

Narrabri Shire 2023 - 2032



REGIONAL WORKFORCE & SKILLS 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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Document History

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FROM THE MAYOR



Narrabri Shire, alongside Moree Plains and Gunnedah Shires, is home to a diverse, skilled and resilient workforce. There are abundant opportunities for our Region's workforce, led by key industries, including agriculture and mining, and supported by growing research, innovation and services industries.

Major investments in the Region, such as Inland Rail, will create further opportunities for our community and add to the demand for workers. The attraction of new value-adding industries, such as research, manufacturing and renewable energy, coupled with the growth of current industries, will drive both growth and change in labour and skill requirements across the Region.

At the same time, the Region – like so many parts of our nation – faces a growing labour and skills shortage. As demand for our nation's goods and services grows and workers remain in short supply, competition for workers across our industries is heightened.

With so many opportunities in the Region, coupled with the challenge of a tight labour market, the need for a clear strategy for the Region to attract and retain a diverse, skilled and engaged workforce is more important than ever. This will underpin the future prosperity of the Region and communities across the Shire, such as Narrabri, Boggabri, Baan Baa, Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata, Edgeroi and their surrounds.

The 2023–2032 Workforce and Skills Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed by Narrabri Shire Council in collaboration with Moree Plains Shire Council and Gunnedah Shire Council. While each council has its own unique strategies, there are areas where active collaboration between our councils can help address the common opportunities and challenges in our Region.

The Strategy establishes a framework for Narrabri Shire Council to address the challenges the Region faces in regard to workforce and skills, and harness the strengths and opportunities on offer.

The Strategy has been produced alongside the Narrabri Shire 2023–2032 Economic Development Strategy and is informed by extensive consultation with government, business and community stakeholders. The Strategy is orientated around four key outcomes:

1. **Capability and capacity** – A sustainable, skilled workforce to support a growing economy, particularly in agriculture, mining, emerging industries and essential services.
2. **People and place** – The Region provides inclusive job opportunities, with community services to support people wanting to work.
3. **Pathways and accessibility** – The community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses can operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.
4. **Housing supply** – Diverse and affordable housing is available to help attract and retain workers to the Region.

To achieve this set of outcomes, the Strategy identifies a set of practical priorities and actions that Narrabri Shire Council will implement. These include both direct actions as well as actions to pursue through engagement with State and Federal Governments. Where appropriate, some actions will involve Council actively collaborating with Moree Plains Shire Council and Gunnedah Shire Council, to achieve these.

Thank you for your involvement and support of the 2023–2032 Workforce and Skills Strategy, as we strive towards a diverse, resilient and sustainable workforce for Narrabri Shire and the greater Region.

– Darrell Tiemens, Mayor



STRATEGY OVERVIEW

STRATEGY VISION: In March 2023, Narrabri Shire Council received funding from the Department of Regional NSW to develop a Regional Workforce and Skills Strategy through the Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Round 1.

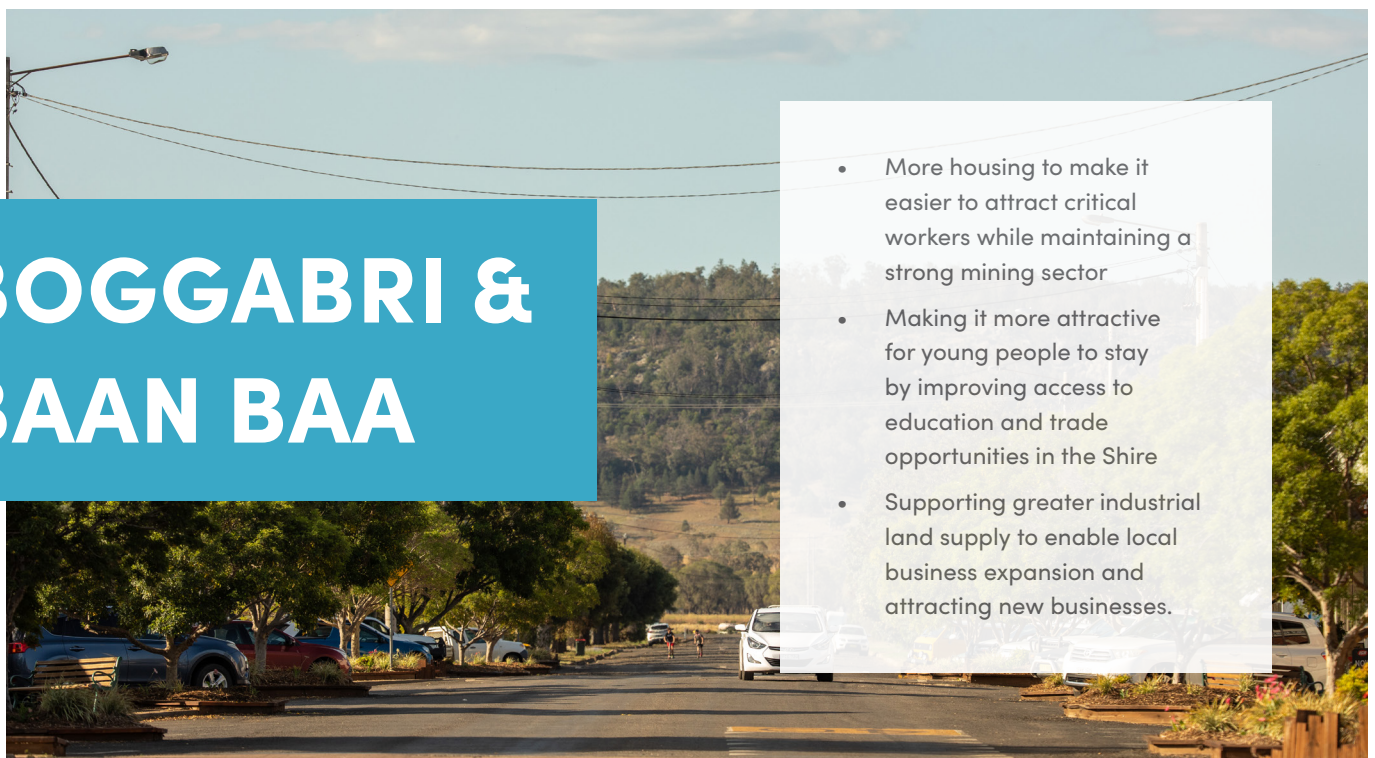
In collaboration with Moree Plains Shire Council and Gunnedah Shire Council (Region Council Group), this Strategy has been developed to acknowledge and support aligned regional workforce and skills outcomes and actions.

Whilst all Councils recognise there are bespoke mechanisms to be delivered individually through their own Community plans and strategies, this document signifies regional collaboration between Narrabri, Moree Plains and Gunnedah Shire Councils, as stakeholders, to collectively achieve workforce and skills goals through synergies and collaboration.

OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES	STRATEGIC OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
<p>OPPORTUNITY 1: The Region has diverse employment opportunities both in existing and emerging industries, for new and existing residents in the Region.</p>	<p>OUTCOME 1: Capability and capacity A sustainable, skilled workforce to support a growing economy, particularly in agriculture, mining, emerging industries and essential services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Supporting growth in high-quality jobs and new industries to retain skilled workers in the region. 1.2 Sustaining a welcoming and inclusive community that attracts skilled workers to the region.
<p>OPPORTUNITY 2: There are opportunities to improve workforce participation by addressing barriers to employment for members of the community.</p>	<p>OUTCOME 2: People and place The Region provides inclusive job opportunities, with community services to support people wanting to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Supporting the provision of community services that underpin career opportunities for parents. 2.2 Attracting and sustaining career and training opportunities that provide opportunities for First Nations people. 2.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries.
<p>CHALLENGE 1: A lack of apprenticeships, school transition programs and higher-education opportunities is exacerbating workforce challenges in the Region.</p>	<p>OUTCOME 3: Pathways and accessibility The community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses can operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Supporting local tertiary and vocational education institutions to provide a breadth of courses that are aligned to industry needs. 3.2 Enabling residents to have equitable access to education and training opportunities across the Region.
<p>CHALLENGE 2: Access to affordable housing poses a challenge to retaining and attracting workers.</p>	<p>OUTCOME 4: Housing supply Diverse and affordable housing is available to help attract and retain workers to the Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Supporting the provision of sustainable residential land supply. 4.2 Attracting short-term accommodation options to the Region to support temporary workers.

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

While this Strategy has been developed for Narrabri Shire and the broader region as-a-whole, a critical objective is delivering tangible outcomes for communities across Narrabri Shire that specifically address their needs. The table below provides a summary of the workforce and skills outcomes this Strategy aims to achieve in response to the specific needs of communities and their surrounds across the Shire.



WEE WAA



- More housing to make it easier to attract critical workers for value-added agriculture and research
- Harnessing the agricultural production and research strengths of the area to attract more high-skilled workers and students
- Supporting road access infrastructure to ensure regional workforce can always access local businesses (e.g., building flood resilience).

- Supporting the improvement of transport, telecommunication and digital connectivity to enhance business and economic resiliency
- Harnessing the agricultural strengths and supporting local primary producers meet their employment needs
- Increasing investment in natural and cultural attractions to drive visitor economy and support the local tourism workforce
- Supporting the transition of students to local businesses through apprenticeship programs and career support.

PILLIGA & GWABEGAR



BELLATA & EDGEROI



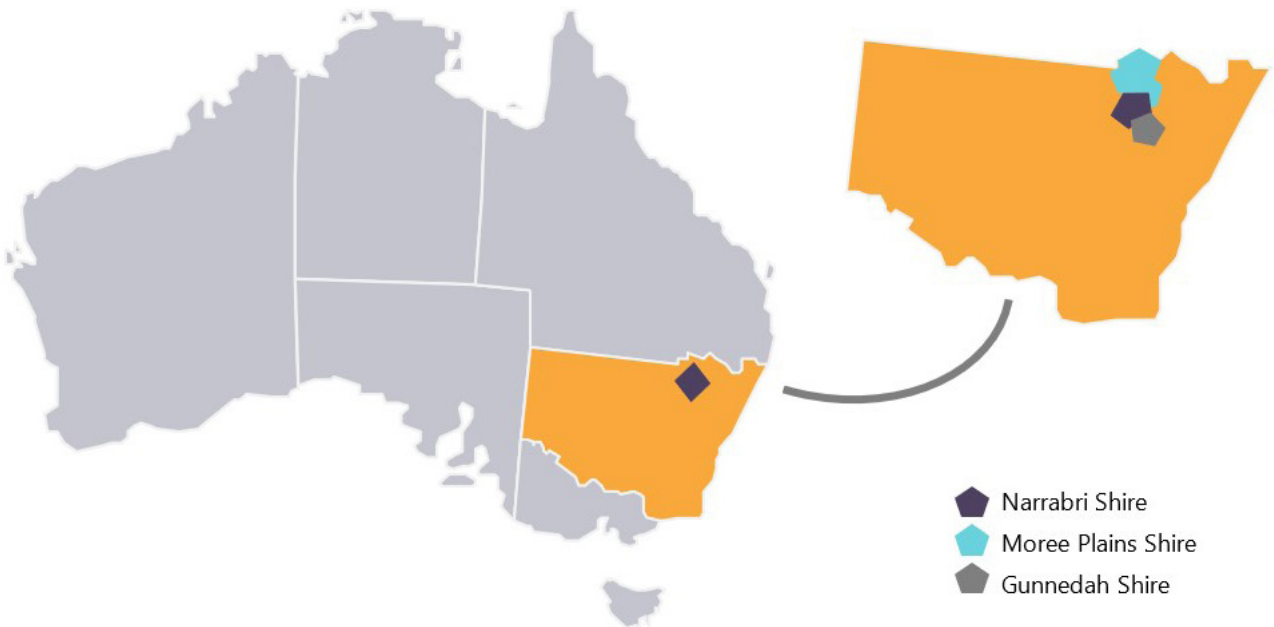
- Supporting the improvement of transport, telecommunication and digital connectivity to enhance business and economic resiliency
- Harnessing the agricultural strengths and supporting local primary producers meet their employment needs
- Increasing opportunities for the young workforce to access educational opportunities in neighbouring townships including Narrabri.

Located in the Upper Northwest and Lower North West regions of NSW, Narrabri Shire, Moree Plains Shire and Gunnedah Shire are collectively home to around 38,000 people

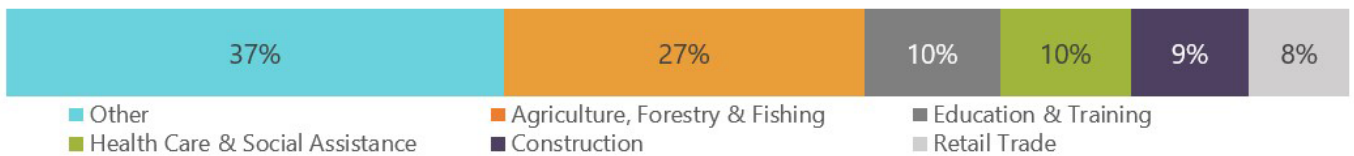
The three Local Government Areas (LGAs) (collectively referred to in this document as, 'the Region') are characterised by a vibrant economy and industrial base, underpinned by fertile agricultural land and natural resource deposits that support strong agriculture and mining industries. The Region's employment opportunities are further strengthened by strong manufacturing, healthcare and construction sectors. North-south and east-west transport corridors provide the Region with a strategic advantage in accessing key domestic and international markets.

ABOUT THE REGION

Figure 1. Location of the Region in NSW



Moree Plains Shire employment by industry




Gunnedah Shire employment by industry



Narrabri Shire employment by industry



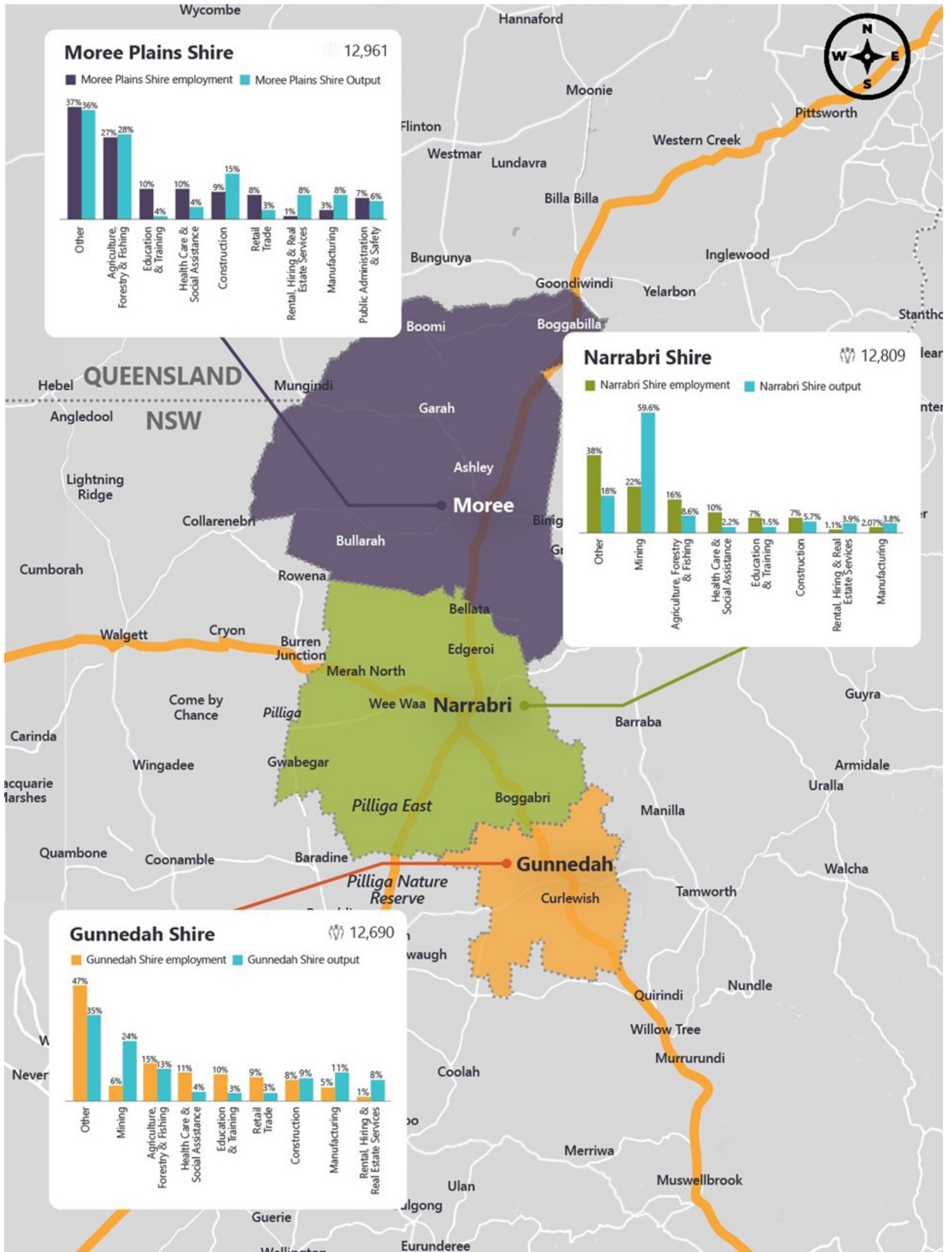


In addition to the industries currently driving economic development and jobs in the Region, key investments under consideration or in the pipeline will drive further growth in our Region, including:

- NARRABRI - Inland Rail, Narrabri Special Activation Precinct (SAP) (under investigation), Northern NSW Inland Port (N2IP), Narrabri Gas Project and expansion of Cargill seed processing facility.
- MOREE PLAINS - Inland Rail, Moree SAP, Moree Hydrogen Hub, Moree Hospital Redevelopment.
- GUNNEDAH - Gunnedah Airport upgrade, Gunnedah Koala Sanctuary, Gunnedah Intermodal Freight Terminal.

Located in close proximity and with many shared economic resources, Narrabri, Moree Plains and Gunnedah LGAs have a common interest in supporting the attraction and retention of a diverse and skilled workforce in the Region. As such, there is an opportunity to work together to ensure economic opportunities are harnessed and that common interests are effectively advocated for.

Figure 2 Employment and output for key sectors in the Region



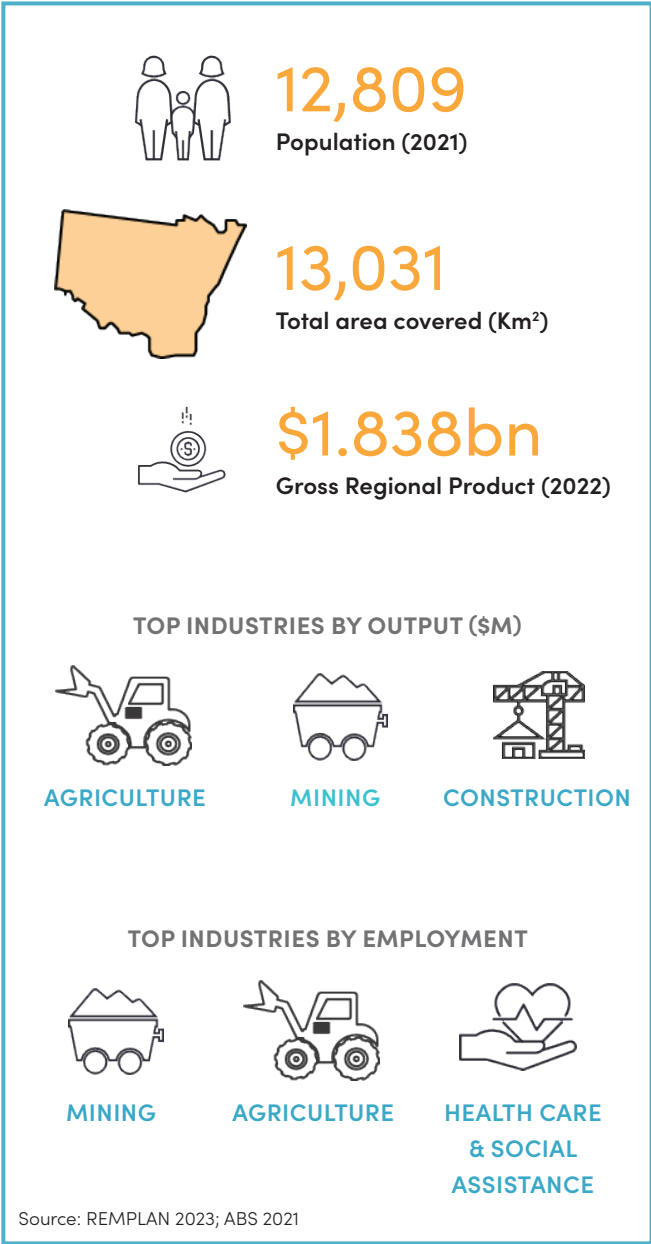
LEGEND: Key Transport Corridor Local Government Area (LGA)

NARRABRI SHIRE

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 13,000km², including townships such as Narrabri, Boggabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata, Edgeroi and Baan Baa. Endowed with fertile agricultural land, substantial coal and gas reserves and a diverse environment, the Shire is underpinned by dynamic agriculture, mining and tourism sectors. The Shire boasts a range of other critical industries that include world-class research institutes, manufacturing and processes facilities, as well as retail services that support a prosperous local economy.

As of 2021, the Shire is home to 12,809 residents.¹ This permanent population is supplemented by a transient workforce – with 46% of the mining workforce residing outside the Shire. This forms a substantial fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in-drive-out (DIDO) workforce. In the six years to 2021, the Shire’s resident population decreased at a rate of 0.8%.¹ The NSW Department of Planning and Environment projects the population of Narrabri Shire to change from 12,809 residents in 2021 to 12,102 residents in 2041 illustrating that the Shire has a largely stable population year to year.² While this change in population is consistent with other LGAs in regional NSW, where there is a trend towards movement from towns to larger regional centres and cities, recently announced major projects and investments may help to boost the local workforce and regenerate population growth.³

Of the total population, 6,949 people are employed in the Shire with the age group 25 years old to 34 years old having the highest number of employed persons. This employment is concentrated in the agriculture and mining sectors. Healthcare and social assistance as well as education and training industries also provide significant employment opportunities in the Shire, ranking lower in terms of the Shire’s total economic output but employing a significant share of workers. Of the employed persons, 2% have a Postgraduate Degree, 14% have a Graduate Diploma or Bachelor’s degree, 8% have an Advanced Diploma and Diploma and 36% have a Certificate.⁴



¹ ABS, Region summary: Narrabri, 2023

² NSW Government, 2021 Planning Projections: Narrabri, 2021

³ NSW Government, Global forces shaping our regional economies, 2023

⁴ REMPLAN, Economy, Jobs and Business Insights, 2022

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.

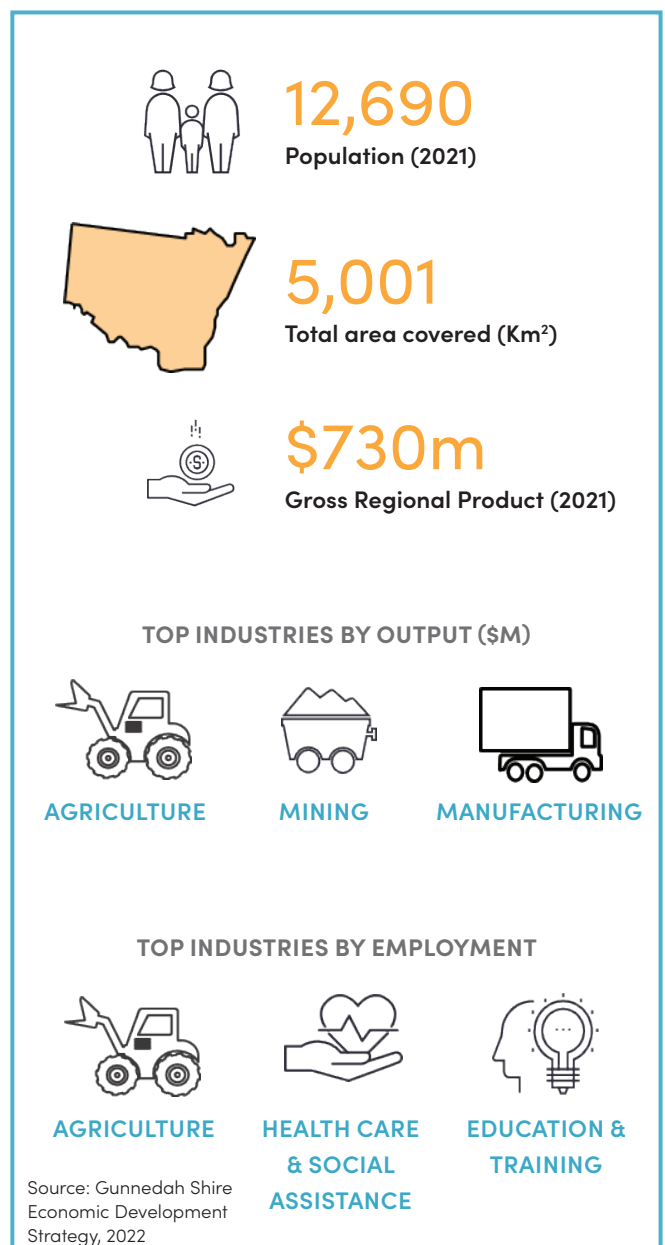
GUNNEDAH SHIRE

GUNNEDAH SHIRE covers an area of 5,001km² located to the south-east of Narrabri Shire, adjacent to the Liverpool Plains in the Namoi River Valley.⁵

Gunnedah is located within a highly productive and rich agricultural region, with this sector employing 15% of the workforce and being the second largest sector by economic output after mining. Due to the Shire’s location in the Gunnedah Basin, mining is a key industry. The industry accounts for 24% of the Shire’s total output and employs 6% of the workforce. Gunnedah is also home to a competitive manufacturing industry. The local industry is characterised by a strong food and beverage manufacturing sector directly linked to the Shire’s agriculture outputs.⁶

Of the almost 12,700 people that live in Gunnedah Shire, 15.6% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Since 2011, the population in Gunnedah Shire has increased by 7% and the median age has decreased from 40 years old to 37 years old.⁷ This decrease in the median age contrasts to the trend in many regional NSW LGAs, where the population is aging.³

Employment in Gunnedah Shire is diverse. In addition to agriculture, healthcare and social assistance, education and training and retail trade are the next highest ranked in terms of employment.⁶ Of the total population 37% have completed year 12 or equivalent.⁷



⁵ Gunnedah Shire, Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy, 2022

⁶ Gunnedah Shire, Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy Themes and Directions, 2022

⁷ ABS, Gunnedah 2021 Census all persons QuickStats, 2022

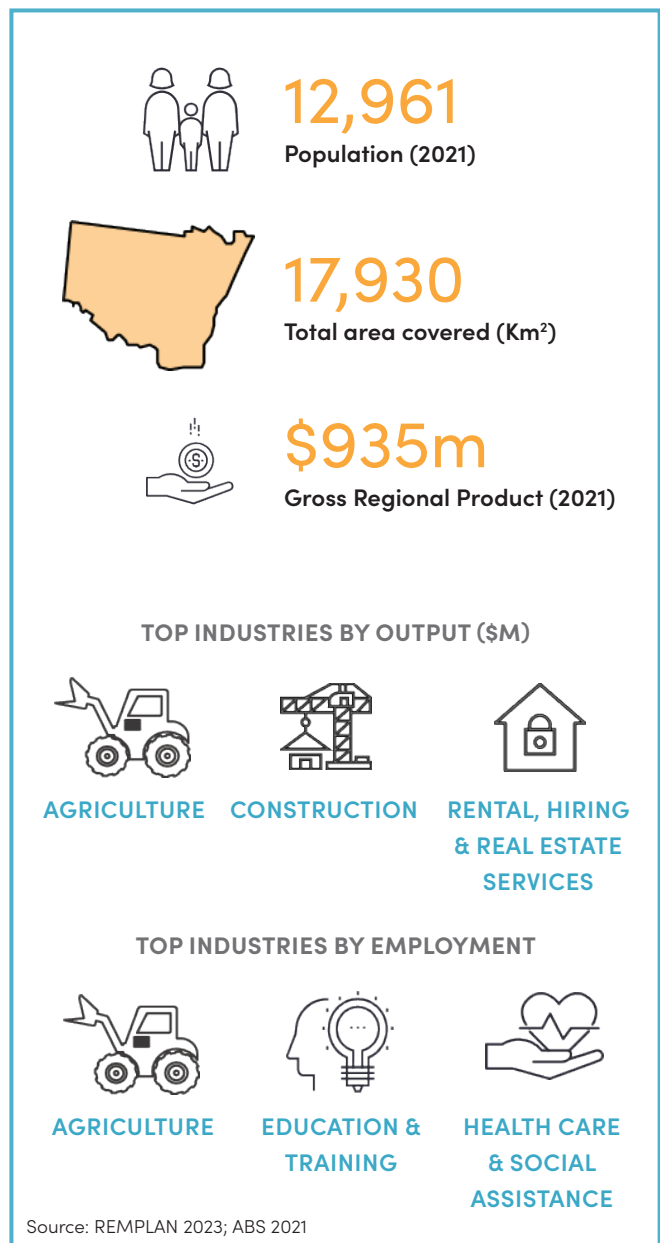
MOREE PLAINS SHIRE

MOREE PLAINS SHIRE spans a total area of 17,930km² and is located to the north of Narrabri Shire and adjacent to the NSW-Queensland border.⁸

Moree sits atop the Great Artesian Basin, providing critical water resources to support its highly productive agriculture industry.⁹ Agriculture accounts for 28% of total output in Moree Shire and over half of its regional exports. In addition to agriculture, key sectors in the Shire’s economy include construction and rental, hiring and real estate services. The economy also benefits from a strong manufacturing sector, which is expected to expand with the development of Inland Rail and the Moree SAP, which will focus on agribusiness, logistics and food processing.¹⁰

Within the Shire, 5,544 people are employed, with 27% of jobs found in agriculture. Following this, the education and training (10%) as well as health care and social assistance (10%) sectors support a large amount of employment in Moree. These sectors are supported by an educated population, with 11.5% of residents having a Bachelor’s degree or above and 8.2% that were undergoing tertiary education either through university or TAFE/ private training providers, in 2021.¹¹

Moree Plains Shire’s population sits at just under 13,000 people, with over 1,700 people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Between 2001 and 2021, the Shire’s population contracted by 19%, consistent with population trends in other regional LGAs, with movement of people away from smaller towns to larger regional centres and cities.¹² However, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment has projected a population increase of over 4,000 people by 2041, based on significant investment that is expected to attract business and industry to the region over the next two decades.¹²



⁸ Moree Plains Shire, Moree Plains Shire Council - Regional Overview (nsw.gov.au), 2022

⁹ Department of Primary Industries NSW, North West Plains Sub Region, 2020

¹⁰ Moree Plains Shire, Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2031, 2021

¹¹ ABS, Moree 2021 Census all persons QuickStats, 2022

¹² Moree Plains Shire, Moree Plains Local Housing Strategy, 2022

DRIVING WORKFORCE AND SKILLS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION

Workforce and skills outcomes are a critical component and driver of economic development in regional communities

What is a Workforce and Skills Strategy?

Strategic planning relating to workforce and skills is critical part of economic development. It provides an opportunity to assess industry’s workforce and skills needs and where there are current and future gaps in capability. A Workforce and Skills Strategy (WSS) sets-out priorities for local government to address these gaps in partnership with the community, business and other levels of government.

Purpose of a Workforce and Skills Strategy

The purpose and value of the WSS is to focus on the priorities and actions that will support opportunities for the community and skills requirements for existing and emerging businesses in the Region. The key areas of focus in this strategy align with sectors where there is an element of commonality across the three LGAs that represent the Region.

The WSS is intended to complement the Narrabri Shire 2023-2032 Economic Development Strategy (EDS), with workforce outcomes being a key driver of broader economic development.

The role of regional councils in supporting skills and workforce outcomes

Promoting skills and workforce outcomes in communities is important for regional councils in their efforts to drive economic development and growth both within their respective LGAs and across the Region. Regional councils are limited in financial resources and powers to address all workforce and skills priorities through direct actions. Therefore, in addition to direct actions within respective councils’ control and capacity, advocacy to and consultation with State and Federal Governments is critical for regional councils to deliver on the priorities outlined in this strategy. Four key areas summarise Narrabri Shire Council’s role – in partnership with other councils – in achieving the outcomes set-out in this strategy. These are summarised below and overleaf.

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

ADVOCATING TO GOVERNMENT

PROMOTING THE REGION



SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry in the region will be a key priority of the councils to ensure that current businesses 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; and providing information to workers and businesses to understand local training and business opportunities.

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN ACTION: COUNCIL BUSINESS INITIATIVES

Narrabri Shire Council takes a holistic approach to supporting business and industry across Narrabri Shire, and provides a range of resources, programs and services to support business growth and development, including:

- Online Business Directory
- Monthly Business e-newsletter
- Narrabri Shire REMPLAN Data and statistic profile
- Narrabri Shire Gift Card Program
- Comprehensive annual NSW Small Business Month event and activity program
- Regular business networking, training and development workshop and events
- Narrabri Shire Online Funding Finder
- Free online resources, including webinars, templates and learning materials

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY



Creating and supporting a business environment that is inviting and attractive for new businesses is a focus of Narrabri Shire Council and councils in the Region. Enabling this will include funding campaigns and investment incentives, while partnering with local business and industry to identify and promote new and existing opportunities for investment. This also includes support towards enabling services and infrastructure, such as childcare, education and community infrastructure, as well as increasing housing supply to attract and retain the workforce to support a growing regional economy.

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN ACTION: LOCAL JOBS TASKFORCE

Narrabri Shire Council is actively engaged in and making representations to the Australian Government's Local Jobs Taskforce for New England Northwest. The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforces meets regularly to develop and support solutions to increase the number of people in the local workforce or undertaking local training, by putting local employer needs and industry needs at the centre of their actions and addressing barriers to employment in the Region.



ADVOCATING TO GOVERNMENT

Councils in the Region play a substantial role in advocating for the economic and financial needs of the Region to both Federal and State Government. It is acknowledged that there are areas beyond the remit or capacity of councils that require engagement and collaboration with other levels of government. This includes: identifying and advocating for skills and workforce priorities in the Region; advocating for investment in community infrastructure to support economic growth and employment opportunities; and ensuring workforce-related policies are addressing the needs of the Region.

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

Narrabri Shire Council's N2IP precinct is destined to be a premier manufacturing, industrial and logistics site in the Region and is set to support over 2,000 ongoing jobs.

In 2020, Council received a total of \$24.6 million for the development of N2IP from other levels of government - \$16.8 million from the State Government and \$7.8 million from the Federal Government. In September 2020, Council commenced the planning process of amending the Narrabri Local Environmental Plan (LEP), working with the Department of Planning and Environment (DPIE) to request a Gateway Determination. The Gateway Determination was issued in October 2020 and was followed by extensive community consultation regarding the changes, particularly with affected landholders.

In May 2021, the most significant amendment to the LEP ever undertaken was approved. This amendment involved the rezoning of the land for N2IP, to increase the ease with which industry can commence development in the designated area.

Once operational, N2IP will accommodate a diverse range of industries and will appeal to existing businesses wanting to expand and new businesses to the Region looking to benefit from the site's proximity to key transport connections and energy from the Narrabri Gas Project (subject to approvals).

PROMOTING THE REGION



Promotion of the Region is an important role of Narrabri Shire Council and surrounding councils. It means highlighting the Region 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 attracting a long-term workforce and showcasing the Region's benefits, to support opportunities for the local workforce, business and industry across Narrabri Shire and the wider Region.

PROMOTING NARRABRI SHIRE AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Promoting the Region in action: Namoi Jobs and Trade Show

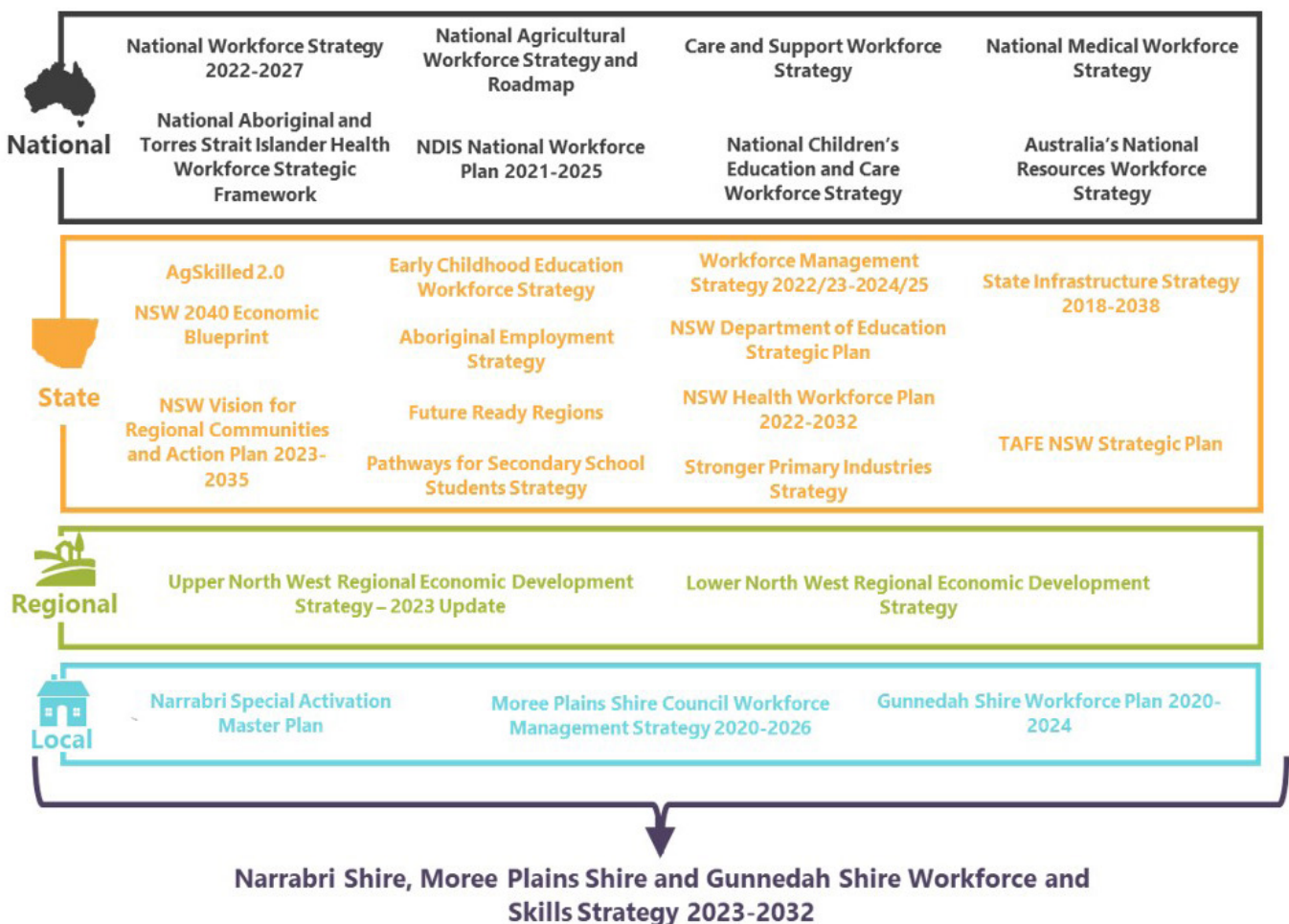
The Namoi Jobs and Trade Show is an annual event, held by Future EDU and Narrabri Industrial Network, showcasing local industries, businesses, jobs and education opportunities in the Narrabri area. Narrabri Shire Council supports the annual Namoi Jobs and Trade show through sponsorship, promotion and event participation.

CONTEXT FOR THE WORKFORCE AND SKILLS STRATEGY

The Workforce and Skills Strategy sits within and aligns with other workforce and skills planning documents at the national, state, regional and local level

Governments have established workforce and skills priorities at national, state, regional and local level, with a focus on providing opportunities for the community and addressing the needs of industry. The focus of existing strategies in place range from general workforce opportunities and challenges in Australia to region-specific or sector specific plans. Figure 3 illustrates this ecosystem.

Figure 3: Related strategy and planning documents



The Workforce and Skills Strategy aligns with other skills and workforce planning documents across national, state, regional and local jurisdictions.

The strategic outcomes and priorities within this Strategy are aligned to those outlined in existing national and state strategies. This consistency is designed to support collaboration across all levels of government to achieve the Region’s workforce and skills objectives.

Table 1: Strategic alignment with relevant national and regional strategies

Strategic Priorities (refer to page 5)	National Workforce Strategy 2022-2027	NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint	Upper North West Regional Economic Development Strategy	Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy
1.1 Supporting growth in high-quality jobs and new industries to retain skilled workers in the Region.			✓	✓
1.2 Sustaining a welcoming and inclusive community that attracts skilled workers to the Region.	✓		✓	✓
2.1 Supporting the provision of community services that underpin career opportunities for parents.	✓		✓	✓
2.2 Attracting and sustaining career and training opportunities that provide opportunities for First Nations people.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries.	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.1 Supporting local tertiary and vocational education institutions to provide a breadth of courses that are aligned to industry needs.		✓	✓	
3.2 Enabling residents to have equitable access to education and training opportunities across the Region.			✓	✓
4.1 Supporting the provision of sustainable residential land supply.		✓	✓	✓
4.2 Attracting short-term accommodation options to the Region to support temporary workers.			✓	✓



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES SHAPING THE REGION AND ITS WORKFORCE

There are several key workforce and skills opportunities and challenges facing the Region, which this Strategy aims to address.

CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

OPPORTUNITY

1



Opportunity 1: The Region has diverse employment opportunities both in existing and emerging industries, for new and existing residents in the Region.

Fundamental to the economic output and workforce of the Region is the abundance of natural resources that support strong agriculture and mining industries. However, the Region is also characterised by its economic diversity, with other industries, such as education and training, employing a significant number of residents and supporting the needs of the community. This diversity has underpinned the resilience of the regional economy in times of instability, whether it be drought, floods or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Crucial to the diversity of the economy is the Region's strategic location along key north-south and east-west transport corridors, which provide convenient access to Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle. This position gives the Region an advantage in attracting and retaining logistics enterprises as well as other industries that rely on effective access to major domestic markets as well as international gateways. It is also an attractor for workers, who may retain social links to major east coast population centres.

With the diverse range of industries and opportunities for new industries, there are a wealth of employment prospects in the Region. Importantly, opportunities are increasing as major projects, such as Inland Rail, the Narrabri SAP (under investigation) and Moree SAP are delivered. This will create significant ongoing demand for workers in the Region. 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) as well as drawing more

workers to the Region (e.g., relocation grants, increased affordable housing supply) to meet growing demand.

To meet the needs of current and future businesses and industry, attraction and retention of the required workforce will be important. Collectively, the Region needs to find ways to attract and retain a local workforce with the right skills to harness the growing opportunities the Region presents. Ensuring that key enablers, such as housing, education, community services and career pathways, are in place within the communities is an important aspect to securing this workforce.

HARNESSING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE REGION ...

The Region has the opportunity to harness its strategic location by utilising its connectivity and upcoming projects to attract a number of new businesses to the Region. Employment opportunities will be created through business and industry growth. Councils can work together to ensure the required community services and support are available to attract and retain the right workforce.

PEOPLE AND PLACE

OPPORTUNITY

2



Opportunity 2: There are opportunities to improve workforce participation by addressing barriers to employment for members of the community.

With a total population of ~38,460, the Region is home to a significant and diverse workforce. However, with major investment, a growing economy and significant post-pandemic workforce supply challenges across the nation, there is a pressing need for more workers.

Local business and industry rely on skilled labour and are impacted by several constraints, as outlined below. This is a key concern for communities across the Region, including townships in Narrabri Shire, such as Narrabri, Boggabri, Baan Baa, Wee Waa, Pilliga, Gwabegar, Bellata, Edgeroi and their surrounds. This challenge is being particularly felt in essential industries, such as age care, education and childcare, and across the economy more broadly as a result of the flow-on impacts to working families. Further, labour-intensive industries, such as agriculture, are feeling the impact of a reduced short-term labour force because of less migration.

To support business growth and emerging industries, there is an opportunity for the Region to unlock more capacity in the workforce through an increase in the participation of the working age population. In particular, this includes supporting more women, First Nations people and partners of full-time workers that are pursuing employment opportunities but lack pathways or other means of support to enter the workforce.

HARNESSING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE REGION ...

The workforce supply-demand challenge facing local businesses and industry are being felt across the Region. This presents an opportunity for the Councils to collaborate to identify where labour gaps are in the market and how, as a Region, these can be alleviated.

Focusing on identifying shared industry challenges and skill requirements and harnessing the strengths of each Council to support the Region can ease the labour force pressures being felt.

¹³ ABS, Region summary: Narrabri, 2023; Gunnedah Shire, Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy, 2022; ABS, Moree 2021 Census all persons QuickStats, 2022

PATHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

CHALLENGE

1



Challenge 1: A lack of apprenticeships, school transition programs and higher-education opportunities is exacerbating workforce challenges in the Region.

The workforce and skills challenges felt by businesses and industry across the Region are being exacerbated by factors such as a lack of visibility of local training pathways for school leavers, the need to travel afield for many training opportunities and a lack of job-specific training for First Nations people.

The Region offers a range of education and training facilities (e.g., Country University Centre (CUC)) and is located in proximity to major educational institutions (e.g., the University of New England (UNE) Armidale and TAFE Tamworth). Given this, there is an opportunity to better utilise existing facilities in the Region and partner with education institutions and community groups (e.g., First Nations groups) to grow course offerings across the Region.

Alongside this, there is an opportunity to create and enhance training and career pathways for young people in local schools by increasing direct engagement with businesses in the Shire. The limited number of apprenticeships and school transition programs is an impediment to local businesses and industry that require a skilled workforce. Higher skill and education attainment of young people will create several opportunities for greater workforce and community participation across the Region. Ensuring that young people are supported by access and proximity to education will be important for youth retention in the Region, providing pathways to support the needs of local business and industry.

Likewise, a greater emphasis on engaging with First Nations organisations and education providers to support job-specific training will help to boost education and employment participation for the Region's First Nations community. Improving access to digital connectivity, transport and culturally appropriate support and mentoring will also be key to driving positive outcomes.

HARNESSING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE REGION ...

There is an opportunity for councils in the Region to work in partnership with the various educational institutions in the Region, including schools, TAFE and UNE, as well as local community groups to grow the existing offerings and develop new education pathways to ensure there is a job-ready transition program from schools to the workforce. Further, a strong education, skills and training sector will attract a high-skilled workforce to the Region, supporting the growth of the workforce.

HOUSING SUPPLY CHALLENGE

2



Challenge 2: Access to affordable housing poses a challenge to retaining and attracting workers.

Across Australia, in both cities and regions, the housing supply shortage is an increasingly critical economic challenge. Despite growth in housing and available land supply in the Region in recent years, access remains a key challenge. Access to both short-term and long-term affordable housing is needed to support a growing workforce by allowing existing and emerging businesses and industry to attract and retain workers.

A diverse supply of housing is needed to support both 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 that underpins many industries (i.e., through temporary accommodation for Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers). In particular, access to housing has a strong link to the health and education outcomes of First Nations people, as well as to their social connectedness, supporting their engagement in the workforce.

HARNESSING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE REGION ...

The Region is underpinned by a number of industries and large events that draw people and businesses to the area for short periods of time. There is an opportunity for Councils to work together to ensure that short-term accommodation is available and accessible across each Shire and to advocate to the NSW Government to support the Regional workforce needs by addressing planning issues that are constraining housing growth.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a green John Deere combine harvester working in a cotton field. The harvester is moving from right to left, with its large auger and grain elevator visible. The cotton plants are in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The sky is clear and blue. The harvester has a yellow John Deere logo on the front and 'PR 16' markings on the side.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES: THE NINE-YEAR KEY THEMED STRATEGY AREAS

The strategic outcomes, priorities and actions set-out in this Strategy will guide Narrabri Shire Council – in collaboration with Moree Plains Shire and Gunnedah Shire Councils – in responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above.

1. CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

Opportunity 1: The Region has diverse employment opportunities both in existing and emerging industries, for new and existing residents in the Region.

Outcome 1: A sustainable, skilled workforce to support a growing economy, particularly in agriculture, mining, emerging industries and essential services.

Strategic priorities

- 1.1 Supporting growth in high-quality jobs and new industries to retain skilled workers in the region.
- 1.2 Sustaining a welcoming and inclusive community that attracts skilled workers to the region.

2. PEOPLE AND PLACE

Opportunity 2: There are opportunities to improve workforce participation by addressing barriers to employment for members of the community.

Outcome 2: The Region provides inclusive job opportunities, with community services to support people wanting to work.

Strategic priorities

- 2.1 Supporting the provision of community services that underpin career opportunities for parents.
- 2.2 Attracting and sustaining career and training opportunities that provide opportunities for First Nations people.
- 2.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries.

3. PATHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Challenge 1: A lack of apprenticeships, school transition programs and higher-education opportunities is exacerbating workforce challenges in the Region.

Outcome 3: Community access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses are able to operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.

Strategic priorities

- 3.1 Supporting local tertiary and vocational education institutions to provide a breadth of courses that are aligned to industry needs.
- 3.2 Enabling residents to have equitable access to education and training opportunities across the Region.

4. HOUSING SUPPLY

Challenge 2: Access to affordable housing poses a challenge to retaining and attracting workers.

Outcome: Diverse and affordable housing is available to help attract and retain workers to the region.

Strategic priorities

- 4.1 Supporting the provision of sustainable residential land supply.
- 4.2 Attracting short-term accommodation options to the Region to support temporary workers.

A PLAN FOR ACTION



To successfully address the Region-wide challenges, an action-based approach is required

This Strategy articulates the common opportunities and challenges across the three LGAs and provides an action-based plan to address these. The identified actions are linked to the four strategic outcomes and are to be implemented over the 10-year period of the Strategy. The actions have been informed by community and stakeholder consultation and collaboration between Narrabri Shire, Moree Plains Shire and Gunnedah Shire councils.

Intervention, timeframes and achievement

Each action is defined as either a Narrabri Shire Council action or Regional action (Narrabri, Moree Plains and Gunnedah Shire Councils acting collaboratively).

Actions are also categorised based on councils having a direct (i.e., engaging directly with business or facilitating a service through the councils) or indirect (i.e., advocating to other government agencies) role. The specific role categories, as detailed on Page 14-16, include:

- 1. Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry** – for example, engaging directly with businesses in the Region to understand their needs and priorities, and utilising this information to support and advocate for these needs.
- 2. Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry** – for example, supporting new businesses by providing incentives or support to relocate to the Region.
- 3. Advocating to government** – for example, directly engaging with Federal or State Government to advocate for the needs of the local community and businesses, to gain funding or to gain support. This may be for policy changes or investment in community infrastructure.
- 4. Promoting the Region** – for example, using industry events, such as trade shows, to showcase regional offerings and attract new workers to the Region.

When advocating to government, there are several key State and Federal Government departments and agencies that are engaged with depending on the action requirements, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. 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

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. CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

Outcome 1: A sustainable, skilled workforce to support a growing economy, particularly in agriculture, mining, emerging industries and essential services.

1.1. Supporting growth in high-quality jobs and new industries to retain skilled workers in the region

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
1.1.1: Action Overview	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.				
1.1.1: Alignment	✓		✓		1 - 2
1.1.2: Action Overview	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.				
1.1.2: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
1.1.3: Action Overview	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.				
1.1.3: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
1.1.4: Action Overview	Engage with the Australian Government and Regional Development Australia regarding worker visa programs and agreements to support skilled migrants and seasonal workers to seek employment in regional areas.				
1.1.4: Alignment	✓	✓	✓		3 - 5
1.1.5: Action Overview	Engage with mining industry employers to provide upskilling and business knowledge training to the trades workforce, increasing resilience of their workforce to industry challenges.				
1.1.5: Alignment	✓				6 - 9
Regional actions					
1.1.6: Action Overview	Hold 'showcase' events with key businesses, research facilities and investors in the Region to enhance business-to-business connections and market the Region's workforce opportunities.				
1.1.6: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
1.1.7: Action Overview	Host a seminar series for local businesses on relocation incentives.				
1.1.7: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
1.1.8: Action Overview	Collaborate with RDA-NI and utilise available online resources and the Come On Inland Initiative to encourage skilled migrants to relocate to the Region.				
1.1.8: Alignment	✓		✓	✓	1 - 2
1.1.9: Action Overview	Utilise education facilities across the Region to deliver education, skills and training sessions and promote the use of these facilities for business programs such as those run by the UNE Smart Region Incubator.				
1.1.9: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
1.1.10: Action Overview	Create a marketing strategy that promotes government funded programs that can assist local business and industry with their labour requirements. This includes engagement with the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and Australian Government Harvest trail.				
1.1.10: Alignment	✓				1 - 2
1.1.11: Action Overview	Deliver an annual regional career and volunteering expo that engages students, young people, mature age jobseekers and businesses from across the Region to showcase opportunities in the workforce, education, training and skill building, for business programs such as those run by the UNE Smart Region Incubator.				
1.1.11: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2

1.2. Sustaining a welcoming and inclusive community that attracts skilled workers to the region.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
1.2.1: Action Overview	Work alongside key local industries to educate and upskill on the use of government relocation incentives to attract essential workers.				
1.2.1: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
1.2.2: Action Overview	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.				
1.2.2: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	Ongoing
Regional actions					
1.2.3: Action Overview	Explore opportunities to enhance the cultural and sporting events and activities calendar across the Region to provide more recreational opportunities for workers and residents.				
1.2.3: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
1.2.4: Action Overview	Collaborate with each Council to develop a “welcome experience pack”. Include vouchers and information to promote activities and offerings across the Region.				
1.2.4: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
1.2.5: Action Overview	Work alongside RDA-NI to distribute welcome packs to arriving migrants to promote the community and attractions of living and working within the Region.				
1.2.5: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2

2. PEOPLE AND PLACE

Outcome 2: The Region provides inclusive job opportunities, with community services to support people wanting to work.

2.1 Supporting the provision of community services that underpin career opportunities for parents.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
2.1.1: Action Overview	Support the development of childcare in Narrabri Shire, by exploring Council incentives for accelerated development and operations.				
2.1.1: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2
2.1.2: Action Overview	Encourage family day care and after school care developments across the Shire.				
2.1.2: Alignment		✓		✓	3 - 5
2.1.3: Action Overview	Support family day care providers with grant funding for start-up, delivery, or expansion across the Shire.				
2.1.3: Alignment	✓	✓			3 - 5
2.1.4: Action Overview	Support professional development opportunities for the early childhood education workforce to upskill and provide further career opportunities.				
2.1.4: Alignment	✓				3 - 5
Regional actions					
2.1.5: Action Overview	Work collaboratively to deliver business seminars that advocate the benefits of flexible working arrangements and how best to utilise the workforce available (e.g., school hour shifts, working from home flexibility).				
2.1.5: Alignment	✓				1 - 2

2.2 Attracting and sustaining career and training opportunities that provide opportunities for First Nations people.

Narrabri Shire Council actions					
2.2.1: Action Overview	Identify existing funding and support pathways specifically targeted towards First Nations businesses. In collaboration with a 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.				
2.2.1: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2
2.2.2: Action Overview	Identify and support First Nations business start-ups through local grant programs, advisers and business education programs.				
2.2.2: Alignment	✓				1 - 2
2.2.3: Action Overview	Ensure ongoing communication with a First Nations Advisory Committee (to be established) to identify their requirements for greater workforce inclusion.				
2.2.3: Alignment	✓	✓			3 - 5
2.2.4: Action Overview	In collaboration with local First Nations groups and education providers, support funding for the delivery of skills/ personal development courses for young First Nations people of Narrabri Shire.				
2.2.4: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
Regional actions					
2.2.5: Action Overview	Ensure liaison and representation of local First Nations people in the implementation of local strategies and delivery of programs aimed at engaging First Nations communities and businesses in the workforce.				
2.2.5: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2

2.3 Enhance business and career opportunities for women in local industries.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
2.3.1: Action Overview	Partner with local business and industry associations to provide networking events for women seeking local career opportunities.				
2.3.1: Alignment	✓				1 - 2
2.3.2: Action Overview	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.				
2.3.2: Alignment		✓			3 - 5
Regional actions					
2.3.3: Action Overview	Support annual Namoi Jobs and Trade Show to showcase apprenticeship and career opportunities in local businesses and industry across the Shire, with a particular focus on opportunities for women, youth and First Nations people.				
2.3.3: Alignment		✓		✓	1 - 2
2.3.4: Action Overview	Work alongside the local TAFE office to market the initiatives that are specifically targeted at women in business to engage local residents and businesses in the programs.				
2.3.4: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2

3. PATHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Outcome 3: The community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses can operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.

3.1 Supporting local tertiary and vocational education institutions to provide a breadth of courses that are aligned to industry needs.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
3.1.1: Action Overview	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.				
3.1.1: Alignment	✓		✓		Ongoing
3.1.2: Action Overview	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.				
3.1.2: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2
3.1.3: Action Overview	Engage with the CUC to support and advocate State and Federal government for expansion of facilities and student learning support services and officers to improve regional tertiary education outcomes.				
3.1.3: Alignment	✓	✓			3 - 5
3.1.4: Action Overview	Advocate for the CUC to be upgraded to provide fast connectivity to increase online course capacity.				
3.1.4: Alignment	✓		✓		3 - 5
3.1.5: Action Overview	Support and promote the current TAFE offerings in Narrabri including the Vocational Education and Training Courses (TVET) and TAFE YES+.				
3.1.5: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
Regional actions					
3.1.6: Action Overview	Regional engagement with the University of New England (UNE) to ensure their projects deliver educational opportunities aligned with the future requirements of the regional workforce.				
3.1.6: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	3 - 5
3.1.7: Action Overview	Utilise education facilities across the Region to deliver education, skills and training sessions, and promote these to potential students through in-school marketing.				
3.1.7: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
3.1.8: Action Overview	Collectively advocate and collaborate with the NSW Department of Education to work towards initiatives and programs for school-leavers and greater funding for education and skills programs in the Region.				
3.1.8: Alignment			✓	✓	1 - 2

3.2 Enabling residents to have equitable access to education and training opportunities across the Region.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
3.2.1: Action Overview	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.				
3.2.1: Alignment	✓				1 - 2
3.2.2: Action Overview	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.				
3.2.2: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2
Regional actions					
3.2.3: Action Overview	Deliver a range of Council-supported business and industry programs encouraging up-skilling and education across the Region and invite businesses from all Shire's to participate.				
3.2.3: Alignment	✓			✓	1 - 2

4. HOUSING SUPPLY

Outcome 4: Diverse and affordable housing is available to help attract and retain workers to the Region.

4.1 Supporting the provision of sustainable residential land supply.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
4.1.1: Action Overview	Continue engagement with NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to ensure the updated Narrabri Shire Council LEP supports adequate provision of residential land including a range of land sizes and affordable housing options, particularly near the major centres of Boggabri, Narrabri and Wee Waa.				
4.1.1: Alignment	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 - 2
4.1.2: Action Overview	Engage with large businesses in the Shire that are potential investors in housing stock to explore opportunities to boost housing supply as part of the development and operation of major projects.				
4.1.2: Alignment	✓				Ongoing
4.1.3: Action Overview	Advocate for State and Federal funding to release and support new residential developments, including for the provision of social and affordable housing.				
4.1.3: Alignment	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 - 2
Regional actions					
4.1.4: Action Overview	Ensure sufficient residential land is available to support industry and business workforce requirements.				
4.1.4: Alignment	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
4.1.5g: Action Overview	Utilise education facilities across the Region to deliver education, skills and training sessions, and promote these to potential students through in-school marketing.				
4.1.5: Alignment	✓	✓	✓		Ongoing

4.2 Attracting short-term accommodation options to the Region to support temporary workers.

	Supporting the workforce needs of existing business and industry	Supporting the workforce needs of new business and industry	Further investigate / advocate to government	Promoting the Region	Implementation year
Narrabri Shire Council actions					
4.2.1: Action Overview	Engage with accommodation providers to attract further investment in tourist accommodation to support the growth in the visitor economy.				
4.2.1: Alignment		✓			Ongoing
4.2.2: Action Overview	Engage with large local industry and businesses to assess their appetite to invest in short-term accommodation options for local workforces.				
4.2.2: Alignment	✓				Ongoing
Regional actions					
4.2.3: Action Overview	Develop a regional fact sheet for residents to increase the uptake of short-term renting of their properties to provide temporary accommodation during events or for short-term FIFO or DIDO workers.				
4.2.3: Alignment	✓	✓		✓	1 - 2
4.2.4: Action Overview	Initiate a regional working group focused on consulting with short-term accommodation providers to understand their capacity and discuss the needs of businesses and upcoming projects.				
4.2.4: Alignment	✓	✓			1 - 2

NEXT STEPS

Ongoing measurement of outcomes, monitoring and review over the next ten years will be imperative to the success of the strategy

Measuring success

The actions in this Strategy are designed to be results-based to enable transparent performance tracking. By measuring the completion status of actions, Narrabri Shire Council and the Region Council Group can track their progress towards achieving 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 5-10 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 with all involved Councils. 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 Region, and in the national economy more broadly, can be considered in updates to the Strategy.

This monitoring and evaluation process should be led by Narrabri Shire Council with the involvement of Moree Plains Council and Gunnedah Shire Council.

To track the overall progress against the outcomes outlined in the Strategy, a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) are detailed below and will ensure Narrabri Shire Council actively work towards achieving the vision of this Strategy.

OUTCOME 1: A sustainable, skilled workforce to support a growing economy, particularly in agriculture, mining, emerging industries and essential services.	
KPI	Current
Increase in number of people participating in the labour force	59.2% ¹⁴
Meet with the RDA-NI department annually	3

¹⁴ ABS, Narrabri 2021 Census Community Profiles, 2022

OUTCOME 2: The Region provides inclusive job opportunities, with community services to support people want to work.	
KPI	Current
Increase the number of available childcare positions	370 ¹⁵
Increase the workforce participation of women in the Shire	41.4% ¹⁴
Increase the workforce participation of First Nations people in the Shire	56.7% ¹⁴

OUTCOME 3: The community has access to high-quality training pathways and skilled jobs, and businesses can operate effectively with a sustainable workforce.	
KPI	Current
Increase the percentage of residents attending an education institution at a tertiary level	11.8% ¹⁴
Host workforce, training and skills events held annually	3

OUTCOME 4: Diverse and affordable housing is available to help attract and retain workers to the region.	
KPI	Current
Increase hectares zoned Residential across Narrabri Shire	4,477.49 Ha
Increase the number of available commercial/industrial land blocks across the Narrabri Shire. Increase hectares zoned industrial/commercial land across Narrabri Shire.	897.44 Ha

¹⁵ Narrabri Shire Delivery Program 2022- 2026 Progress Report - 1.1.4_KPI00001 – Number of available childcare spaces across the Shire

Financial implications and resourcing for Narrabri Shire Council

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.

Governance

This Strategy presents regional challenges and opportunities and has been led by Narrabri Shire and developed in collaboration with Moree Plains and Gunnedah Shire Councils as stakeholders.

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 Department
- Tourism Department
- Parks and Open Spaces Department
- Community Development Department
- Strategic Planning Department.

Some actions will require collaboration with the Region Council Group, however these are expected to be led by Narrabri Shire Council.

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

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





NARRABRI SHIRE
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

46-48 Maitland Street
PO Box 261
Narrabri NSW 2390

02 6799 6866
council@narrabri.nsw.gov.au
www.narrabri.com.au