wide tourism marketing campaign to showcase the industry and other offerings (retail, food and beverage and cultural experiences).</b>   |                                      |  |                     |                     |
| 5.3.5: Alignment              | ✓  |                                      |  | ✓                   | 1 - 2               |

### 5.4 Attract new retail and support local businesses to drive regional economic opportunities

|                               |   |   |  |   |         |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---------|
| <b>5.4.1: Action Overview</b> | <b>Support and/or deliver events in the Shire that can leverage local business offerings.</b>                                       |   |  |   |         |
| 5.4.1: Alignment              | ✓   |   |  | ✓ | Ongoing |
| <b>5.4.2: Action Overview</b> | <b>Support local businesses to increase their visibility through business curb appeal, signage and promotional marketing.</b>       |   |  |   |         |
| 5.4.2: Alignment              | ✓   |   |  | ✓ | 1 - 2   |
| <b>5.4.3: Action Overview</b> | <b>Engage with large retailers to attract department stores to Narrabri to provide greater access to goods for Shire residents.</b> |   |  |   |         |
| 5.4.3: Alignment              |   | ✓ |  |   | Ongoing |
| <b>5.4.4: Action Overview</b> | <b>Identify and deliver development initiatives to beautify and activate vacant CBD spaces.</b>                                     |   |  |   |         |
| 5.4.4: Alignment              | ✓   | ✓ |  | ✓ | 1 - 2   |

# NEXT STEPS

## Successful implementation of the Economic Development Strategy will require ongoing measurement of outcomes, monitoring and review

### Measuring success

The actions of the Strategy are designed to be results-based to enable transparent performance tracking. By measuring the status of actions, Council can track progress towards achieving the strategic outcomes and adjust the allocation of resources towards different priorities over time.

Each type of action will have different measures for success:

1. Completion or implementation of the action
2. State or Federal Government policy response to advocacy by Narrabri Shire Council
3. Key performance indicators for actions which require ongoing attention from Narrabri Shire Council.

### Monitoring and timing

Each action has been defined by an implementation timeframe of either 1–2 years, 3–5 years and 6–9 years. These timeframes are based on the resources and requirements of an action and the estimated time for development and delivery.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will require continuous monitoring of progress towards its strategic outcomes through annual reviews and a mid-point check in after five years. During these review processes, testing can be undertaken with key stakeholders to identify the status of actions. Likewise, any changes to challenges and opportunities in the Shire, and in the national economy more broadly, can be considered in updates to the Strategy.

To track the overall progress against the outcomes outlined in the Strategy, a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) are detailed below. Performance against these will be reported on annually.

| <b>OUTCOME 1: Narrabri Shire maintains a diverse, resilient and sustainable economy, where the community continues to thrive in the face of economic change and climate impacts.</b> |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>KPI</b>   | <b>Current</b>              |
| Maintain or increase the Narrabri Shire’s Gross Regional Product (GRP)   | \$1.8 billion <sup>10</sup> |
| Increase in labour force participation   | 59.2% <sup>11</sup>         |
| Maintain or increase the Narrabri Shire population   | 12,809 <sup>11</sup>        |

| <b>OUTCOME 2: Narrabri Shire harnesses its physical and digital connectivity to attract more investment and provide greater opportunities for local businesses and workers.</b> |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>KPI</b>  | <b>Current</b>      |
| The number of local businesses in the Shire increases   | 1,757 <sup>12</sup> |
| % of Shire’s State and Local road network that is sealed  | 28.3%               |

<sup>10</sup> REMPLAN, 2023

<sup>11</sup> ABS, Narrabri 2021 Census Community Profiles, 2022

<sup>12</sup> Narrabri Shire Council, Annual Business Survey, 2023

**OUTCOME 3: Diverse, affordable and sustainable housing and land is available in the short- and long-term to meet the needs of residents and businesses, and to support growth opportunities in Narrabri Shire.**

| KPI   | Current     |
|---|-------------|
| Increase hectares zoned Residential   | 4,477.49 Ha |
| Increase the number of available commercial/industrial land blocks across Narrabri Shire. Increase Hectares zoned Industrial. | 897.44 Ha   |

**OUTCOME 4: The Narrabri Shire community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses are able to operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.**

| KPI   | Current             |
|---|---------------------|
| Increase the percentage of residents attending an education institution at a tertiary or vocational level | 11.8% <sup>11</sup> |
| Host workforce, training and skills events annually   | 3                   |
| Increase the workforce participation of women in the Shire  | 41.4% <sup>11</sup> |
| Increase the workforce participation of First Nations people in the Shire                                 | 56.7% <sup>11</sup> |

**OUTCOME 5: High-quality public and community services are available to support broad workforce participation and diverse cohorts, and to ensure that Narrabri is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work.**

| KPI   | Current             |
|---|---------------------|
| Percentage of Council Grants submitted that are successful            | 76% <sup>13</sup>   |
| Increase of the essential workforce (education, childcare and health) | 1,192 <sup>14</sup> |
| Increase in the number of retail businesses across the Shire          | 64 <sup>15</sup>    |
| Increase the number of cultural events delivered                      | 6 <sup>16</sup>     |

<sup>11</sup> ABS, Narrabri 2021 Census Community Profiles, 2022

<sup>13</sup> Narrabri Shire Operation Plan and Service Plan – Quarterly Report – Economic Development KPM

<sup>14</sup> REMPLAN, 2023

<sup>15</sup> REMPLAN, 2022

<sup>16</sup> Narrabri Shire Council Operational and Service Plan Quarterly Updates – Community Develop KPM

**Financial implications and resourcing**

The financial implications of the Strategy for Council are expected to be manageable through existing revenue sources. The majority of direct actions will be resourced and funded through existing Council resources, with other actions relying on Council advocating to the State and Federal Governments. One full-time equivalent person will be required as a SAP liaison (subject to the outcome of the SAP investigation) and all other resourcing will be absorbed within existing Council functions.

**Governance**

The actions have been assigned a responsible service area within Narrabri Shire Council that will be responsible for developing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating of each action.

These responsible service areas include:

- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Community Development
- Strategic Planning
- Statutory Planning
- Information Technology
- Road Services
- Projects and Assets
- Environment and Sustainability

Actions have been agreed to by the above service areas and assigned based on the relevance to the operations and responsibilities of each service area to ensure the appropriate and best suited area delivers each action.

Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of each action and the corresponding responsible service area.





**NARRABRI SHIRE**  
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

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