



End of Term Report

July 2018 - June 2021

Acknowledgement:

Dubbo Regional Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri People who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land. Council pay respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal peoples from other nations who are present.

Executive Summary	3
Section 1 Introduction	4
Section 2 Development of the 2040 Community Strategic Plan	6
Section 3 Tracking our progress.....	8
Section 4 Challenges faced by Council	19
Section 5 Potential improvements to the CSP	21
Section 6 Recommendations to the incoming Council	24

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework requires Council to prepare an End of Term (EoT) Report that reports on Council's implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) in achieving its social, environmental, economic and civic leadership objectives over the previous three years. It provides information about how effective the objectives have been, summarises the achievements of Council, identifies key challenges and pressures that Council faced in meeting the objectives, and helps with the review of the CSP.

Council adopted the 2040 CSP on 25 June 2018. The CSP identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area, and takes into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to deliver their long term objectives. The CSP is required to answer the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know we've arrived?

The EoT Report is organised and presented to address the five themes of the 2040 Dubbo Community Strategic Plan:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Economy
- Community Leadership
- Liveability

The objectives in the CSP cover a broad range of Council functions and create a balance for delivering the majority of the actions and initiatives in a sustainable manner. They also acknowledge that some initiatives and actions cannot be delivered entirely by Council, and identify where Council may have an advocacy role on behalf of the community

The newly-elected Council will need to review the existing CSP before 30 June 2022 and either endorse the existing plan, endorse amendments to the existing plan, or develop and endorse a new plan. Council will need to proactively engage with the community after the election, as the CSP seeks to give emphasis to community-led strategy development rather than Council-led. The upcoming review will also provide an opportunity for Council to ensure the existing strategies are still relevant, and create any additional strategies to address emerging trends and issues for the region. A number of strategies may need to be revisited, updated and/or reaffirmed as, with a view to strengthening Council's approach to planning and delivery.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Council adopted the 2040 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) on 25 June 2018. The CSP is the highest level strategy that guides and influences the actions and initiatives of Dubbo Regional Council in partnership with the community, all tiers of government and community stakeholders, over a 22 year period through to 2040.

The CSP identifies the community's vision and main priorities for the Dubbo Region in 2040. It takes into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to deliver their long term objectives.

Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework recognises that Council plans and policies do not exist in isolation and are all connected to deliver community outcomes. The IP&R Framework is demonstrated in the diagram below.

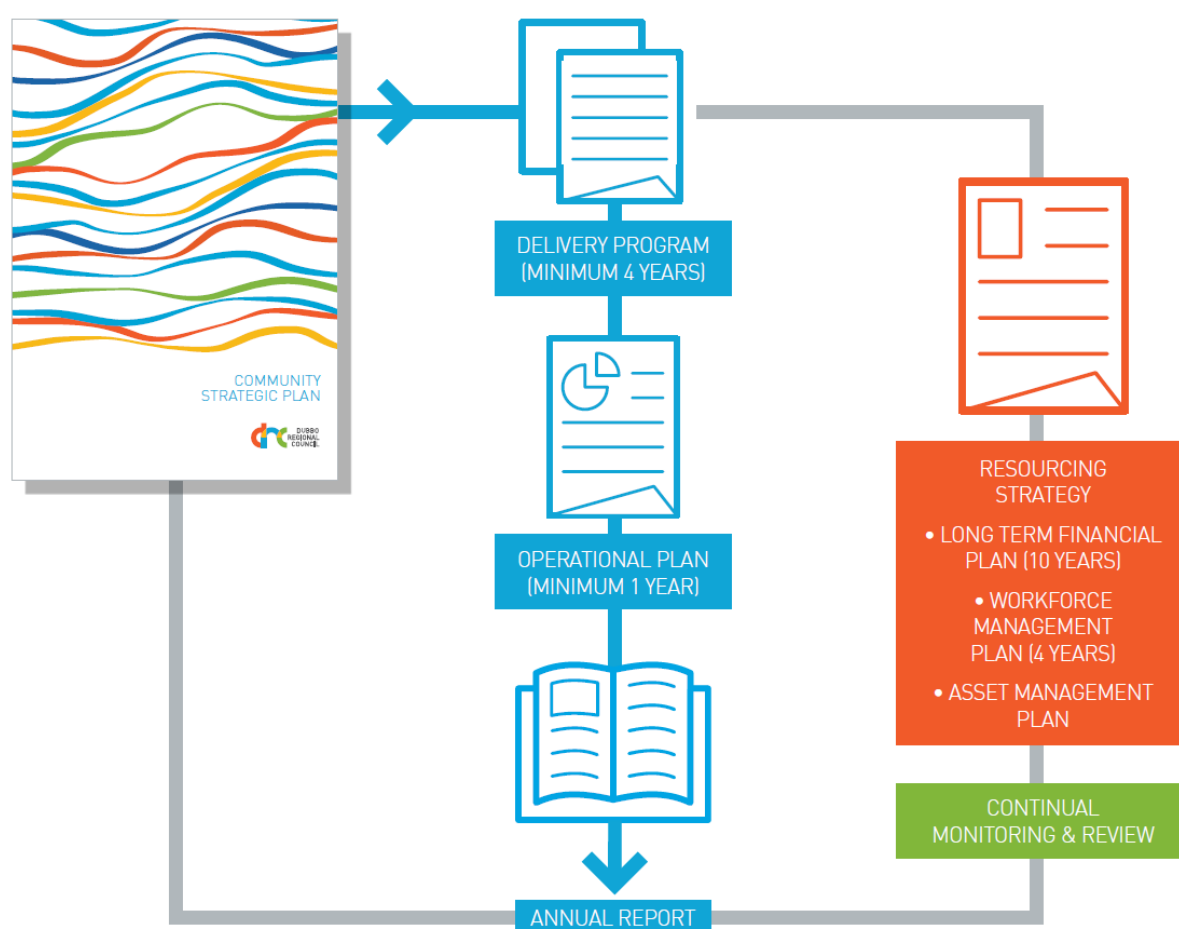


Figure 1: Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Local Government Act 1993 and the IP&R Framework requires Council to prepare an End of Term (EoT) Report that provides an update to the community on how Council has progressed over the last three years towards achieving the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership objectives of the CSP. It provides information about how effective the objectives have been, as well as any key challenges and pressures that Council faced in meeting the

objectives. By measuring our progress, we will be able to understand the answer the question: “How is the Dubbo Region going?”

This report is organised and presented to address the five themes of the 2040 Dubbo Community Strategic Plan:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Economy
- Community Leadership
- Liveability

This report has been prepared for presentation to the final meeting of the outgoing Council before Local Government elections are held in December 2021.

SECTION 2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2040 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2040 CSP is the community's plan, prepared by Council on behalf of the community. It is the first CSP created for the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area, and was informed and guided by the former Dubbo City and Wellington Council's existing plans and consultation with the community and other stakeholders.

2.1.1 Amalgamation of the former Dubbo and Wellington CSPs

Prior to the amalgamation of the former Dubbo City and Wellington Councils, the former Dubbo City Council operated under the Dubbo 2036 CSP, and the former Wellington Council operated under the Wellington 2025 CSP. Both CSPs were supported by a four year Delivery Program and a one year Operational Plan.

Following the amalgamation, both CSPs were still in operation, however, were due for review in July 2016. As a result of the merger, the Delivery Programs and Operational Plans of the two former Councils were harmonised as an interim measure until the new IP&R Framework was developed.

It is acknowledged that significant work went into preparing these documents from both former Councils. Given the extensive consultation and contribution provided by the Dubbo and Wellington communities, this work was used to assist with development of the 2040 CSP.

2.1.2 Community and stakeholder engagement

Preparation of the new CSP commenced with community and stakeholder engagement period 1, which was undertaken between 13 June 2017 and 14 July 2017. This included a number of community summits, regional roadshows, sector-specific stakeholder workshops and 'drop-in' consultation stations. The engagement provided an opportunity for members of the community to discuss and explore positives and negatives of the region, and to provide priorities and strategies for inclusion in the new draft 2040 CSP.

Following preparation of the various components of Council's new IP&R Framework, community and stakeholder engagement period 2 was undertaken between 10 May 2018 and 8 June 2018. This included a number of community summits, regional roadshows, sector-specific stakeholder workshops and 'drop-in' consultation stations.

The draft 2040 CSP was developed based on the submissions received during the community consultation process. The following common themes and values were identified:

- Housing
 - Housing choice;
 - Affordability across our community;
 - Short-term visitor and accommodation;
 - Council's functions in guiding housing; and
 - Strategic and planning control guidance and Council's legislative requirements.
- Infrastructure
 - Provision of local roads;
 - Advocacy for state roads;
 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities;

- Dubbo City Regional Airport and Bodangora Airstrip; and
- Water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure.
- Economy
 - Form and function of our local economy, including the importance of our visitor economy;
 - Key industry sectors and employers – how can we attract further economic development opportunities; and
 - Council as a business owner in the Local Government Area.
- Community Leadership
 - Sustainable use of Council’s resources and asset management;
 - Financial sustainability; and
 - United Council driving our community.
- Liveability
 - Provision of open space and recreation facilities and how we live our lives;
 - Availability of health services and education, community services and associated facilities across our community; and
 - Importance of Indigenous and European heritage and our cultural facilities and assets.

2.1.3 Our community’s vision

Providing a succinct vision statement encourages community ownership and a sense of common purpose. It also helps people focus on wider issues and aspirations for the community and to get in touch with the values and priorities that underpin the planning process.

The CSP identifies the community’s vision and main priorities for the Dubbo Region in 2040 as:

In 2040 we will celebrate our quality of life, the opportunities available for us to grow as a community, our improved natural environment, and being recognised as the inland capital of regional NSW.

The community identified the following aspirations for the growth and development of the Local Government Area:

- Provide for housing choice and housing affordability to meet the needs of our community;
- Achieve ongoing economic prosperity through a diverse employment base and a visitor economy that makes use of our tourism assets;
- Key infrastructure and services are provided to further enhance the quality of life of our community and to maintain economic growth;
- A united and cohesive Council that provides leadership to our community;
- We have access to a range of community, cultural and open space facilities and areas; and
- We value our unique environment and ensure it’s protected for future generations.

SECTION 3 TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

This section identifies the CSP themes and strategies and why they're important to the community, and highlights the key achievements from Council and our partners.

3.1 Theme 1 - Housing

3.1.1 Our Strategies

Residential housing opportunity meets the current and projected needs of our community and facilitates an ultimate population of 100,000	Residential development is well-designed	Residential development opportunities are provided in the villages to facilitate rural lifestyle housing options
An adequate supply of land is maintained close to established community services and facilities	Neighbourhoods are designed and enhanced to ensure social cohesion and connectivity	Opportunities for short-term and visitor accommodation are provided
The importance of the local development industry to the continued residential growth and development of the Local Government Area is recognised		

3.1.2 Why it's important

Access to affordable housing is viewed by the community as a significant benefit of living in the region.

Across Dubbo and Wellington, considerable land is available for the development of housing which could provide in excess of approximately 10,000 dwellings. This includes approximately 7,000 in Dubbo and approximately 3,000 in Wellington. Significant residential development opportunity is available across many of the villages. However, the availability of land is only one component of the housing spectrum. It is also important to examine housing choice, affordability and the availability of public housing and crisis accommodation for our community.

Council has a number of roles across the housing spectrum, including identifying land for housing and streamlining planning processes, to setting appropriate local policy positions through planning instruments, to assessing applications, and building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders.

Council also has a role in articulating and negotiating with government in respect of the need and demand for public housing and crisis accommodation.

3.1.3 Council's progress

Overall development approvals

There has been a steady increase in the development sector over the past three years. Council approved over 2,300 applications to assist in the delivery of a liveable and distinctive built environment. 589 approvals were for new single dwellings, 1,029 approvals were for

alterations to an existing single dwelling, and 63 approvals were for dual occupancies and secondary dwellings.

Housing availability and affordability

Council can impact the nature, quality, timing, supply, amenity, and the cost of housing and development within the region through land use definitions, rating policy, the development consent process and partnerships with other government agencies and local organisations.

In 2021 Council hosted a housing availability forum to bring together members of the community, government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and local experts to discuss housing availability in the region. The forum discussed the various aspects of affordable housing and the role Council can play in easing the affordability crisis.

Managing urban change

Council has a suite of planning controls, guidelines and initiatives that address challenges associated with population growth and urban change. Council's approach includes:

- Protecting features and attributes that are important to the community through statutory controls;
- Encouraging and guiding appropriate development through development controls, policies and guidelines; and
- Establishing reference groups and working parties to consult with the local community and broader local government sector about important development matters.

Following the amalgamation of the former Dubbo City and Wellington Councils, Council undertook an operational review of the Wellington Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 to work towards harmonising the planning controls across the region. The operational review amended and addressed any administrative concerns and provided a level of parity between the provisions of the Wellington LEP 2012 and the Dubbo LEP 2011. The gazettal of the Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2021 is expected to occur in late 2021, and it will represent a significant review of land use planning in the region. The exhibition and ultimate gazettal will see land use planning well placed for the future.

Residential land development

Council is committed to ensuring the region remains an affordable place to live and work. Council developed land in Keswick Estate to provide affordable entry into the residential market for home buyers, in a location close to retail and medical services. Council also owns land in the north-west urban release area which is intended to be developed for residential purposes.

Central West and Orana Regional Plan (CWORP)

The Dubbo region is part of the Central West and Orana Region established by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Council participated in meetings with the Department about the five-yearly review of the CWORP.

Council is participating in Technical Working Groups and workshops with the Central West and Orana Councils to identify the issues the plan will need to tackle so that future development and growth in the region responds to the needs of current and future residents.

3.2 Theme 2 - Infrastructure

3.2.1 Our Strategies

Opportunities for use of renewable energy are increased	Our road transportation network is safe, convenient and efficient	Infrastructure meets the current and future needs of our community
Our transportation networks are planned to accommodate future growth and development of the Local Government Area	Our diverse transportation system supports connections within and outside the region	Community and business have access to the highest standard of telecommunications networks and facilities

3.2.2 Why it's important

Infrastructure provision provides some of the very foundations of our community and the services that we rely upon every day. Traditional infrastructure includes transportation in the form of roads, pedestrian and cycle facilities, reticulated sewer and water supply, stormwater drainage, waste and recycling facilities and a street lighting system that aims to deliver a safe environment for our community.

Our community benefits from our geographical location at the centre of NSW with Dubbo forming the junction of three highways. The region has access to Sydney through a daily train service and access to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Newcastle from the Dubbo City Regional Airport. The community also has access to the Bodangora Airstrip which provides general aviation facilities and is a vital asset for the Wellington community.

Dubbo has benefited from the initial roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN). However, the CSP recognises that we must advocate to government for NBN to be provided in Wellington and for NBN and an improved mobile phone service to be available in our villages and rural areas.

The LGA has one of the highest take-up rates for solar energy provision in Australia. The CSP recognises that our community, business and industry understand the financial and environmental benefits of renewable energies and the role it can play in our sustainable future.

The provision and maintenance of infrastructure is a key consideration for Council and the community over time in both Dubbo and Wellington. The provision of appropriate infrastructure provides economic development opportunity and ensures our community can continue to benefit.

3.2.3 Council's progress

Infrastructure and asset renewal

Council has a direct role in the provision of transport infrastructure in partnership with Commonwealth and State Government agencies, including roads, footpaths, bike paths and bus shelters. Council delivered an expanded asset renewal program whilst continuing to reduce the infrastructure renewal backlog. Funding required to maintain, renew and upgrade our infrastructure was revised annually from Council's asset registers, asset management plans and asset management strategy.

Made road safety a priority

Council manages and maintains over 2700km of roads, and has an ongoing program of renewal and improvement works for the road network. New roads were constructed, existing roads were resurfaced and regraded, traffic calming measures and pedestrian safety refuges were installed in strategic locations, and new kerb and guttering was built across the region.

Reduced waste going to landfill

Council continued to work with residents and businesses to deliver environmentally responsible and sustainable waste management solutions. Council educated the community on how to make long-term changes to reduce unnecessary waste and reuse and renew valuable resources that would otherwise be sent to landfill.

Renewed our stormwater network

Council has an ongoing program of renewal and improvement works for its stormwater network. These works are critical to ensure Council's stormwater network operates efficiently.

Council installed new gross pollutant traps on pipe outfalls in both Dubbo and Wellington. This has resulted in a total of approximately 400Ha of urbanised stormwater catchments to be treated that were not previously. This is a great result for both Dubbo and Wellington communities, as there could be up to 100 tonnes of additional gross pollutants removed from the Macquarie River system per year, resulting in a much healthier river system.

Water saving

Council is responsible for providing a safe, reliable and cost effective water supply which is customer focused, enhances the local environment, and caters for the sustainable growth in the region.

In 2020 Council adopted the Drought Contingency and Water Emergency Response Plan, which aims to identify the strategic mechanisms for managing water supply in the region. The key aim of the Plan is to ensure the community recognises the issues associated with drought management and their role in supporting Council's actions during a drought.

In 2020 Council commenced installing Smart water meters as part of our commitment to enhancing sustainability and changing behaviours in relation to water use. The meters regularly report water usage which allows Council and the community to highlight any issues or trends to better manage the water network.

Energy saving

Council operates a number of facilities across the region and is progressively reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency, and increasing the use and adoption of renewable energy resources and sustainable transport. A range of initiatives include installing solar power systems, upgrading street lights, reducing fuel use, and supporting energy smart communities.

3.3 Theme 3 - Economy

3.3.1 Our Strategies

Visitor economy growth is supported through product development, enhancement and strategic management	Employment opportunities are available in all sectors of our economy	The opportunities and benefits of living, working and visiting the region are promoted
A strong agricultural sector with a continuing capacity to be a significant contributor to the local, regional and national economy is encouraged	The long-term economic growth of the Local Government Area is realised	The Local Government Area is recognised as a leading regional centre in Australia through the development of a united and positive image of the region
A strategic framework is in place to maximise the realisation of economic development opportunities for the region	The Dubbo Central Business District and the Wellington Town Centre are strategically managed to promote occupation, activity and investment	The importance of the local development industry to the continued growth and development of the Local Government Area is recognised

3.3.2 Why it's important

The region benefits from its strategic location in the centre of NSW and being located at the junction of the Golden, Newell and Mitchell highways. The region also benefits from connections offered by the Dubbo City Regional Airport to Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Newcastle. The region is also traversed by the Main Western Rail Line which provides connections for both passengers and freight to Sydney and beyond. The region will also have the benefit of being within close proximity to the Brisbane to Melbourne Inland Rail. The strategic location of the region and the significant infrastructure and transport connections in place provide the very foundations for the development of a diverse regional economy.

Over time, the focus of the region's economy has shifted to be strongly reliant on robust service, health and education sectors. This is reflective of the role the region now plays in servicing a significant percentage of western NSW.

The region includes significant tourism assets which serve to drive the visitor economy and attract significant numbers of both domestic and overseas tourists. The region boasts the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Wellington Caves and the Old Dubbo Gaol as prime tourist attractions.

Council has a role in providing leadership in the region to both promote the significant economic development opportunities available and to partner with existing business, industry and providers to ensure our workforce has the appropriate range of skills and experience to meet industry demands.

3.3.3 Council's progress

Established partnerships with local businesses

Council continued to create and promote strong and effective relationships with local businesses and organisations to help strengthen the economy. Council's Destination Partnership Program and associated marketing campaigns targeted the visitor, new resident and events markets, with inclusion in printed and digital guides to build destination appeal and encourage visitation and investment. The profile of local businesses were increased through promotional opportunities on Sunrise, the Today Show, The Amazing Race Australia and multiple newspapers and traveller magazines. In addition, the MyDubbo Region Program continued to grow with new businesses signing up and expenditure increasing, with 159 businesses signed up and over \$261,260 in expenditure.

In 2017 Council supported the Regional Economic Development Strategy, and in 2020 adopted the Dubbo Regional Economic Recovery Strategy, which aim to reflect the economic needs and opportunities of the region, and assist the fiscal recovery by targeting regional jobs, investment and industry recovery. The Strategies were developed with input from industry stakeholders and analysis of data to identify Council's role and responsibilities in the delivery of economic development activities.

Increased visitors and tourism opportunities.

Council successfully delivered events with regional and national prominence, which significantly increased visitation numbers. Marketing campaigns were undertaken to encourage visitation from residents in the Western Region, with geotargeting undertaken for residents within a four-to-five hour drive and from key metro locations in Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra. Marketing activity also utilised the Dubbo Region Great Big Adventure Pass, with over 4,520 passes sold since its introduction in September 2019.

Destination marketing activity throughout 2020-21 contributed to strong visitation trends in the region in the wake of COVID-19, with local attractions and accommodating bookings reporting record visitation numbers in the past 12 months.

Town Centre revitalisation

Council delivered strategies and activation projects to help revitalise the region's commercial centres. Council's Ignite Program was specially designed to support commercial and social activation across the Dubbo and Wellington Central Business Districts. Council facilitated multiple placemaking activities including activating empty shopfronts in Wellington and Dubbo, providing assistance for community events and markets, promoting activities and creating ambience in the CBD, promoting Christmas and other events, and creating augmented reality games to leverage tourist visitation.

In 2021 Council adopted the Wellington Town Centre Plan, which aims to revitalise the Wellington Town Centre and establish a vision for its future. The key aim of the Plan is to create a safe, attractive and vibrant town centre for the future, as a successful town centre will provide benefits for the local community, local businesses and the region.

Positive procurement practices

In 2020 Council adopted the Local Purchasing Policy, which aims to ensure Council's procurement undertaking encourages and supports local suppliers and economic activity within the region. The key aim of the Policy is to create a framework that ensures Council gives due consideration in all procurements to the benefits of supporting local businesses, by sourcing goods and services locally and for best value (where possible).

Dubbo City Regional Airport

In 2019 the Dubbo City Regional Airport was awarded the Large Regional Airport of the Year for strategic planning, significant airside infrastructure developments and stakeholder engagement. The airport has undergone significant renovations including runway upgrades, construction of aeromedical and RFS training facilities, and general aviation improvements. Upgrades to the airport allowed it to accommodate a growth in services, with flights reintroduced to destinations such as Cobar, Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge, and a trial program introduced for direct flights between Dubbo and Ballina. The trial proved so popular that additional flights were scheduled and the trial program was extended.

3.4 Theme 4 - Community Leadership

3.4.1 Our Strategies

Our community is active and engaged	Our civic leaders represent the community
The resources of Council are appropriately managed	Statutory requirements are met and services are provided to the organisation in a cost-effective and timely manner

3.4.2 Why it's important

Community Leadership is an important term that aims to ensure the delivery of the actions and initiatives provided by the community is achieved across a variety of connected stakeholders, including all levels of government, our community and other interconnected service providers. Importantly, our civic leaders are the champions of Council's IP&R Framework and the effective liaison between the community and Council.

Most importantly, community leadership ensures that Council can continue to operate within its means and ensure our income streams, including land rates, are treated with respect and value for money is sought across all of Council's processes and actions, including the actions and initiatives identified by the community.

The CSP recognises that limited funds are available to deliver all of the identified actions and initiatives which means that Council cannot deliver all actions and initiatives. The CSP will take our community to 2040. It is important in this period that we have a view on the future whilst ensuring we continue to leverage and maintain our existing community assets.

3.4.3 Council's progress

Services to the community

Council has made service improvements that have filled gaps in the service delivery of the former Dubbo City and Wellington Councils, completed major capital works, and engaged with the community to develop a shared direction of the region.

Aboriginal employment and electoral opportunities

In 2021 Council prepared an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which aims to enhance career pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, support and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, and create and maintain a culturally safe environment. The knowledge, skills and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people provides a rich learning environment for Council.

In 2021 Council endorsed an Aboriginal Electoral Engagement Strategy, which aims to increase the Indigenous enrolment rate in the region, increase Indigenous voter participation in the region, and reduce obstacles to indigenous representation on Dubbo Regional Council.

Welcomed thousands of new citizens

Council welcomed new citizens into our community each year through citizenship ceremonies. The citizens came from many different countries, adding to the diversity of our community.

Engaged with our community

Council recognises the strong need to engage with the community and all external stakeholders to provide information about Council's activities, programs, achievements and facilities. Council actively uses a range of methods to share information. Council is continuing to focus efforts on determining local priorities and gaining community feedback on issues facing the region.

In 2019 Council conducted a Community Needs and Satisfaction Survey to track Council's performance in service delivery, identify priority areas and community needs, and evaluate Council's customer service levels. The findings were used to inform future decision making regarding Council's operations and areas for improved performance. Ongoing research and consultation about community priorities and views is an essential part of our commitment.

In 2019 Council adopted the Community Participation Plan, which identifies how and when Council will engage with the community across relevant planning functions. The planning functions referred to include development applications lodged with Council, and strategic planning matters including Local Strategic Planning Statements, Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans, strategic land use plans and policies.

In 2021 Council adopted a Customer Experience Charter to ensure our community receives proficient, responsive and friendly service at every opportunity. The Charter details our commitment to provide quality customer service, and provides clear standards for our staff to strive for service excellence in achieving Council's vision.

Took steps to secure our future

In response to the pressures on Council's overall financial position, Councillors and staff worked together to understand and consider options and solutions to address the region's long-term financial position. Council has a strong commitment to maintaining delivery of services to the community in an effective and efficient manner. Council has maintained a healthy financial position in each year, and took steps to maintain this position during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Integrated Business Systems

In 2017 Council commenced operating a single integrated Corporate Business System, which provides a unified interface for staff operating across all Council offices. This successful outcome was the result of detailed planning, reviewing existing systems in both former Councils and months of software development, data migration and testing. In addition, Council implemented additional software modules to improve security and governance in managing financial services and reduce processing times.

Council staff

As a result of the Council amalgamation, Council has a mix of educated and experienced staff from former Councils and outside of the area. This workforce has allowed for a creative and collaborative approach to providing high quality services and programs to ratepayers. Council's workforce and succession planning also ensures the skills and experience levels are maintained when people retire.

3.5 Theme 5 - Liveability

3.5.1 Our Strategies

Our City, town and villages are well-maintained, welcoming, showcase their heritage and what they have to offer	The health of the community is maintained and enhanced	The lifestyle and social needs of the community are supported
The community has access to a full range of educational opportunities	The community has the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle, sporting and passive recreational pursuits	We are a safe and healthy community
The high profile of existing cultural services and facilities is maintained	The diversity of our heritage is maintained and promoted	Environmental sustainability is a priority
The quality of our environment and lifestyle is enhanced by the provision of environmental education and regulation		

3.5.2 Why it's important

The quality of life our community enjoys comprises a number of interconnected components. Our quality of life and the liveability of our community is underpinned by a number of key elements that include access to health care, education, community protection, recreation and open space areas, an understanding of our past in terms of Aboriginal and European heritage, public health and safety and the sustainable enjoyment of our natural environment.

Council has a community leadership role in ensuring the population is provided with services and facilities equitable with those provided in other local government areas. However, it should also be recognised that for a number of services and facilities which add to the liveability of our region, Council has an advocacy role with government and other service providers.

Our community has access to a unique range of arts and cultural facilities and parks and recreation facilities which are unparalleled in regional NSW.

Crime and safety is viewed by our community as a significant issue. This includes the 24-hour availability of police services in Wellington and the provision and maintenance of the safety camera system in Dubbo and Wellington.

Our community understands the need for all levels of government to address issues of crime and drug dependency across the region and the need for a dedicated Drug Court, Youth Koori Court and residential drug rehabilitation facilities in the region.

It is acknowledged that the redevelopment of the Dubbo Base Hospital is continuing however, it is unclear as to the long term intentions of government for the Wellington Hospital.

The health of the Bell, Macquarie and Talbragar rivers and associated environments is an important issue for the community. In addition, the continued conservation of our unique, natural environment and the further education of our community in the importance of

environmental issues will ensure we sustainably manage our environment for future generations.

3.5.3 Council's progress

Grants for community organisations and events

Council coordinated and administered financial assistance, community services, community benefit and event assistance grants to provide assistance to local community organisations, not-for-profit organisations, sporting groups and businesses that make a difference in their local area. These grants and assistance programs aim to:

- Support projects or programs that create, enhance or build community well-being and amenity;
- Support projects or programs that deliver social, cultural or environmental benefits;
- Provide financial assistance for projects and programs that support Council in the delivery of actions under the Community Strategic Plan;
- Assist not-for-profit organisations to defray costs associated with hiring Council venues or procurement of services provided by Council relating to an event located on Council property; or
- Support the development, growth and sustainability of local events.

Health, Education and Well-Being Precinct Master Plan

Council partnered with Charles Sturt University and the Western NSW Local Health District to prepare of a Master Plan for the Dubbo Health, Education and Well Being Precinct. Located just 2.5km from the Dubbo CBD, the master plan aims to create synergies between the various health, aged care, education and recreational uses and facilitate the precinct's capacity to become a significant employment generator.

Safeguarding the community

Emergency management covers the plans, structures and arrangements that are established to deal with emergency needs, including prevention, response and recovery. Council continues to provide administrative and strategic support to the Rural Fire Services (RFS) and State Emergency Services (SES).

Council continuously works toward common RFS and SES goals with and for the benefit of the community. These organisations include thousands of unpaid volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and professions who respond to emergencies and disasters 24/7 across NSW. The support received is vital in providing the necessary services and assistance to the community.

Upgraded playgrounds and sporting facilities

In 2019 Council adopted the Recreation Strategy 2030, which aims to provide accessible, diverse, safe and appealing open space networks. The key aim of the Strategy is to guide the future planning and delivery of recreation to ensure the community has access to healthy and vibrant lifestyles. Council continues to invest significantly in the on-going renewal and upgrading of our playgrounds and sports fields across the region.

In 2019 Council installed the Adventure Playground in the Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden. The playground offers approximately 40 play elements, and has been designed to be inclusive of all abilities. It also fosters intergenerational interaction, with a seniors fitness area located nearby.

Disability improvements

Council's adopted 2017-2020 and draft 2022-2025 Disability Inclusion Action Plans outline Council's plans to assist in the removal of barriers so that people living with a disability have a better opportunity to live a meaningful life and enjoy the full benefits of membership in the community. The Plans were developed through feedback and public consultation with residents in the region. In conjunction with these Plans, Council established the Disability Access Infrastructure Fund to enhance infrastructure.

Health facilities

In 2019 Council secured \$3m through the Commonwealth Government Community Health and Hospitals Program for a residential rehabilitation Alcohol and Other Drug facility. Council also developed a concerted advocacy campaign resulting in the NSW Government committing \$7.5m towards construction and programming of a facility. Council has committed to gifting land for the initiative and continues to work with the NSW Government and external stakeholders to undertake suitable preliminary planning.

Cultural facilities

Council continually leveraged cultural facilities and programs to help activate and celebrate the culture of the region. In 2020 Council adopted a Cultural Plan, which aims to guide the strategic development of culture in the region. The key aim of the Plan is to build, activate, celebrate and promote the role that culture plays in the region, and create cultural programs and services in response to identified community needs.

In 2019 Council was successful in receiving funding for the 'Destination Dubbo – International Ready' Project, which aims to capitalise on Dubbo's natural, cultural and heritage endowments. It involves the creation of three new cultural tourism precincts to showcase Dubbo to the rest of Australia and the world. The cultural precincts are the development of a public heritage plaza at the Old Dubbo Gaol, the construction of a Wiradjuri Tourism Centre and the activation of the Macquarie River Foreshore. The project has been developed in partnership with its creative and cultural partners to integrate significant cultural story and representation, and is on-track to be completed by late 2022.

Energy Strategy and Implementation Plan

In 2020 Council adopted the Energy Strategy and Implementation Plan, which aims to support and guide Council in reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency, increasing the use and adoption of renewable energy resources and sustainable transport while taking into account the needs and desires of a growing community. The Strategy and Implementation Plan also seeks to support the local community in becoming energy smart.

SECTION 4 CHALLENGES FACED BY COUNCIL

4.1 Drought

Council experienced one of the most severe droughts on record in 2019. Water restrictions were introduced to protect the region's water supply, but the region contains a large amount of businesses that rely on water. Keeping people employed and businesses open was essential so that they can continue to contribute to the economy.

The drought and associated challenges provided Council with the opportunity to work with the community to understand the potential impacts of droughts, and identify solutions that are timely, well considered and seek long-term innovative solutions to securing water.

Council responded to the drought by investigating and developing a fully integrated, innovative and sustainable water supply network to meet the community's long term need of water for the future. Council also established the Drought Coordinated Response Team, which aimed to better prepare the community, businesses, and Council operations for increased water restrictions.

4.2 COVID-19 pandemic

2020 and 2021 were challenging years for Council and many businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions placed on everyday operations. The pandemic impacted Council in the following ways:

- Models of delivery had to change for many divisions, with many community facilities closing or transitioning to online service models;
- Council provided financial support where possible, and provided information about various government support packages; and
- Council faced a reduced cash position and projection, which required constant monitoring and appraisal to ensure Council remained as financially sound as possible in order to provide services to the community. Whilst Council absorbed significant financial losses as a result of COVID-19, there was a strong commitment to maintain delivery of services to the community.

COVID-19 impacted residential property prices and rental vacancies as a result of people moving to the region. Improved working from home capabilities and lower base prices were a major driving force of people moving to the region. The lack of properties for sale and rent relative to buyers caused house prices to rise quickly. Council's role in housing supply involves facilitating an appropriate supply and mix of housing to meet community needs and to develop strategies and policies that encourage the construction of affordable housing. Council is in an ideal position to review its land use planning program and contributions framework to further encourage the supply of higher density development and in some instances to respond to changes in State Government policy. However, it must also be acknowledged that housing supply is a function of market demand. Council can only create the conditions for developers to provide alternative housing types, as market demand needs to drive the delivery of housing choice.

COVID-19 disrupted the region's economy in substantial ways as a result of restrictions, reduced discretionary spending, compulsory business and industry closures, and changing consumer habits. Different industries have been impacted in different ways, through supply chain restraints or shortages in the supply of skills and labour. In response, Council

established an Economic Recovery Taskforce, which included industry representatives of sectors of the economy most impacted by COVID-19. These industry leaders represented their industry in a holistic way to ensure an informed, responsible and sustainable economic recovery. The Taskforce helped develop the Dubbo Regional Economic Recovery Strategy, which focused on the recovery of the Dubbo Region economy by targeting regional jobs, regional investment and industry recovery.

SECTION 5 POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CSP

The upcoming review will provide an opportunity for Council to ensure the existing strategies are still relevant, and create any additional strategies to address emerging trends and issues for the region. A number of strategies may need to be revisited, updated and/or reaffirmed as, with a view to strengthening Council's approach to planning and delivery.

5.1 Social

Council's philosophy in providing services and facilities is to ensure people live fulfilled lives and enjoy life to the fullest. The CSP currently addresses the following social issues through a variety of strategies:

- Housing needs
- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Employment
- Child Care
- Transport
- Safety
- Recreation
- Culture
- Disability access

Due to resource constraints and priorities, Council has limited ability to provide services and facilities for every person and their personal needs and requirements. Council, in partnership with associated organisations, must continue to advocate for and ensure there is an equitable provision of services to the vulnerable and disadvantaged and those people with special needs, so all people in the community can live healthy, harmonious, stimulating and fulfilling lives.

The provision of a healthy human environment must also be guided by the community's expectations, needs and desires with the resources that they are prepared to pay to facilitate this environment. It is certainly not possible for Council with the resources available to address each and every human service requirement in the region. The CSP must endeavour to address the key items which have the greatest impact on the community, and establish partnerships to ensure these services can be provided.

The review of Council's IP&R Framework will provide an opportunity to leverage the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), which is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. It seeks to summarise the socio-economic conditions of an area using relevant information from the Census. The indexes provide information about the area in which a person lives, but within any area there are likely to be households, families and individuals with different characteristics to the overall population of that area.

Common uses of SEIFA include:

- Determining areas that require funding and services;
- Identifying business opportunities; and
- Researching the relationship between socio-economic and various health and educational outcomes.

5.2 Our Environment

The climate of Australia, and the rest of the world, is changing with many extreme weather events observed since the 1950s. The 2018 Local Government NSW's Climate Change Adaptation Survey indicated that the overwhelming majority of local governments are currently experiencing impacts from climate change. Councils completing the survey indicated that storms and flooding were the most common climate impacts, while extreme heat and drought have the most severe impacts. Concerns about impacts on assets and infrastructure, biodiversity and landscapes and general environmental health were high, as were the demands for emergency services, impacts on public safety and water supply/demand.

Council will need to address the increased risks that climate change poses to its assets, operations and people as it is often the first level of government that communities turn to in an extreme climate event. The review of Council's IP&R Framework will provide an opportunity to consult the community to identify any community specific climate change priorities, risks and treatments that could be incorporated into the CSP.

5.3 Civic leadership

Civic leadership and participation involves community and stakeholder engagement and communication to set a vision and strategic direction for the region. A key element of civic participation is the involvement of individuals and their elected representatives in making decisions about issues that affect them and their lives.

The review of Council's IP&R Framework will provide an opportunity to ensure the vision for the region in 2040 and beyond is still applicable.

5.4 Economic

Council's key priorities include growing our local economy, increasing employment and investment opportunities, attracting business investment into the region, and reinvigorating the region's prosperity. Supporting the growth of employment is a core part of building resilience and creating social and economic benefits for people. Participation in employment also strengthens the sense of community. Council advocates on behalf of local businesses, and for further education and training opportunities.

Council must create new partnerships, whilst strengthening existing relationships, to increase employment opportunities and options, and address the demographic challenges of the region.

5.5 Consolidation of similar strategies

When developing the 2040 Community Strategic Plan, it was important not to lose sight of the significant community input and actions from previous iterations of the Dubbo and Wellington plans and to build on their success in driving and maintaining the region as a great place to live, work and play. This resulted in some strategies and actions having similar outcomes that focused separately on the Dubbo and Wellington regions.

Council should consider consolidating similar strategies and broaden their focus to place greater emphasis on regional planning rather than location-based planning.

5.6 Performance reporting

The purpose of implementing a CSP is to bring positive changes to the community, so it is important to regularly check whether or not the community is making progress towards achieving these goals.

Council continually reports on activities and outputs, but reporting on outcomes and performance can potentially help the community better understand what services are being delivered, how effectively and efficiently they are being delivered, and what improvements are being made. However, a challenge associated with this type of reporting is identifying which indicators or methods of evaluating performance to use, and how and where to gather the information.

5.7 Partnerships with external stakeholders

The review should aim for outcomes to be delivered by a partnership between individuals, community groups, state agencies and Council. Creating these partnerships will also help the CSP to be a live document that is constantly referred to and reviewed.

SECTION 6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INCOMING COUNCIL

The incoming Council will need to review the existing CSP before 30 June 2022 and either endorse the existing plan, endorse amendments to the existing plan, or develop and endorse a new plan. Council will need to proactively engage with the community after the election, as the CSP seeks to give emphasis to community-led strategy development rather than Council-led.

The review will need to ensure that partners are identified and involved in the development and implementation. There are mutual benefits for Council and Government agencies, non-Government agencies and community groups in working together to deliver services for the community. To work effectively, it is important to build on established relationships and utilise existing forums to identify common goals and potential partnerships.

An important part of gathering information is to look at existing and proposed plans, strategies and other sources of information to see what has been highlighted before and what is planned for the future. Issues might be identified in these other plans, and if they are relevant to the community, they might need to be incorporated into the CSP.

The review presents an opportunity for Council to explore ways in which relevant forms of information and knowledge from both top-down sources (such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics) and bottom-up sources (such as local knowledge emerging from the community engagement process) can be blended to create optimal community outcomes.