



Community Strategic Plan 2035

Hay

Exciting Heritage... Positive Future

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Acknowledgement of Country

Hay Shire acknowledges the Wiradjuri, Nari Nari, and Yitha Yitha people as the traditional custodians of the land in which we live and work and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters.



Exciting Heritage... Positive Future



Our Vision & Values

Our Vision

Where our people can reside, experience and thrive creating a liveable, dynamic, resilient and inclusive community.

Our Values

Inclusivity

Ensuring that all voices are heard and represented in decision-making processes. This involves actively seeking out diverse perspectives and creating opportunities for participation from marginalized or underrepresented groups.

Resilience

Building resilience in the face of challenges, whether they are environmental, economic, or social. This includes investing in infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and community resources to ensure that the community can recover and thrive in the aftermath of adversity.

Adaptability

Embracing change and being open to new ideas and approaches. This involves continuously evaluating and improving policies and practices to meet the evolving needs of the community and to take advantage of new opportunities for growth and development.



Introduction

Integrated Planning & Reporting

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework is a key component of the Local Government Act 1993, introduced in 2009 to enhance the way councils in New South Wales plan for and report on the long-term future of their communities. Since its introduction, IP&R has significantly transformed strategic planning in local government, ensuring a more transparent, coordinated, and community-driven approach.

Hay Shire Council is strongly committed to the principles of the IP&R framework. It serves as the foundation for aligning Council's plans and strategies to support a unified vision for the future of the Hay community. Through this framework, Council identifies long-term community aspirations and priorities, and develops an agreed roadmap for their delivery.

The main parties in the IP&R process are outlined below. Each has their own unique but inter-connected role.



At the core of the IP&R framework is a suite of integrated, cascading plans that clearly articulate Council's vision, objectives, and strategies for achieving measurable outcomes. This approach ensures a seamless connection between high-level strategic planning and day-to-day operations.

The framework also incorporates a robust reporting and review structure. This enables Council and the community to monitor progress, evaluate performance, and adapt to changing needs ensuring that the goals, strategies, and actions remain relevant and effective over time.

The IP&R framework is built around four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- How will we know when we've arrived?

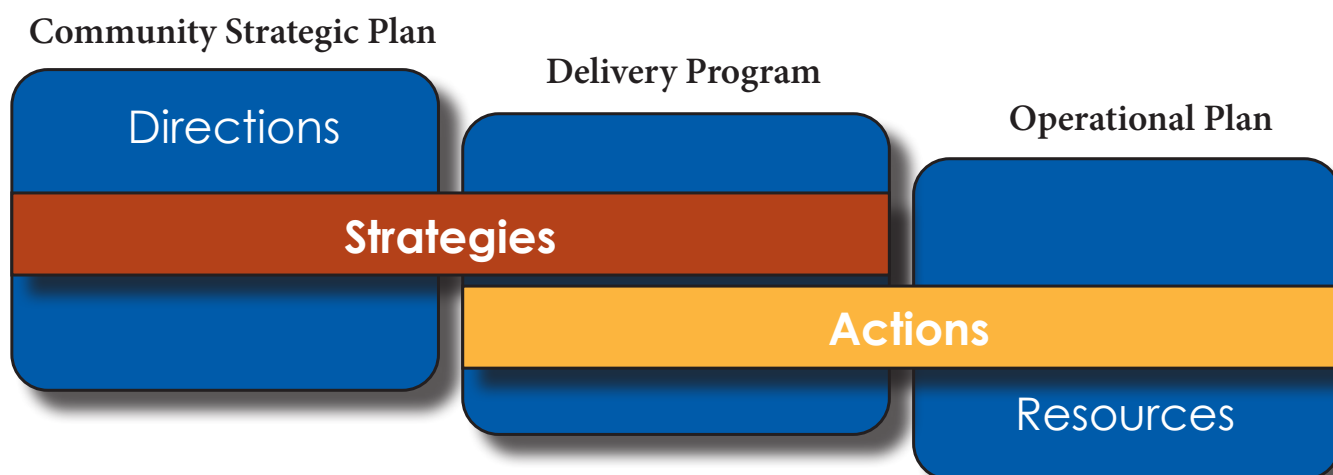
For more information, visit the NSW Office of Local Government's website:
www.olg.nsw.gov.au

The Plans

Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by Council. Spanning a period of ten or more years, this long-term plan captures the community's key priorities, values, and aspirations for the future. It sets out the broad strategies required to achieve the desired outcomes and serves as the foundation for all other Council plans. Every plan developed under the IP&R framework aligns with, and supports, the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan.

Interrelationships between the 3 levels of planning:-



Delivery Program

The Delivery Program is prepared by each newly elected Council and outlines the specific strategic directions to be pursued over the Council's four-year term. It translates the long-term strategies of the Community Strategic Plan into medium-term priorities, identifying key focus areas and initiatives that will guide Council's efforts during its term.

Operational Plan and Budget

The Operational Plan and Budget are developed annually and provide a detailed account of the individual projects, activities, and services that Council will deliver in a given year. These actions are directly aligned with the priorities identified in the Delivery Program and are supported by corresponding financial allocations to ensure effective implementation.

Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy outlines how Council will secure and manage the resources required to achieve the objectives outlined in the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, and Operational Plan. This strategy includes three core components:

Long-Term Financial
Plan

Workforce Management
Strategy

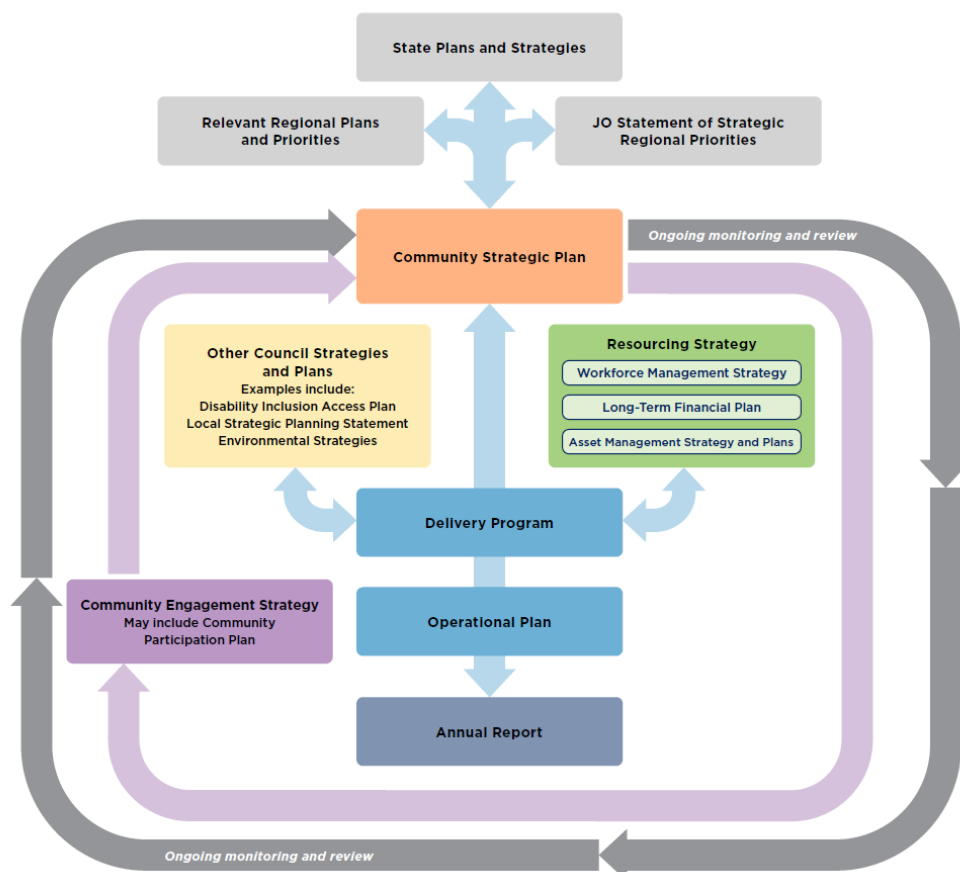
Asset Management
Strategy and Plans

Together, these elements ensure that Council is well-positioned to deliver sustainable outcomes through responsible financial, human, and asset resource planning.

Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Strategy sets out Council's approach to engaging with the community and other key stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process.

It defines how Council will seek input, foster collaboration, and maintain ongoing dialogue to ensure that community needs, expectations, and aspirations are accurately reflected in strategic planning and decision-making.



Our Shire, Our Community

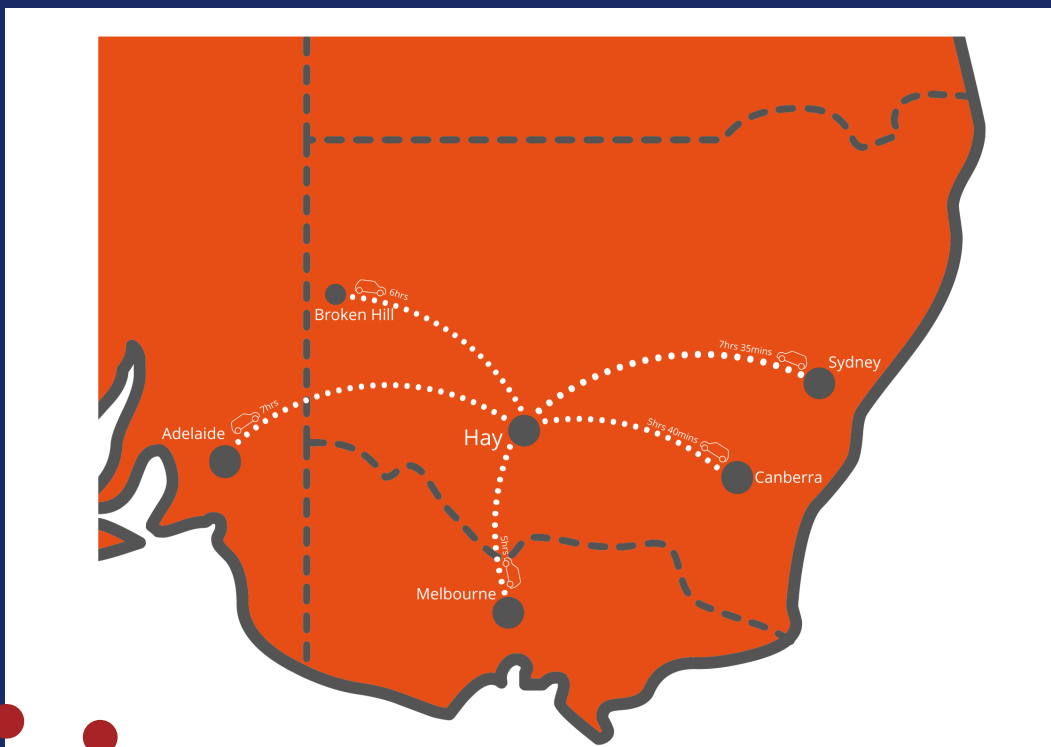
Hay Shire encompasses the vibrant town of Hay and the unique villages of Booligal—immortalised in Banjo Paterson’s “Hay and Hell and Booligal”—Maude, and One Tree. Geographically, the Shire is bordered by Carrathool Shire to the north and east, Murrumbidgee Council to the east, Edward River and Murray River to the south, and Balranald Council to the west.

The township of Hay is strategically located at the crossroads of the Cobb, Sturt, and Mid-Western Highways—approximately 720 km west of Sydney, 420 km north of Melbourne, and 650 km east of Adelaide. Hay enjoys strong regional connections to Griffith (130 km east) and Wagga Wagga (270 km east), where residents can access a broad range of health, education, retail, commercial, and transport services.

Hay Shire offers an abundance of attractions, from fascinating museums and tranquil parks and gardens to first-class recreational and sporting facilities. Whether you’re a visitor exploring the area or a local proud to call Hay home, there’s something here for everyone.

With an proud heritage and a positive outlook for the future, Hay Shire is more than just its landscape—though the wide-open spaces and rural charm are certainly part of the appeal. It’s the people who make this community truly special.

Hay is a welcoming, safe, and family-friendly town, known for its low crime rates and strong community spirit. The resilience and generosity of its residents shine through in the many active volunteer groups and local organisations. Together, we are building a future that honours our past, supports our present, and shapes a thriving, connected community for generations to come.



Our Shire, Our Community

Our Community

Educational attainment levels among residents of Hay Shire are below the NSW state average; however, they are broadly consistent with those of neighbouring rural shires, as highlighted in recent socio-economic studies.

According to the 2021 Census, the mean weekly income for individuals with taxable incomes in Hay Shire is significantly lower than the NSW average. This reflects the region's economic composition, which is primarily driven by agriculture, trades, and local services—sectors that typically offer lower remuneration compared to urban-based professional and corporate industries.

Hay Shire has experienced a gradual population decline over recent decades. Projections from NSW Planning indicate this trend may continue. However, it is important to note that these projections are based on current data and do not account for potential future investments, policy interventions, or social and economic initiatives that may positively influence population growth.

Despite these challenges, Hay Shire maintains an unemployment rate below

the NSW average. Owing to the region's relative geographic isolation, a substantial proportion of the workforce is employed within the Local Government Area, reflecting a strong local employment base.

Community Snapshot

According to the 2021 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Hay Local Government Area (LGA) had a population of 2,882 residents. Approximately 76% (2,208 people) resided in the main township of Hay and its immediate surrounds, while the remaining population was distributed across rural parts of the Shire, including Maude (110 people) and Booligal (98 people).

The median age in Hay Shire was 48 years, significantly higher than the New South Wales average of 39 years and the national average of 38 years. Notably, individuals aged 50 years and over comprised approximately 48.2% of the total population, highlighting an ageing demographic profile.

This demographic trend underscores the importance of strategic planning to address the needs and opportunities associated with an ageing population, including service delivery, community engagement, and workforce sustainability.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census QuickStats: Hay (A) LGA.



Community Snapshot

POPULATION 2,882

MEDIAN AGE



MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$1,236



NO LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS



MOTOR VEHICLE PER DWELLING



1.9

Average number of children per family
1.8

Non-English language is used at home



5.7%

NUMBER OF FAMILIES

742



DID VOLUNTARY WORK THROUGH AN ORGANISATION OR GROUP

22.2%

Average number of people per household 2.2



MEDIAN WEEKLY RENT



\$175

BORN IN AUSTRALIA

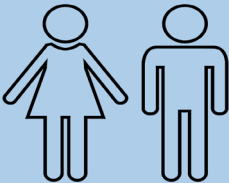
80%



8.3%

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

49.8% Female
50.2% Male



Previously served or currently serving



Australian Defence Force 1.9%

ATTENDING TERTIARY EDUCATION

86

Our Shire, Our Community

Our Local Economy

The Hay Shire Council area is predominantly rural, with approximately 1,097,547 hectares zoned RU1 Primary Production and a further 1,230 hectares zoned RU4 Primary Production – Small Lots. Together, these zones account for around 97% of the total land area, underscoring the region's strong agricultural focus.

Agriculture remains the cornerstone of Hay's economy, contributing significantly to the region's Gross Regional Product (GRP). As of the 2023/24 financial year, the GRP stands at approximately \$212 million, reflecting substantial economic activity in the area.

Employment patterns within the Shire also reflect the significance of agriculture. The top ten industry sectors by employment, according to the 2021 Census, are:

Industry Sector	Share of Employment
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	21.9%
Retail Trade	12.2%
Public Administration & Safety	11.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	8.8%
Education & Training	8.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	7.0%
Construction	6.6%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	4.0%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	2.6%
Manufacturing	2.5%

This data highlights the community's economic dependence on the primary industries sector, alongside significant employment in essential services such as retail, education, and health care.

Sources: Land zoning data: Hay Shire Council Local Environmental Plan (LEP); Economic contribution: Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Economic Profile; Employment data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census QuickStats for Hay (NSW)



A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark trousers, and a black cap is standing in a field, holding a camera up to their eye to take a photograph. The background shows a vast, flat landscape under a sky with soft, golden light from a low sun, creating a silhouette effect on the person. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Supporting State and Regional Plans

In developing the Hay Shire Community Strategic Plan, careful consideration was given to a range of key State and Regional strategic frameworks to ensure alignment with broader government policy directions and long-term goals. These plans provide essential guidance on sustainability, economic development, infrastructure, health, housing, and community wellbeing, and have informed the strategies and objectives outlined in this Plan.

The following documents were particularly influential:

- NSW State Plan 2021–2031
- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- NSW State Health Plan
- 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW (2021–2041)
- NSW Housing Strategy
- NSW Energy Plan
- NSW Net Zero Plan
- NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy
- National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy
- National Waste Policy and Action Plan
- South West Regional Resilience Strategy
- Hay and Carrathool Drought Resilience Plan
- Hay and Carrathool Economic Road Map

By integrating the priorities and directions from these plans, the Hay Shire Community Strategic Plan ensures that local actions contribute meaningfully to regional, state, and national outcomes, fostering a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for our community.

How we developed the plan

How we developed the Plan

The development of this Community Strategic Plan (CSP) was guided by a thorough and inclusive engagement process, designed to reflect the values, needs, and aspirations of the Hay Shire community. Council undertook a variety of engagement activities including:

- Staff Workshops to draw on the knowledge and experience of Council employees,
- Council Workshops to ensure alignment with strategic direction and leadership priorities,
- A Community Survey to capture broad community sentiment and feedback, and
- Ten Community Consultation Sessions held across the Shire to engage directly with residents and stakeholders.

These activities were further supported by a review of previous community engagement findings, strategic studies, and local surveys to provide a strong foundation for informed planning.

In addition to local engagement, the CSP was developed with consideration to the following frameworks and strategic alignments:

- *The Social Justice Principles, ensuring fairness, access, and inclusion in all aspects of planning*
- *The Quadruple Bottom Line approach, incorporating social, environmental, economic, and civic leadership considerations*

- *Alignment with relevant Federal, State, and Regional Plans, ensuring integration and consistency across all levels of government.*

Further details about the engagement methods, reference materials, and policy alignments are included in the following sections of this Plan.

Social Justice Principles

The Hay Shire Community Strategic Plan is founded on four interrelated social justice principles, ensuring inclusive and equitable outcomes for all members of the community:

Equity

Decision-making and resource allocation must be fair and responsive, particularly for those in need. The planning process prioritises the involvement of people in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances.

Access

All individuals should have equal access to services, facilities, and opportunities that enhance quality of life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Participation

Community members are provided with genuine opportunities to contribute to decisions that impact their lives. Meaningful participation strengthens local ownership and ensures diverse perspectives are considered.

Rights

The Plan supports and promotes equal rights for all, encouraging active involvement in community life by people of all linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

What you told us...

What you told us...

Livability Priorities

#3	General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)
#1	Sense of belonging in the community
#2	Locally owned and operated businesses
#4	Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks etc.)
#5	Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)
#6	Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)
#8	Sense of connection to/feeling support from neighbours or community
#7	Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)
#8	Local history, historic buildings or features
#10	Ease of driving and parking

Economic Priorities

Locally owned and operated businesses	63%
Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks etc.)	58%
Access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.)	40%
Local employment opportunities (within easy commute)	37%
Things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, live music etc.)	34%

Sustainability Priorities

Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)	44%
Landscaping and natural elements (street trees, planting, water features etc.)	36%
Protection of the natural environment	17%
Sustainable behaviours in the community (water management, solar panels, recycling etc.)	17%
Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, sustainable building design, density etc.)	15%

Leadership Priorities

General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)	60%
Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)	52%
Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)	47%
Evidence of Council/government management (signage, street cleaners etc.)	41%
General condition of housing and other private buildings	35%
General condition of private open space (verges, driveways etc.)	13%

'We would like more shade at the ovals'

Youth Taskforce

'We would like a permanent x-ray service' - Youth Taskforce

'Improve footpaths for gopher users'

Haydays Residents

'Would be great to have a dentist in Hay'

Booligal Residents

'Maintain and keep businesses. Support what we have'

We love that the town is safe and friendly!

'Hay has good sporting facilities'

'There needs to be more river blocks available'

'Signage welcoming visitors and reminding them of rear to curb parking plus asking them to take care of cyclists and pedestrians'

'Promote travelling through Maude from the Highway'
Maude Residents

'We would love to see Early Learning have access to the Booligal School'
Booligal Residents

'Shade for the BBQ area to encourage travellers to stop and for locals to have a place to go and sit'
Maude Residents

The Plan

How will the Plan Work

Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) relies on a collaborative approach with clearly defined roles and shared responsibilities. The Mayor and Councillors are responsible for advocating for the CSP and championing its vision throughout the community. The General Manager has a key leadership role in driving the delivery of the CSP, ensuring its integration with Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plan, and Resourcing Strategy. Depending on the strategy, Council's role may be to deliver, partner, support and/or advocate

Measuring Progress

To ensure the CSP remains effective and responsive, it is supported by a framework of measurable outcomes and performance indicators. These measures track our progress in delivering key activities and achieving strategic objectives. As the timeframes of each supporting plan shorten—from long-term strategy to annual operations—the level of detail and specificity in these measures increases. Ongoing performance monitoring enables Council to adopt a culture of continuous improvement in service delivery and community outcomes.

Reporting and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are fundamental to good governance. The General Manager will provide regular progress reports in accordance with a structured reporting schedule. These reports will be made available to the public via Council's website, newsletters, and other communication platforms. Formal updates will also be provided through the Annual Report and End of Term Report, ensuring the community is informed about achievements, challenges, and future focus areas.

Working Together

The CSP is a whole-of-community plan and its success depends on strong partnerships. Council will actively collaborate with the community, local organisations, government agencies, neighbouring councils, and other stakeholders to implement the strategies and actions within the CSP. These partnerships are essential in delivering shared outcomes and building a resilient, thriving Hay Shire.



Our Focus Areas:

1. Social
2. Environmental
3. Economic
4. Civic Leadership





1. Social

No.	Objective	No.	Strategy	Role
1.1	Our community is skilled and supported	1.1.1	Our community has access to a range of employment opportunities	Advocate
		1.1.2	Increase housing options within the community	Advocate Partner Deliver
		1.1.3	Improve access to health services	Advocate
		1.1.4	Support local health initiatives and programs	Advocate
1.2	Recreational, Civic Spaces, and Infrastructure that meet community needs	1.2.1	Enhance public recreation areas and facilities	Deliver
		1.2.2	Placemaking with purpose	Deliver
		1.2.3	Deliver infrastructure that are responsive to the community's needs	Deliver
		1.2.4	Create a safe, inclusive, and resilient community where all members feel secure, supported, and empowered to thrive	Advocate Partner Deliver
1.3	Our community is connected	1.3.1	Enhance public and community transport options	Advocate
		1.3.2	Build a connected, collaborative community	Advocate Partner Deliver
1.4	Our youth and aged are supported	1.4.1	Advocate for greater capacity for local based child care services	Advocate
		1.4.2	Support youth and aged services and initiatives	Advocate Support
1.5	Our community is inclusive and sustainable	1.5.1	Residents of all abilities and cultures have access to public facilities	Deliver
		1.5.2	Inclusive and Empowered Communities	Advocate
		1.5.3	Enhance educational pathways and opportunities	Advocate Partner
		1.5.4	Promote inclusion and education of all abilities workers in community and business sector	Advocate
		1.5.5	Facilitate access public spaces for cultural and community events	Deliver
		1.5.6	Support cultural programs and initiatives, including First Nations	Support



2. Environmental

No.	Objective	No.	Strategy	Role
2.1	Council is resilient and adaptive	2.1.1	Council considers climate change resilience in our services, and the maintenance and management of our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure.	Deliver
		2.1.2	Foster sustainable energy solutions and practices to reduce Council's footprint.	Deliver
		2.1.3	Climate change risks and opportunities are embedded in our decision making process.	Deliver
2.2	Our Community is resilient and adaptive	2.2.1	Support business with climate risk adaptation and best practice	Support
2.3	Celebrate and Promote our unique natural environment	2.2.2	Support local community groups, first nations groups, and other agencies working with the natural environment	Support Partner
		2.2.3	Implement sustainable and eco friendly tourism initiatives	Deliver
2.4	Enhance the built environment	2.4.1	Maintain and beautify urban areas.	Deliver
		2.4.2	Support and promote public art initiatives	Support Deliver
		2.4.3	Provision of sustainable infrastructure that is adaptive to changing needs, suitability, betterment and funding levels.	Deliver
2.5	Our community is inclusive and sustainable	2.5.1	People of all abilities have access to natural environments, cycleways and passive areas.	Deliver
		2.5.2	Support cultural environmental initiatives	Support
		2.5.3	Advocate for water security and practices	Advocate
		2.5.4	Develop and implement a sustainable waste management strategy	Deliver
		2.5.5	Facilitate and support sustainable practices across our community	Support Advocate

3. Economic

No.	Objective	No.	Strategy	Role
3.1	Our community welcomes new and innovative industry to support our future	3.1.1	Future Ready Businesses	Advocate Support
		3.1.2	Strengthen Business Support Services	Deliver
		3.1.3	Business Attraction and Investment Growth	Advocate Deliver
		3.1.4	Facilitate growth industries including workforce development and skills	Deliver
		3.1.5	Identify opportunities to grow the agricultural sector	Deliver
		3.1.6	Identify opportunities to grow the renewable energy sector	Deliver
3.2	Our community values its history and tourism	3.2.1	Increase tourism and visitor spend	Deliver
		3.2.2	Promote events and activities	Deliver
		3.2.3	Actively identify, promote and enhance tourism initiatives	Support Deliver
		3.2.4	Showcase our open space, recreation and cultural facilities	Deliver
3.3	Our community is resilient and adaptive	3.3.1	To proactively reduce the risk and limit the impact of disasters associated with natural hazards on our community and economy	Partner Deliver
		3.3.2	Coordinated action for Climate Resilient Economic Development	Advocate Partner Deliver
		3.3.3	Reimagined Care Economy	Advocate Support




4. Civic Leadership

No.	Objective	No.	Strategy	Role
4.1	Our Council leads by example	4.1.1	Implement and promote best practice governance	Deliver
		4.1.2	Monitor and evaluate Council's strategic planning documents	Deliver
		4.1.3	Be environmentally responsible in decision making	Deliver
		4.1.4	Council will seek to continuously improve	Deliver
4.2	Our community is supported by a strong and resilient Council that is responsive to its needs	4.2.1	Provide an advocacy role on behalf of the community	Advocate Deliver
		4.2.2	Inform and empower community input into decision making	Deliver
		4.2.3	Our community has access to Council information, services and facilities	Deliver
4.3	Our Council is inclusive and sustainable	4.2.1	Enable an engaged workforce with suitable skills, available in the right place at the right time	Deliver
		4.2.2	Build a strong, collaborative, and supportive team culture	Deliver
		4.2.3	Ensure a financially sound Council that is responsible and sustainable	Deliver



Our Targets

Social

- A skilled labour force
- Increase in employment options
- Improvement in options for all levels of education
- The community's overall sense of well being is increasing
- Provide high quality recreation and cultural facilities and support
- An attractive town centre
- An inclusive place to live

Environment

- Natural environments well maintained
- Reduction in non renewable energy
- Sustainable water practices and water security
- Increase in take up of environmentally sustainable initiatives including waste reduction and water saving initiatives
- Clean and attractive place to live

Economic

- Increase in business numbers and opportunities across the community
- Increase in tourism visitor numbers
- Growth in existing businesses
- Display leadership and innovation to deal with change
- Population growth
- Growth in agricultural sector

Civic Leadership

- Satisfaction with Council's overall performance is increasing
- Community overall feels more engaged in the decision making process of Council
- Council's performance against industry wide financial benchmarks is strengthened
- Increase in Council's involvement in local and state matters affecting the Hay Community
- Continuously improve
- Remain Fit for the Future



Measuring Our Performance

Measuring our Performance

Planning for the future of our community involves more than creating a vision of how we want to live but also includes careful consideration of how we as a community will measure our progress and continually review and shape our path forward.

A Scorecard for Our Community

The long-term strategies contained within this Community Strategic Plan lay the foundations for working toward the making Hay a sustainable and better community. Central to the development of these strategies has been the creation of targets for which as a community we work to achieve. These targets are balanced across the 4 key areas of responsibility and will flow through to the supporting Delivery Plans and Resourcing Strategies, to ensure every action we take builds toward their achievement. A performance review and monitoring framework will enable measurement of our progress, consisting of:

Council's Annual Report, which will provide an overview of operational achievements at the conclusion of each year, in turn building toward our long-term goals.

Half Yearly Performance Reports, which will be produced by Council to track progress and report updates on projects to our community.

Community Survey - As part of our strategy to measure what we do, it is proposed to undertake further livability surveys to measure how the community assesses our performance.

