



Shape *your region*

Community Plan 2022-2032

Engagement summary

We are creating a Community Plan for the next ten years.

During October and November 2021 Armidale Regional Council consulted with the community about what they want to see in 2032, what they love about their region and what needs to be improved.

This engagement is a core part of a larger project to review council's Community Plan and associated documents including the Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy – all key parts of the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This Framework is a legislative requirement that seeks to deliver a community-led process for local government strategic planning.

Our aim with this engagement was to give the entire community the opportunity to tell us what is important to them and what they want for their future.

We looked to inspire participation through widespread promotion, interesting and engaging activities and a willingness to have frank discussions and to actively listen.

The results of this engagement are contained in this summary report.



Website

The Shape Your Region website featured available activities, information sheets, surveys, FAQs, videos and event timelines and was available at shapeyourregion.com.au



Events

- Community groups and services BBQ Breakfast
- **Listening Posts - 12 total**
 - 5 villages** – Ebor, Hillgrove, Ben Lomond, Black Mountain and Wollomombi
 - 3 Guyra events** – Bradley Street, Australian Poetry Hall of Fame Markets and an Aboriginal Community BBQ in Volunteer Park
 - 3 Armidale events** – Mall, Centro and an Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place Community BBQ
- **Library displays** • **Staff briefings**

Activities

Postcard Survey

Reply paid postcards and an information sheet were sent to all households in the Local Government Area. The postcard asked: What do you love about the Region, what would you like improved in the Region, and describe what our region should be like in 2032?

Detailed Survey

The detailed survey looked more deeply at the type of region our community wants to see. It utilised rankings, emojis, and open questions to get a clear vision for the region.

How we engaged

\$100 challenge

This activity gave the community the opportunity to allocate budget across Council services.

Postcards from the Future

School children also had the opportunity to participate through a postcard asking them what they want the future to look like. Postcards were distributed to all participating schools in the region – mainly Years 5/6 and Years 9/10.

Phone survey

400 community members participated in a telephone Community Satisfaction Survey conducted by Taverner Research in late November. This data will be collected annually to allow Council to track its progress and community satisfaction.



Participation

The number of participants for each element of community engagement was:

Postcards - online	184
Postcards – returned via mail	253
Detailed survey – online	175
Phone survey	400
Face to face engagement (Listening Posts)	192
Postcards from the Future	523
\$100 Challenge - online	121
TOTAL	1,848

Phone survey results

17% of respondents were satisfied with council's overall performance (against 53% dissatisfied and 30% neutral)

Highest satisfaction services

- Parks, reserves and playgrounds
- Sporting facilities
- Waste and recycling

Lowest satisfaction services

- Economic development and attracting investment
- Planning and development
- Being a well-run and managed council

When satisfaction scores were ranked against perceived importance, the priorities for Council that emerged were:

- Sealed roads
- Community information and consultation
- Development applications and planning
- Economic development and attracting new investment
- Being a well-run and managed Council

70% would recommend living in the Armidale Region

Respondents said that more economic development, entertainment and attractions, retail opportunities, better roads and tourism advertising would add to the Armidale Region's appeal to visitors or residents.

Results

Postcards (Returned via mail & online)

What you love about our region

1	2	3	4	5
Our natural environment	Our community	Education and training	Heritage	Location
Climate, seasons, weather, natural beauty, wildlife, National Parks	The people, diversity, volunteers	Opportunities and institutions	Architecture, history, buildings	Between Sydney and Brisbane, proximity to coast

What you want improved about our region

1	2	3	4	5
Transport Infrastructure	Environmental sustainability	Economic development growth	Shopping variety	Tourism
Maintained roads, cycling infrastructure, shaded and increased parking, upgraded bus stops, more traffic lights	Green power, response to climate change, water security, waste collection, cleaner air, more recycling, feral animal control	More industry, business, jobs, population and completion of Airside Business park	More shops, bigger variety, affordable shop rents, more support for retail	Variety of events, larger events, better attractions, promotion of arts and culture, better signage, free caravan camping facilities

What you think our region should be like in 2032

1	2	3	4	5
Economically robust	Environmental sustainability	Led through good governance	Strong tourism sector	A cohesive community
A supported and thriving business and industry sector, a growing population, more job opportunities, thriving shopping precincts	Environmentally conscious society, maintained Creeklands, clean environment, water sustainability	Stable and progressive council, strong Community-Council relationship, affordable rates and charges.	Well marketed, many local attractions, events and activities for the local and visiting people.	Inclusive and diverse community, better community spirit.

Detailed survey Total responses: 175

Demographics specific to survey results

Male 40%
Female 57%
Non-binary 3%

Lived in the region

Less than 12 mths 2%
 1-5 years 12%
 6-10 years 13%
 11-20 years 22%
 20+ years 50%
 Don't live in the region 1%

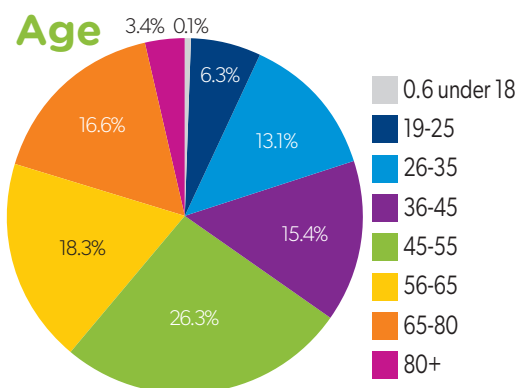
3.7% have a disability

2.2% are Aboriginal/Torres
 Straits Islander heritage

12.7% were not born in
 Australia

Do you...

Live 164
Work 103
Visit 11
Own property 109
Own a business in region 21



Location (Where people were from)

Armidale 78%
Guyra 12%
Black Mountain 0.6%
Ben Lomond 2.3%
Other 6.3%

What we value the most about living in our region

1	2	3	4	5
Our natural environment	The people in our community	Educational opportunities	Arts and culture	Our parks, playgrounds and gardens
134 responses	58 responses	54 responses	48 responses	42 responses

Livability scorecard

How do you feel about...

Education



Happy

Education in our region - educational institutions, support and services?

Doing business



Neutral

doing business in our region - business support, opportunities and patronage?

Living in our region - housing, infrastructure, transport, health?

Living



Happy

Shopping



Unhappy

Shopping in our region - essential and non-essential shopping/availability/experience?

Tourism



Neutral

Tourism in our region - attractions, events, accommodation?

Working in our region - jobs, job support?

Working



Happy

Playing



Happy

'Playing' in our region - entertainment/sporting/recreation?

\$100 Challenge

If you had \$100 of council's budget, you would spend it on:

Community facilities	\$18
Community services	\$15
Water and waste	\$14
Roads	\$12
Economic and tourism	\$10
Regulation	\$10
Capital works	\$8
Businesses	\$6
Customer services	\$3

The top three challenges we face in our community

1	2	3
Growth, economic development	Environmental sustainability, climate change	A financially sustainable and well-governed Council

Other prevalent themes:

- Health and medical – adequate health facilities, attracting medical specialists and doctors
- Community cohesiveness and positivity
- Building lifestyle infrastructure
- Engaging youth through facilities and activities



78% 'Definitely agreed' or 'Agreed' with the current Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027 Community Vision:

We want a harmonious region which celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of our communities, provides opportunities for all people to reach their potential, encourages engagement with our environment, cultures and lifestyles, while supporting growth, opportunity and innovation.

What you want council to focus on improving (through direct services, advocacy or support)

Community

Top 5 ranked:

Health and community services
Youth services and facilities
Family and children's services
Community safety
Entertainment and events

Environment

Top 5 ranked:

Water provision and sustainability
Alternative energy sources
Climate change
Biodiversity preservation
Reserves and open spaces (parks and gardens etc)

Transport and Infrastructure

Top 5 ranked:

Footpaths
Sealed roads
Cycleways
Unsealed roads
Streetscapes, trees and verges

Leadership

Top 5 ranked:

Community consultation
Leadership and representation
Level of service
Ethical practices
Customer service

Economy

Top 5 ranked:

Job opportunities
City/town activation
Economic development
New industry development
Business support and growth initiatives

Your vision for our region for the next 10 years

Key themes:

1. **Economy and growth** – opportunities and support for business/industry; a growing and evolving region; an attractive region that retains our young people and attracts new residents with abundant employment/career opportunities, leading to prosperity for all.
2. **Environment and sustainability** – recognising and proactively responding to climate change; supporting renewable and alternative energy; promotion of carbon neutrality; a safe and healthy environment, with ecological sustainability and clean air.
3. **Tourism** – a thriving tourism sector; the choice for tourists coming to the New England; known for its events, beauty, lifestyle opportunities and attractions.
4. **Community and culture** – a cohesive, proud, engaged, supportive, family-friendly and welcoming community that practices cultural inclusiveness and diversity, celebrates and engages with our Aboriginal community, and supports a thriving arts and cultural scene.
5. **Retail** – vibrant shopping and business centres; a destination for regional shoppers; a thriving and unique Mall offering a diverse shopping and dining experience.
6. **Leadership** – a regional council that provides the stewardship for growth, development and prosperity that facilitates a unified and inclusive region, and maintains affordable rates and charges, quality services and financial sustainability.
7. **Transport** – quality transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs and cycleways, with excellent transport links to other regions, public transport and lifestyle infrastructure.

Face to face engagement (Listening Posts) - Top 5 themes

1	2	3	4	5
Sustainability	Youth	Tourism	Infrastructure	Governance
Biodiversity, renewable energy, more green spaces, tree maintenance and more nature	Activities, events, employment, drop-in centres	Promotion of our heritage and natural assets, more signage, more events, collaborate with UNE	Increased footpaths, maintenance of facilities, walking tracks, wider and better quality roads, consultation with the community, sealing of dirt roads	Consultative and transparent Council, lower rates and fees

Postcards from the Future - In 2032, the school children of today want to see...

1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment	Facilities	Shopping	Environment	Youth activities
Water park, Trampoline park, zoo/native animal sanctuary, entertainment centre, more Armidale Sport and Rec activities and facilities	More off-leash dog parks, playgrounds, fitness equipment, cycling/BMX tracks, heated indoor pools, cleaner public toilets, skate parks	More shops for youth	Cleaner and greener environment including less litter, better recycling, more bins, cleaner Creeklands, more green and native spaces	More youth-focused activities and events