

Great Lakes 2030

community strategic plan
2013 - 2030



Great Lakes
COUNCIL

Endorsed by Great Lakes Council on 25 June 2013





key directions

Four key directions emerged from our consultation with the community and these provide a focus for the development of objectives and strategies.

They now provide a framework to plan social, environmental and economic outcomes to deliver and achieve our vision of a sustainable future.

our environment

Objective 1: Protect and maintain the natural environment so it is healthy and diverse

Strategies

- 1.1 Undertake an active management program to support a healthy environment that also provides for economic, recreational and cultural opportunities
- 1.2 Encourage and support the community to embrace environmentally-friendly behaviours and sustainable business practices
- 1.3 Manage the balance between natural siltation in our lakes and the provision of access for recreation and economic purposes
- 1.4 Reduce the impact of noxious weeds and invasive species on our environment through strategic management and education
- 1.5 Monitor and report on the health, productivity and diversity of the Great Lakes environment

Objective 2: Ensure that development is sensitive to our natural environment

Strategies

- 2.1 Base strategic land use planning on ecologically sustainable principles

Objective 3: Prepare for the impact of sea level rise and climate change

Strategies

- 3.1 Establish a risk based adaptation response to sea level rise and climate change

Objective 4: Sustainably manage our waste

Strategies

- 4.1 Seek to reduce, reuse or recycle all waste
- 4.2 Manage residual waste to minimise impact on the environment
- 4.3 Implement waste minimisation programs throughout the community

strong local economies



Objective 5: Promote the Great Lakes as an area that is attractive for residents and visitors

Strategies

- 5.1 Market the Great Lakes as an area that offers a range of opportunities for all
- 5.2 Explore new and emerging opportunities to promote the Great Lakes

Objective 6: Establish and maintain a supportive business environment that encourages job opportunities

Strategies

- 6.1 Support our existing business community and encourage the development of new business
- 6.2 Pursue improved and equitable access to telecommunication services
- 6.3 Encourage skill development that reflects local business needs

Objective 7: Provide transport infrastructure that meets current and future needs

Strategies

- 7.1 Identify transport network needs based on recognised asset management processes
- 7.2 Maintain transport network infrastructure to current service standard
- 7.3 Develop facilities that provide for safe pedestrian and cycle traffic



COMMUNITY



**The Manning Valley Community Plan
2010 - 2030**

Key Directions

Looking after what we've got



Respecting the environment



A strong economy



A great lifestyle



Getting things done



Looking after what we've got

One of the strongest messages from the community in creating our long-term Plan was the need to look after what we already have – the building blocks that support our community and our way of life.

Because of the scattered nature of settlement in our Valley, we have developed a web of community infrastructure – roads, bridges, footpaths, buildings, parks and playing fields – to meet our various needs. On a per-capita basis, we have invested more heavily in community infrastructure than most urban councils and are now paying the price of maintaining that investment.

At the starting point of our Plan – 2010 – one quarter of our community's infrastructure is in need of reconstruction or major repair. This represents a cost of some \$170 million, which our community currently does not have in reserve. Without serious intervention, this situation will continue to decline to the point where the roads will ultimately become impassable and settlements will be isolated.

In developing this Plan, we recognize that our community cannot achieve its hopes for regional status, economic growth and improved lifestyle if we do not address the problem with our infrastructure. We cannot build a strong house on poor foundations. Because this is so important to the Valley, it has been identified as a separate theme within the Plan.

"Looking after what we've got" addresses a number of key issues:

- The need to improve the standard of the infrastructure we currently have.
- The need to consider whole of life costings for new infrastructure and plan for long-term maintenance.
- The need to encourage reduced dependency on motor vehicle transport.
- The need to preserve the unique character of our area by limiting the scale of development and improving urban design.

Improving infrastructure standards

Over the years, the Manning Valley has developed a wide network of community infrastructure. Some of these assets are 50 -100 years old and are coming to the end of their serviceable life. Infrastructure has a natural cycle of deterioration through normal usage patterns and exposure to the elements. Council currently uses a 10-step scale to rate the standard of community infrastructure in our area and determine how quickly it is deteriorating. Number one on the scale is "brand new" and number 10 marks the point where the infrastructure has reached the end of its life. Depending on the type of infrastructure, there is a point along the scale where the asset needs major repair or reconstruction to extend its useful life. With roads, for example, this point is at number 8 on the scale. All the roads in worse condition than this are classed as "backlog". Strategies 2.1 and 2.2 on the following pages address this issue. These strategies set a long-term direction to address the current infrastructure backlog for our roads and to prevent further roads from deteriorating to the point of needing major reconstruction. The strategies also set a direction to improve road maintenance practices and to continue to seek funding from other levels of government to support our roads network.

Taking a more strategic view

The need to take a more long-term strategic view of our assets was also highlighted in the community discussions supporting this Plan. This involves thinking about the "whole of life cost" of an asset before it is constructed. In the past, our community has accepted substantial government funding to help build new assets without giving full consideration to the ongoing cost of maintaining these assets and the ultimate cost of replacing them when they reach the end of their life. This has repercussions for future generations and we are currently experiencing the impacts of past decisions in this regard. The strategies on the following pages call for a more long-term view of asset costing. They also advocate more community involvement in the future design and care of local assets.

Reducing our dependency on vehicles

While the community acknowledges that roads will always be a significant part of our landscape, there is a growing understanding that we need to start reducing our dependency on vehicles. Apart from the environmental benefits, there are also benefits for public health and reduced impact on community infrastructure. The strategies on the following pages call for increased provision and use of public transport, developing a network of safe cycleways and walkways and exploring alternative transport modes.

Preserving our unique character

Another important aspect of "looking after what we've got" is to maintain the unique character of the area. Most people in our community do not want to see high rise or high density development within our area, particularly in coastal settlements. While community members agree on the need to strengthen our economy and encourage growth there was also a strong view that this shouldn't be at the cost of the things we valued the most about our region – its open spaces and natural environment. The strategies on the following pages emphasise the importance of establishing a balance between development and conservation in our communities and ensuring quality urban design.

How will we know our Plan is working?

The objectives and strategies on the next pages set a course of action for the future. One of the key measurements we can use to judge our success in improving asset management is the size of the community's infrastructure backlog – the number of assets that require major repair or reconstruction. Under the strategies proposed, the backlog should start to diminish and the community should notice improvements to the standard of local roads, bridges and footpaths etc over the next 20 years.

We can also measure community satisfaction levels with local infrastructure and increased usage of alternative transport methods, such as cycleways, public transport and walkways. Other indicators would be improvements to urban design, such as entranceways to towns and villages, increased urban renewal projects and continued compliance with our area's key planning instruments.

“ We don't want high rise buildings - we don't want to look like Forster or the Gold Coast. People come here for holidays because it reminds them of when they were kids, when the world was less complicated. ”

Comment from consultation at the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival

Looking after what we've got

Objective: To improve the current standard of infrastructure and plan for the future needs of the community.

Strategies

Possible Actions

1. Public assets and infrastructure will be planned, managed and funded to meet community needs and agreed levels of service.

- Consider infrastructure implications of new development, and ensure whole-of-life costings are assessed.
- Strengthen Council's asset management capability within the Organisation, including implementation of an asset management system.
- Resource and implement a prioritised maintenance programme for all public assets, incorporating a risk management approach.
- Develop a Graffiti and Vandalism Management Strategy.
- Encourage community involvement in the design and care of community assets.
- Continue to engage with the community in relation to acceptable service levels for all public assets.

2. Ensure the road system meets the transport needs of the community.

- Ensure road standards do not fall below a condition level of 7 in Council's asset assessment framework.
- Reconstruct roads that are at or below a level of condition 8.
- Replace all timber bridges, culverts and causeways on a priority basis, during the life of the Plan.
- Review and improve road maintenance practices and procedures.
- Advocate for federal and state government funding assistance towards improved regional roads and bridges, and public transport.

3. Develop an urban stormwater capability to maintain effective discharge with no net increase in environmental consequences.

- Review and continue to implement the Urban Stormwater Management Plan.
- Research contemporary environmental stormwater management techniques to improve the health of our waterways.

Looking after what we've got

Strategies

Possible Actions

4. Encourage the community to consider use of alternative and sustainable transport.

- Advocate for improved public and community transport capability across the local government area.
- Facilitate reduced private vehicle use through strategies such as carpooling.
- Provide a network of safe and convenient cycleways and walking paths, linking major land uses and recreation facilities.
- Explore all opportunities for funding alternate transport modes.
- Ensure transport facilities are accessible to all members of the community.

5. Aim for a higher quality of design and maintenance in all development, both public and private.

- Develop quality design standards, guidelines and programs for local infrastructure and development.
- Incorporate environmental performance criteria in all design guidelines and plans for public infrastructure.
- Invest in urban design improvements to public places, especially entrances to towns and villages.
- Encourage and reward design excellence and sustainability.
- Ensure public places are managed and maintained as safe, clean and inviting places, that will reinforce a desired community standard.

6. Maintain a strategic land-use planning framework that will establish a clear balance between development and conservation, and accommodate economic investment and lifestyle change demands

- Finalise and maintain the Taree Conservation and Development Strategy.
- Create urban renewal opportunities to meet the Department of Planning requirements for a 40% infill population growth capability.

Col and Carmel Hurrell – Dairy Farmers at Marlee



Carmel and I both come from dairying families. We commenced our own dairy operation in 1980 and have been dairying at Marlee on "Rocky Falls" for the last 12 years.

There have been huge changes in dairy farming during this time. The biggest change was the deregulation in 2000 which had a big effect on families, with some farmer's income being reduced by 40%. A lot of farmers rode out those difficult times and now the Dairy Industry in the Manning is really strong again. Current value of milk production in the Manning Valley is about \$53 million per annum (2010). Average farm sizes have more than doubled in the same time.

The Manning Valley is a great place for dairying. We have good soils, access to plenty of water and are close to city markets. The region has a strong cohesive group in the Mid Coast Dairy Advancement Group who are proactive in promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

We are continually improving the way we manage our business. Soil testing, effluent management and energy efficiencies are improving all the time.

Asset management is extremely important for longevity of the farm. Since taking over our property we have made upgrades to our pastures, irrigation and dairy shed and yards. We are still upgrading – doing laneways and fencing. It is crucial to plan ahead for future needs.

Community infrastructure is crucial for rural farming areas to remain sustainable. When people move to our region they expect the same service as the larger areas. However, this places a strain on Council resources to maintain a large amount of roads and bridges over great distances. If we don't have adequate roads and bridges there can be no local primary industries.

Everything is done on a massive scale now. We have lost our local milk co-operatives. Our milk is transported to Sydney for processing in a 28,000 litre tri-axle milk tanker.

It is disappointing to see the local business infrastructure disappearing. It is more important now than ever to maintain our community infrastructure so local producers can continue to contribute to our local and broader economy."



Vital dairy farm infrastructure – Col and Carmel beside their milk vat

Respecting our environment

Respecting our natural environment is a high priority for the Manning Valley Community. Our local landscapes are the reason many of us came to live here and the reason why many of us stay. We identify strongly with natural icons such as the Manning River, the escarpment of the beaches because they provide a "sense of home" and community identity. However, when it came to nominating specific issues and environmental programs for our future, those involved in the community discussions for the Plan found it difficult to provide detailed directions.

The strategies and objectives on the following pages have been developed by local environmental managers, in response to the general directions identified by the community.

Some of the key environmental issues for the future include:

- Applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- Maintaining and enhancing local biodiversity
- Protecting local water resources, particularly the Manning River
- Managing environmental risks and hazards, such as flooding, fire, land degradation and coastal erosion
- Encouraging responsible waste management, recycling and reuse
- Preparing for the impacts of climate change
- Developing environmental knowledge and understanding within our community

Respecting the river

Our community has made it clear that it respects and values the Manning River for many reasons – environmental, economic, social and spiritual. However, finding community consensus on what is best for the River is often a challenging exercise. There are many stakeholders involved in the future management of the Manning and many different views to discuss and address. One of the key strategies for our future is to draw these groups together to develop an Integrated Catchment Management Plan. This will provide a single document upon which we all agree and set a path for future projects on the Manning, such as maintenance dredging, river bank stabilization and managing acid sulphate soils.

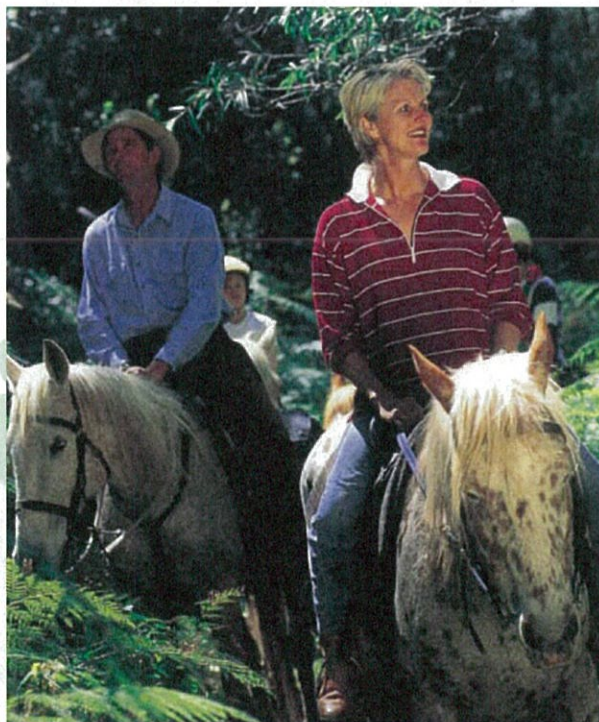
"We need to give leadership in making our communities less dependent upon motor vehicles. To do this, we must provide safe, user-friendly alternatives"

Written submission

Encouraging sustainable development

One of the challenges for our future will be to find a healthy balance between increasing population and protection of the environment. The Manning's coastal areas currently house some 25% of our population and are continuing to grow in popularity. Over the past five years, more than half of all new residential subdivisions were located in the coastal villages.

This type of development can place significant pressure on sensitive environmental areas. One of the main methods to managing the balance between growth and environmental protection for the future will be through local land use planning instruments such as the Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plans, ensuring appropriate zoning of land, providing buffer zones to protect areas of high value biodiversity and encouraging environmentally sensitive development design. Protecting significant remnant vegetation and restoring and protecting key habitat corridors will also be a priority over the coming years. Our region is home to 86 threatened fauna species, 38 threatened flora species and nine endangered ecological communities. Preserving these species for future generations will require sensitive land management, particularly the management of vegetation. As approximately 70% of vegetated land in our area is currently under private ownership, any future plans for preserving biodiversity in the Manning Valley will require a working partnership between private and public landholders.





“The beauty of this place sustains each of us every day”

comment from Elands community forum



Getting involved

Throughout the community discussions to prepare this Plan, residents expressed a willingness to learn more about the environment and to be involved in environmental management programs. Council and other environmental groups can play a key leadership role in the future by working to improve local environmental understanding and providing opportunities for volunteer work on local projects. One of the key focuses for future community and environmental education programs will be the Cattai Wetlands site.

Preserving agricultural land

Future environmental directions for our Valley also recognise the need to preserve high quality agricultural land and to promote sustainable farming practices. We can expect that agriculture will continue to play a substantial role in our local economy in the coming years and that there will be increasing demand for local food products. Our focus for the future is to maintain, protect and enhance our local agricultural lands and to explore new opportunities for rural landholders.

Preparing for climate change

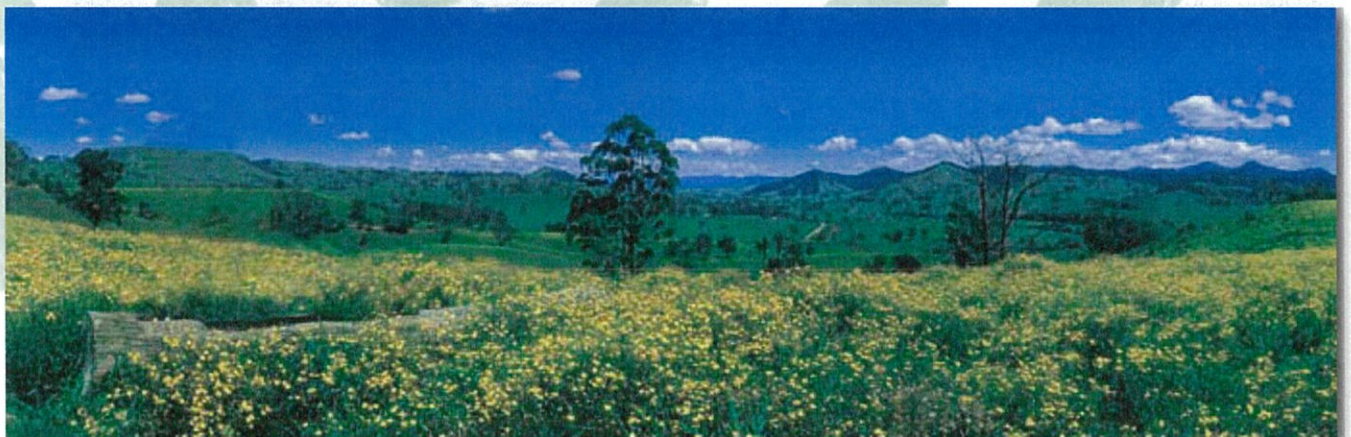
At the commencement point of our Plan, we do not have a clear picture of how climate change will affect the Manning and what the impact will be upon our community. However, we do expect significant sea level rises to occur in the next 100 years. The objectives and strategies on the following pages call for further assessment of the potential risks of climate change and the need to work with the community to adapt to these changes.



How will we know our Plan is working?

The objectives and strategies on the following pages set a path for improved environmental management in our region over the next 20 years. One of the key reports we will rely on in gauging our future success is the State of the Environment Report, prepared by Council on behalf of the community. This report looks at key environmental indicators and monitors our progress in achieving our environmental outcomes.

Other indicators that we could use include increased community awareness of environmental issues and participation in environmental programs.



Respecting our environment

Respecting the environment

Objective: To recognise our responsibility as a community to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

Strategies

Possible Actions

7. Maintain and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

- Development and maintenance of land-use planning and conservation strategies that provide for sustainable population growth, and the protection of natural areas.
- Preparation and implementation of a biodiversity strategy to identify priorities and risks, and to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Planning and implementing measures, in partnership with the community, to restore and protect key habitat corridors, that protect sites of biological significance and prevent further extinction of flora and fauna.
- Protect significant remnant vegetation and significant trees.

8. Protect and preserve local water resources.

- In partnership with neighbouring councils ensure the preparation of an Integrated Catchment Management Plan for the Manning River.
- Facilitate processes and projects that will achieve stabilisation of the banks of the Manning River and its tributaries.
- Prepare a maintenance dredging strategy for the Manning River and facilitate ongoing works to implement the strategy.
- Effectively manage the licensing of on-site sewage treatment facilities so that operators meet the requirements of environmental performance and legislation.
- Continue to implement a programme to achieve effective management and rehabilitation of acid sulphate soils.
- Continue to implement a programme to achieve effective management of coastal wetlands.
- Review and implement Council's Estuary and Coastal Management Plans.
- In partnership with relevant stakeholders, continue to monitor water quality within the Manning River, and other rivers, in the catchment.



GROWING GLOUCESTER

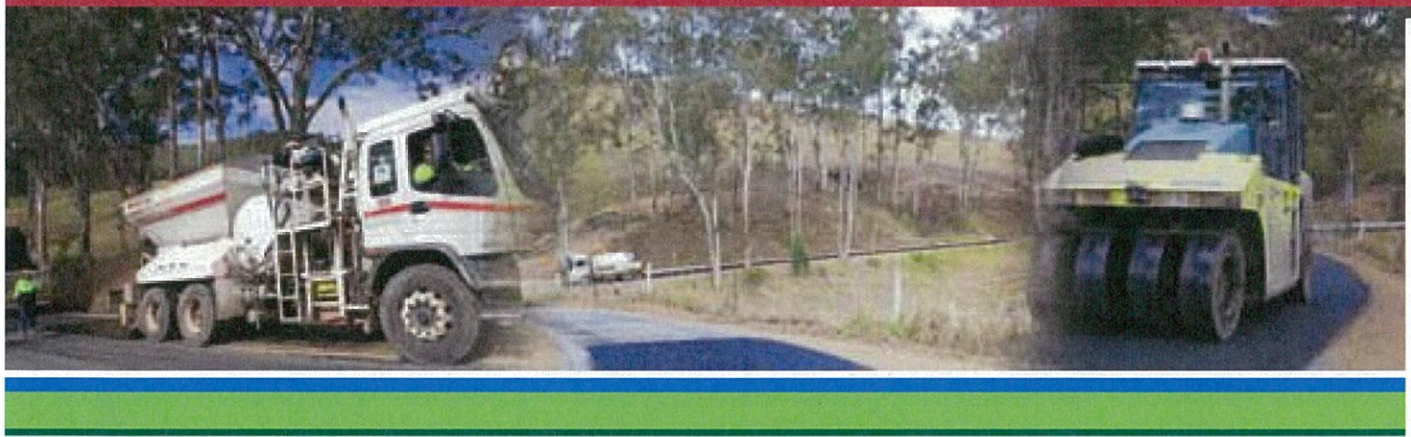
Community Strategic Plan 2014–2024



Key directions

Our Community Strategic Plan is based on five Key Directions, identified by our community:





Direction One: Maintaining core infrastructure

Gloucester Shire has a large amount of public infrastructure, but only a small population to help maintain it. The community has over \$410 million invested in road and transport assets alone, which equates to over \$80,000 per person. With additional investment in public buildings, parks and sporting facilities, this amount increases to approximately \$100,000 per person.

Over the past 40 years, there has been a diminishing level of resources available to maintain, renew and augment our community infrastructure. The impact of Rate Pegging over many years with rates limited to CPI increase (3%) while real costs in regard to road construction and maintenance are increasing at 5% p.a.

This is one factor that has left Council short of money to build or even maintain roads. We can only allocate half of the \$8.6 million per year to keep our roads in acceptable condition. Our roads and bridges are deteriorating faster than we can repair them.

We have completed a full review of the condition of all roads and bridges which fully details how much backlog in renewals and maintenance we face.

We currently have some \$10 million worth of assets that have fallen below the minimum standard. By 2021 we expect that will have increased to \$60 million.

We also need to consider future growth demands on infrastructure. Our local terrain and climatic conditions

Given these challenges, it is unlikely that any major new infrastructure will be built in our Shire over the life of this Plan. Our focus will be on maintaining and repairing what we already have.

Outcomes

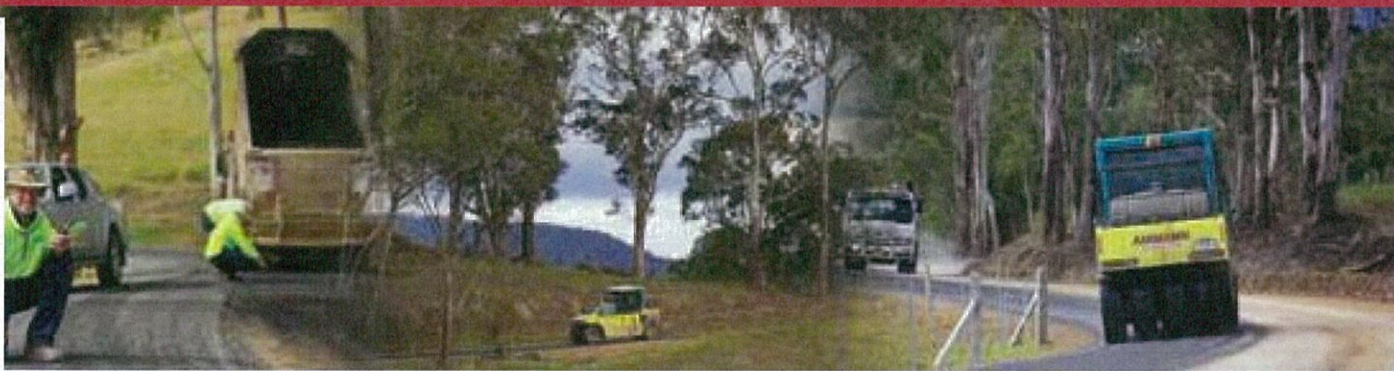
Key indicators of our success with this program will be;

- > infrastructure is maintained to agreed community standards
- > No critical or catastrophic failures of community assets
- > increased resources are directed to core infrastructure
- > increased patronage and income from the use of facilities

together with a lack of local good quality road building materials add further challenges to our task. Attracting suitable contractors and suppliers to our region means that design and construct resources will come from internal sources.

We have developed a long-term maintenance and renewal plan.

However, delivering this plan will depend on our capacity to find additional income including rate increases.



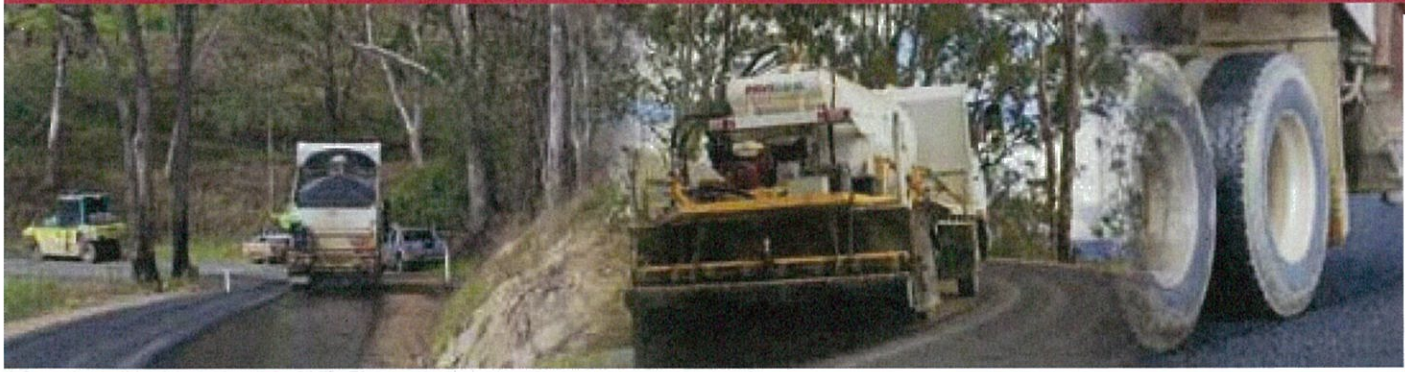
Direction One: Maintaining core infrastructure

Objective 1: Public assets and infrastructure will be planned, managed and funded to meet agreed levels of service

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
1.1 Consider infrastructure implications of new development and ensure whole of life costings are assessed	leader	Developers
1.2 Develop a comprehensive asset management capability	leader	-
1.3 Resource and implement a prioritised maintenance program for all public assets, incorporating a risk management approach	leader	-
1.4 Encourage community involvement in the design and care of community assets	leader	Community Groups
1.5 Continue to engage with the community in relation to acceptable service levels for all public assets	leader	Community Groups Developers

Objective 2: Ensure the road system meets the transport needs of the community

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
2.1 Ensure achievement of road service levels identified in Council's Asset Management System	leader	Community, State Government (RMS) Federal Government
2.2 Implement the bridge and crossing replacement strategy	leader	-
2.3 Review and improve road maintenance practices and procedures	leader	-
2.4 Advocate for State and Federal government funding assistance towards improved Regional Roads, bridges and public transport	advocate	State Government, Australian Government



Direction One: Maintaining core infrastructure

Objective 3: Provide an environmentally Sustainable Urban Stormwater System

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
3.1 Maintain an urban stormwater capability to provide effective discharge with no net increase in environmental consequences	leader	-

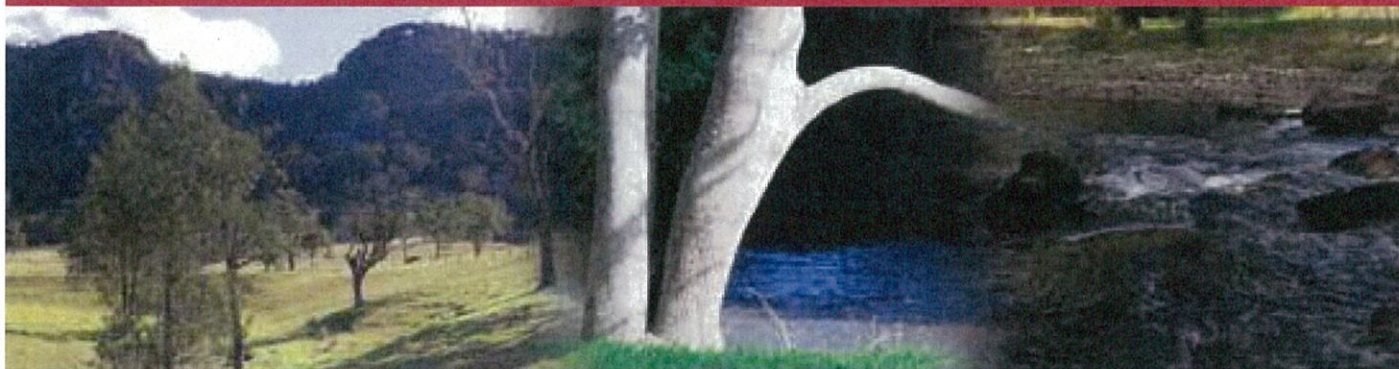
Objective 4: Adopt current best practice for design and maintenance of infrastructure

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
4.1 Review quality design standards, guidelines and programs for local infrastructure and development	leader	-
4.2 Consider environmental performance criteria in all design guidelines and plans for public infrastructure	leader	State Government (Fisheries, CMA, RMS)
4.3 Ensure public infrastructure and places are managed and maintained as safe, clean and inviting places	leader & advocate	-

Objective 5: Enhance the economic viability of public infrastructure

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
5.1 Promote public use of infrastructure	leader & Groups advocate	Community





Direction Two: Protecting the environment

Gloucester's environment is unique in the world. We love this place - the wild mountain ranges, the rolling hills and pristine waters. Our national parks have been recognised with World Heritage listing and we hold some of the region's most significant water catchments in our care. That is why protecting and preserving these areas is so important to our future.

To do this, our community will need to develop well-informed, balanced and responsible environmental management strategies. Working with stakeholders such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service and local catchment management agencies will help to increase our knowledge of environmental issues and assist us in preparing management strategies. Over the life of this Plan, Council hopes to develop a comprehensive Catchment Management Plan and vegetation Management Plan for our region.

We will also seek to involve the community in the ongoing protection of our environment by encouraging participation in environmental programs such as

landcare, Rivercare and Stream Watch.

One of the key questions to be considered in the coming years is the potential long term cumulative impacts of extractive industries upon our local environment. There is no doubt that the subject of mining ignites a passionate response within our community. That is

mining debate.

Another important focus will be to identify and manage environmental risks to our region, through bushfire, flood, weed infestation and disposal of waste. We are already actively working in these areas and propose to continue these programs over the coming years. There is also increasing pressure on

Outcomes

Key indicators of our success with this plan will include;

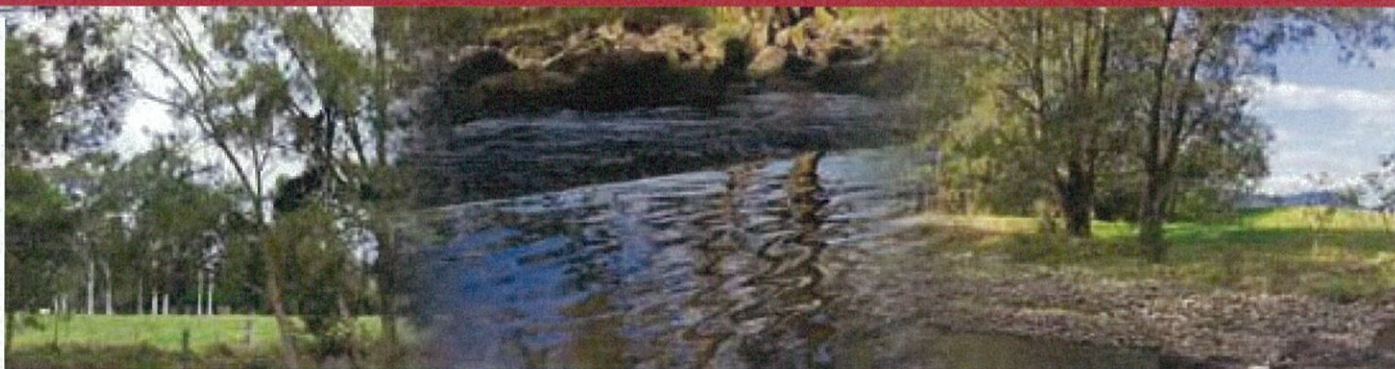
- > an increase in available environmental data
- > improvement in the indicators included in Council's State of the Environment Report
- > Preparation of a Catchment Management Plan, vegetation Management Plan and Waste Management Plan for the local Government area
- > Support for existing, and the establishment of new, environmental management programs

why Council has committed to a thorough investigation of the issues, so that all potential impacts may be considered and comprehensively addressed. Council will continue to act as an advocate for the community to ensure that environmental, social and economic issues are adequately considered within the

our community to strengthen its waste management measures.

We will need to focus more on recycling and reuse and minimise the amount of waste we send to landfill.

The coming years will see stronger controls and new environmental requirements for our landfill site.



Direction Two: Protecting the environment

Objective 1: Provide effective environmental management in the Gloucester region

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
1.1 improve knowledge and understanding of environmental issues	leader, Facilitator, advocate	MCW, State Agencies, Hunter ROC
1.2 Prepare and support environmental strategies and plans	leader	Community State agencies, Hunter ROC
1.3 Develop, implement and support environmental management programs	advocate	State Agencies

Objective 2: Manage environmental risks

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
2.1 Research, monitor and respond, as appropriate, to the long term and cumulative impacts of resource extraction	leader	Community Groups
2.2 Support catchment protection strategies	Member	MCW (leader),
2.3 Support air quality management strategies	advocate, Facilitator	State, Mining industry
2.4 implement floodplain management strategies	leader	Developers
2.5 Manage bushfire risk	advocate	RFS & Community
2.6 Maintain an active role in weed management	leader, Facilitator	Reg. Weeds C'tee, LHPa
2.7 Respond to the impacts of climate change	Facilitator	Community Groups



Direction Two: Protecting the environment

Objective 3: Manage the sustainable disposal of waste

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
3.1 Undertake waste management planning	leader	lPa, Contractor, Community Groups
3.2 Operate an efficient and effective waste service		
3.3 Encourage waste minimisation and recycling	leader,	advocate Community Groups

Objective 4: Provide leadership in sustainability

Strategy	Council's Role	Other Stakeholders
4.1 Encourage environmentally sustainable development	Facilitator	Developers
4.2 Provide leadership in sustainability	leader, Facilitator	MCW, NPWS Hunter ROC
4.3 Seek broad community engagement in environmental stewardship activity	leader	Community Groups

