



FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE CONSULTATION CRITICAL FOR PLAN

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions across the state, face-to-face community consultation and engagement is making a return as one of the ways Council communicates with the community. While COVID-19 precautions and best practices will remain in place during any face-to-face consultation, a blend of ‘traditional’ and ‘online’ interactions will be critical for future community engagement. The first cab off the rank with this in mind is the community consultation being sought for the 2040 Community Strategic Plan.

“The previous Council at its meeting on 25 October 2021, resolved to update and extend the current Community Strategic Plan and supporting documents for the next 12 months, with extensive community consultation and additional changes made prior to July 2023,” said Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Mathew Dickerson. “This was in response to the high number of COVID-19 cases in the region at the time, with Council prioritising operations and communications with the community about the importance of staying home, staying safe, and

getting vaccinated.”

“With restrictions easing, it is critical we get back to re-establishing better community consultation; updating and reviewing the Community Strategic Plan is a key project. Also critical, we do this consultation face-to-face where possible and provide that ‘human interaction’, while offering an online option and making use of available technology to better engage with the community.”

“Councillors play a key role in advocating for the community when it comes to services and facilities. To better understand the community’s needs and aspirations, Councillors recognise the importance of face-to-face communications, said Mayor Dickerson. “That’s why as a united group of elected representatives, we’re committed to making sure people can speak with us directly without fear or favour, and we can ‘champion’ the community’s future needs and aspirations through a critical framework like the Community Strategic Plan.”

Dubbo Regional Council’s Community Strategic Plan is the highest level strategy that guides and influences the actions and initiatives of Council in partnership with the community, state and federal governments through to 2040. In essence, it’s a community-driven ‘blueprint’ for Council to work to, and advocate for, on behalf of the entire community.

“In reality, 2040 is not that far away,” said Manager for Growth Planning, Steven Jennings. “Kids who are in primary school now will be in their mid-20s by then, some of whom by 2040 will either be raising families or considering starting a family. Some of our older kids now may go on to have careers that take them further afield, but they may return to settle down later in life and bring their skills and experience back to the region.”

“In that time, the region will be a very different place, just like the region now is vastly different compared to 20 years ago. The plans we contribute to and develop now will support our future generations that will call the Dubbo region home.”

“Similarly, the older generation of today, can play a significant role in helping us to prepare our communities for the next generation we will see 20 years in to the future. In reality, that’s most of us who are currently at the midway or latter point in our working careers,” said Mr Jennings. “What will the region offer the next generation of retirees or older citizens? Will there be the right services and infrastructure in place? We all have a role to play in shaping the future now for the next generation, as well as planning for our own generation’s future needs.”

For further information on Dubbo Regional Council’s 2040 Community Strategic Plan, and for information on how to take part in the community consultation process, visit Council’s website www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au. Face-to-face and online community consultation will run throughout March, with submissions on the draft updated 2040 Community Strategic Plan currently on public exhibition closing on Friday 8 April 2022.

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