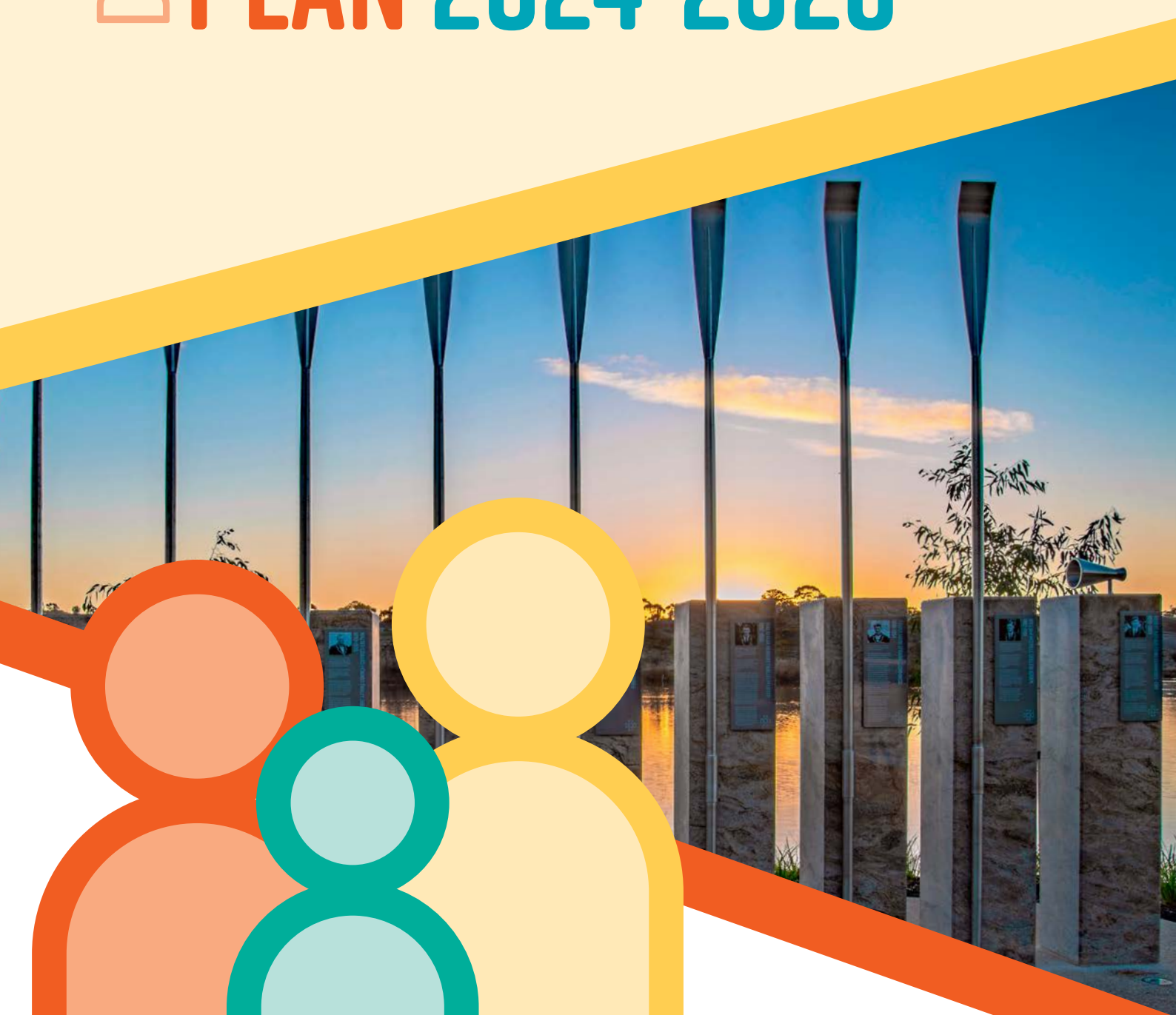


THE RURAL CITY OF MURRAY BRIDGE

DRAFT STRATEGIC
PLAN 2024-2028



GROWING. THRIVING. STRONG.





We acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people as the traditional owners of this land on which we meet and work. We respect and acknowledge their spiritual connection as the custodians of this land and that their cultural heritage beliefs are still important to the living people today.

We recognise the living culture and combined energies of the Ngarrindjeri people, our global pioneers and community members today for their unique contribution to the life of our region.

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MAYOR AND CEO MESSAGE

It's an exciting time to be part of the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

We are a community on the cusp of significant growth with development that will strengthen our position as the regional heart of the Murraylands.

This Draft Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028 sets out how Council will actively prepare for the growth of our rural city, a critical phase toward our shared vision of Thriving Communities.

It's time to take the leap forward with our community and partners – industry, government and service providers – to maximise opportunities for our diverse communities and economy and enhance our lifestyle and environment.

We are proud to have shaped this plan with our community, Elected Members and staff. We listened to our community during an extensive engagement process and this Draft Plan reflects their ideas and embraces their strong identity and spirit.

There is an important alignment between what we heard from our community and partners. The SA Government has identified our rural city as a growth area and satellite city in the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan. Industry and developers are investing and want to be here. Our community told us it wants well planned growth that complements the rural and river lifestyle and brings community and economic benefits.

This Plan will provide direction for decision making and how we prioritise efforts and resources in actively managing the growth of our rural city. As a Council we must be flexible, agile and continually reflect on our approach, to ensure we're meeting the needs of our growing communities.

We thank our community for their contributions in shaping this Draft Strategic Plan and welcome your feedback to make sure we've got it right.

WAYNE THORLEY
Mayor

HEATHER BARCLAY
Chief Executive Officer





OUR RURAL CITY

A thriving rural city on the banks of the picturesque Murray River.

The regional heart of the Murraylands.

A region on the cusp of significant growth.

A blend of rural and rural residential communities and rapidly growing urban areas.

A destination with something for everyone.

Our well-loved river and natural landscapes supporting recreational and tourism experiences.



Local business
1,399



Local jobs
10,382

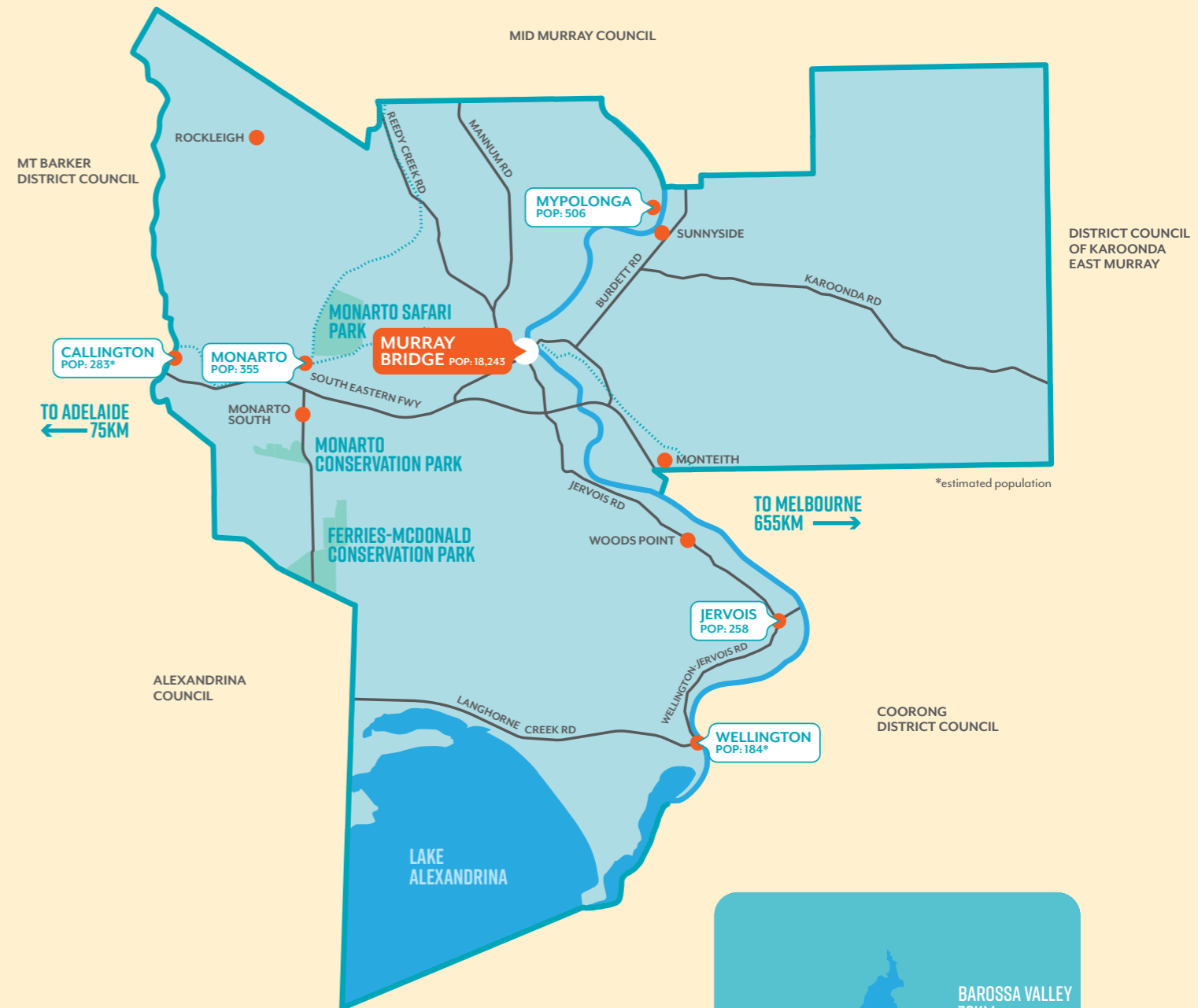
We work in health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing and agriculture, forestry and fishing.



Iconic Murray Bridge Road Bridge completed in 1879



Covers an area of approximately **1,832 sq/km**



65 km length of the Murray River travels through our rural city.

Located **80 km** south-east of Adelaide and less than an hour from the Adelaide CBD.





OUR COMMUNITY

We take great pride in the Murray River (the Murrundi), it is part of us all.

We are friendly, supportive and full of community spirit.

We are a diverse and welcoming community.

We are home to the Ngarrindjeri people and many different cultures who have chosen to call Murray Bridge home.

We value our rural atmosphere and laid back lifestyle.



Median Age
43 years old



Household type
Couples with children 22%
Couples without children 27%
One parent families 12%
Lone person households 30%



5.6% of our community are First Nations people



13% of our community were born overseas
Top 5 birth places (other than Australia) are the UK, Philippines, China, New Zealand and Vietnam.



68.7% of the people that work within our rural city also live here.

OUR COUNCIL

Our community is at the heart of our decisions and actions every day.

We take great pride in our work and culture.

We are focused on preparing for the growth of our rural city.

We are committed to financial sustainability and providing value and quality services to our community.

We embrace our role as a regional leader in the Murraylands.

We partner with neighbouring Councils, Government, service providers and industry for the benefit of the region.



Elected Members **10**



Council employees **205**

Approximately 1/3 work at Lerwin Aged Care Facility



Registered volunteers with Council **225**



57% of Council employees are local residents



We value working with our community and the contributions they make across our rural city.

OUR SHARED VISION THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Our **Community Plan 2016 – 2032** reflects our community's aspirations and sets out a shared vision of **Thriving Communities**.

The plan was developed through an extensive community engagement process in 2015 where over 3,500 comments and ideas were shared culminating in the vision. Council is committed to the delivery of this vision over 16 years, through four strategic plans.

The development of the 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan was guided by the four Community Plan themes that define what our Thriving Communities will see and experience. They are:

GREAT PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLE

Where people are friendly, living well and enjoying all the region has to offer.

People thrive when they experience great people and lifestyle.

DYNAMIC ECONOMY

Where people, business and industry are seizing opportunities to learn, earn and grow.

People thrive when they participate in a dynamic economy.

VALUED ENVIRONMENT

Well cared for river, green spaces and built and natural environment that people value and love.

People thrive when they spend time in a valued environment.

CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Where people get involved, contribute to, and are supported by the community around them.

People thrive when they belong to connected communities.



OUR ROLE IN DELIVERY OF VISION

Our Strategic Planning Framework sets out how our suite of Strategic Management Plans together provide direction, key moves, data and resources to deliver the vision of Thriving Communities.

STRATEGIC PLAN 4-YEAR TIMEFRAME

Identifies our **strategic focus** for the next four years and **provides direction** for decision making and how we prioritise our resources and effort.

LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 10-YEAR TIMEFRAME

Ensures we can **deliver** services, maintain our assets and achieve our strategic focus in a **financially sustainable manner**.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS 10-YEAR TIMEFRAME

Supports effective and data driven **management and care** of our **community assets**.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 1-YEAR TIMEFRAME

Secures **resources and identifies the work** to deliver the Strategic Plan over a 12-month period.

Our suite of strategic management plans is supported by a range of plans and strategies focused on specific areas ranging from economic development, open space to events. These plans are adjusted over time to reflect the direction of the Strategic Plan. They identify and prioritise projects, actions or initiatives including those to be considered as part of the Annual Business Plan and Budget process.

Council is preparing a Structure Plan to help guide the future growth and development of our rural city. It will identify what land, services and infrastructure will be required to support this growth and help to prioritise projects for funding and advocacy actions.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Partnering with our community to develop this Draft Strategic Plan was important to us. Over 900 people were involved in the Let's Thrive engagement process undertaken during July and August 2023, contributing over 2,000 individual priorities.

This was the first phase of engagement with the community, including businesses, to help shape the plan.

We offered a range of ways to get involved including face to face workshops and drop ins across the whole rural city, online engagement and a reply-paid survey sent to all households. We incorporated discussions from other youth engagement activities and findings from recent engagements on the Murray Bridge Structure Plan and Community Satisfaction Survey.

Across all engagement methods we asked the community the same question: **As we continue to work towards your vision of Thriving Communities, what do you think are the most important things for the Rural City of Murray Bridge to focus on in the next four years?**

11 key inter-connected themes emerged which we grouped into four, distinct areas our community wants us to focus on. These include:

- The need to look after and plan well for **our places and spaces**. This ranges from roads and footpaths to our open space and natural environment.
- The need to **activate and tell more people about our rural city**. This includes making the most of our natural assets including the riverfront, tourism opportunities and the Murray Bridge CBD.
- The need to **connect our communities better**. This includes improved access, physical and social connections, and involvement across our communities.
- The need to **support our communities** as we grow. This includes making sure we have the services, facilities, skills and employment opportunities our community needs.

These needs have informed the development of this Draft Strategic Plan and helped shape the direction and our focus areas for the next four years.





THE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS GROWING. THRIVING. STRONG.

WE ARE ACTIVELY PREPARING FOR THE GROWTH OF OUR RURAL CITY.

We will strive to **maximise opportunities** for our **community and economy**.
We will ensure our **built and natural environment** and **lifestyle is enhanced**.

WE WILL FOCUS ON:

1 **ACTIVATING OUR RURAL CITY AND ATTRACTING PEOPLE AND INDUSTRY**

3 **ENHANCING OUR PLACES AND SPACES**

2 **CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES**

4 **SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES**



OUR FOCUS 1

ACTIVATING OUR RURAL CITY AND ATTRACTING PEOPLE AND INDUSTRY

We'll see vibrant activity and development that complements our unique identity, creating an attractive environment for investment, visitors and residents.



OUR DIRECTION

Enliven key public spaces, making greater use of the attributes of the Murray Bridge CBD, Riverfront and our natural assets.

Actively plan and advocate for infrastructure that supports our growing communities and industry, making it a desirable hub for a variety of activities.

Ensure there is something for everyone including a lively and well-integrated mix of social and cultural offerings, business and housing.

KEY MOVES

- Develop **plans for Growth and Development** including delivery mechanisms.
- Initiate and advocate for **Code Amendments and deliver Structure Plan** to support industry and residential growth.
- Advocate for **housing uplift and affordable housing** options.
- Embed approach to **CBD activation** that integrates public realm, social and economic activity and connection to environment.
- Focus on **riverfront activation** as a key driver of all our thriving communities.
- Continue to celebrate and recognise **Ngarrindjeri** cultural heritage and history and contributions of our **global pioneers and community members** today.
- Build on opportunities for **arts and creative activities** to attract people and visitors.
- Develop a **strategic approach to tourism and events** to support an experience economy.

OUR FOCUS 2

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES

We'll see improved access and support, physical and social connections and involvement across our communities that brings our people and places together as we grow.

OUR DIRECTION

Improve access to our natural assets and link the places and trails our community value and love.

Enhance the physical connections across our communities and how people and freight move around the region.

Build on opportunities for people to connect with each other socially and get involved with their broader communities and Council.

KEY MOVES

- Ensure **open space renewal and enhancement of riverfront** considers physical connections between places and improved access.
- Ensure our **open spaces and community places** are **safe** and **welcoming** places that encourage people and groups to use and enjoy.
- Advocate for inter and intra-city **public transport**.
- Advocate for **freight bypass** and **Transport Plan** for Murray Bridge.
- Advocate for a **future airport location** within our rural city.
- **Share our stories, listen and provide information** on the work Council is doing and why.
- Increase access to Council through **digital services and channels** that support sharing and receiving of information in a more immediate way.
- Encourage **involvement in decision making** and seek **community to work with Council** on projects and events.

OUR FOCUS 3 ENHANCING OUR PLACES AND SPACES

We'll see a well-cared for public realm and a green, attractive and welcoming environment and destination for visitors and residents.

OUR DIRECTION

Continue focus on the greening of our communities and the care, management and sustainability of our natural environment.

Continue focus on looking after and improving our public realm and infrastructure so it looks and feels great.

Focus on open space renewal and enhancement, and riverfront activation.

KEY MOVES

- Look after and renew our public realm assets and infrastructure across the rural city and townships.
- Continue to develop our water management solutions.
- Continue to advocate for management of riverbank collapse and erosion.
- Pursue funding for delivery of Sturt Reserve Masterplan, enhancement of riverfront reserves and town entrance linear parks.
- Ensure open space renewal considers opportunities for play, recreation and tourism.
- Deliver Strategic Property Management that meets the needs of a growing community.
- Develop public realm service standards.

OUR FOCUS 4 SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

We'll see people that are supported to have access to the services, opportunities and benefits that a growing community brings.

OUR DIRECTION

Pursue the right balance of services, education and training opportunities to support our community to live well.

Plan for the sport, recreation and community facilities required to support our growing region.

Partner and advocate with governments and service providers to meet the current and future needs of our communities.

KEY MOVES

- Lead planning for a Multi-Sport Complex and Regional Stadium, identifying potential location, regional partners and funding.
- Lead a collaborative, regional approach for a Regional Sports Strategy and Regional Swimming Centre 24/7 facility.
- Advocate for increased local education and training options to support job's growth and a skilled workforce including pathways for young people.
- Review Council services to ensure alignment with residential and business community needs.
- Lead opportunities for shared services with regional partners.
- Advocate for the hospital expansion, health services and development of an integrated Community Wellbeing Plan.



OUR COMMITMENT TO TRACKING PROGRESS

We are committed to tracking and reporting on our progress against the Strategic Plan.

We will use our established reporting framework to inform the community and stakeholders of our performance in delivering services, projects and other initiatives to meet the needs of our growing communities.

This framework provides for financial and non-financial performance measurement and aims to align reporting with delivery of strategic outcomes, encourage continuous improvement, support financial sustainability and comply with legislative requirements.

We will continue to reflect on and adjust the way we report and share information to support effective and open communication with our community.

The main reports include:

ANNUAL REPORT

A comprehensive report of the projects, services and activities that Council has delivered across the rural city throughout the preceding year.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORTS

A quarterly report that updates progress against the services and projects funded in the Annual Business Plan toward the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW

A quarterly review that provides analysis of our actual financial performance over the previous quarter and impacts of this performance and other financial decisions made during the quarter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE REPORTS

Reports and activities that measure, track and gain reliable information about community needs, attitudes, expectations and experience of service delivery, facilities and the organisation's strategic direction.



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