

Addressing Scale and Capacity

Introduction

According to ACELG, the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP), IPART and the NSW Office of Local Government, having sufficient 'scale and capacity' is critical in ensuring a council's sustainability in the long term. A challenge for councils in this regard is that there is no single definition of the term 'Scale and Capacity' that has been developed for use in this context.

The OLG guidance material specifies that each council must use the ILGRP preferred options as a starting point to assess if it has the appropriate scale and capacity. The ILGRP allocated non-metropolitan councils to a group based on their projected population, size of the rate base and the ability to merge with others. Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils were assigned to groups F and B.

The ILGRP identified a preferred merger option for Harden Shire Council, which was one of 24 rural and regional councils merged in to 11. The reasoning provided for the preferred option in Harden's case was focused on councils with very small populations that are adjacent to one or more suitable partners.

In the case of Cootamundra, the ILGRP provided a merger option, to merge with Junee, which was given equivalent weight to the option for "no change". The no change option was conditional upon council's participation in a fully fledged regional joint organisation.

Panel consideration	Cootamundra ¹	Harden ²
Group	F	B
Population 2011	7,501	3,680
Population projection 2031 ³	7,100	3,600
Adjusted population projection ⁴	8,161	4,014
Financial position and outlook	Moderate, neutral	Moderate, negative
Infrastructure audit	Moderate	Strong
Rate base	Low	Low
Grant dependency	Not high or very high ⁵	Very high

¹ Page 115, Revitalising Local Government, Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

² Page 114, Revitalising Local Government, Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

³ Population projections by the DP&I without boundary changes or mergers. These projections are disputed, and the ABS shows that the populations of each LGA have increased by an average of 3.39% over the last 5 years.

⁴ Page 53, Cootamundra and Harden Merger business plan.

⁵ The ILGRP only listed "high", or "very high", otherwise the field was left blank.

Panel consideration	Cootamundra ¹	Harden ²
Merger potential (availability and proximity of a suitable partner)	Medium	High
Recommendation	Council in Riverina JO or merge with Junee	Merge with Boorowa and Young or Rural Council in Tablelands JO

Group B consists of 9 councils, (including Harden), with current and/or projected populations below 4,000, all of which could readily be merged with a neighbour. All have a low rating base and / or are highly dependent on grant support to continue operating in their current form.

Group F includes 14 councils, (including Cootamundra), with projected 2031 population between 5,000 and 10,000. In some cases (generally where projected populations exceed 8,000) these councils may well be able to continue as 'stand-alone' entities for several decades to come. However, most need to consider whether a merger could improve their sustainability and build strategic capacity.⁶

The Key Elements of Strategic Capacity

The primary point of reference in assessing Scale and Capacity is the ILGRP's list of 'Key Elements of Strategic Capacity'.⁷ These key elements of strategic capacity are the basis of the following scale and capacity assessment of the combination of Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils. The assessment is based on the *existing* practices and attributes of the two Councils, with evidence and relevant examples.

More robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Council owned residential land development - Claron Estate.⁸
- Waste Science Pty Ltd partnership, provides additional annual revenue of between \$50k - \$300k due to joint arrangement with private industry involved in soil remediation in conjunction with Council waste depot⁹. <http://www.wastescience.com.au/soil-recycling-facility.html>
- Business and residential property rental income – eg Krugar Medical Centre in Harden.
- Use of LG procurement and regional purchasing
- Southern Phone Company shareholding.¹⁰

⁶ Page 112, Revitalising Local Government, Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

⁷ Box 8, p32 of Revitalising Local Government, Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

⁸ Page 32, AR Bluett Award 2014 submission, Cootamundra Shire Council.

⁹ Page 31, AR Bluett Award 2014 submission, Cootamundra Shire Council. NB Waste Science changed its name from EESI.

¹⁰ Southern Phone is the second largest provider of fixed line services (after Telstra) and the fourth largest mobile phone provider (after Telstra, Optus and Vodafone) in regional Australia. Shares in the Southern Phone Company are held by 41 local councils. <http://www.southernphone.com.au/about-us>

Scope to undertake new functions and major projects

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Local partnerships with community groups and volunteers – CDC, Art Centre, VIC, Bradman, Heritage, Library programs, Muttama Creek restoration, Showground, Jugiong, Village associations
- State and Federal government funding partnerships assist with the completion of numerous projects.

Table: List of major projects completed at 30 June 2015 by Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils

Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
DPP1 (10)	Construction of new heated pool	Cootamundra	April 2014	\$2.3M	98%	Reserves \$1M, LIRS loan \$1.3M	NSW Government LIRS scheme and \$50k
DPP3 (33)	Cootamundra Arts Centre and Tin Shed Theatre	Cootamundra	Ongoing over 10 years	Over \$1.5M to date	25%	Reserves \$200k, General fund	Arts NSW Sport & Rec NSW RLCIP
SP2 (24)	Construction of new animal pound	Cootamundra		\$140,000	100%	General funds	Nil
SP2 (22)	Construction of 9 new toilet blocks	Cootamundra	2008- 2015	~\$760k	~85%	General funds, private bequest \$125k	State \$100k
DPP3 (31)	Former Cootamundra Gasworks Rehabilitation: Removal of treatment of contaminated material	Cootamundra	Jan 2014	\$555,600	10%	Revenue	NSW Environmental Trust \$500k
DPP3 (6)	Plant and Equipment Purchases	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$805,100	100%	Reserves	Nil

Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
DPP3 (7)	Cootamundra Saleyards: Construction of new sheep loading ramps	Cootamundra	January 2014	\$76,000	20%	Reserves	Transport for NSW, Heavy Vehicle Safety & Productivity Program
DPP3 (7)	Cootamundra Saleyards: Improvements to drafting area, pens and truckwash	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$14,000	100%	Reserves	Nil
DPP1 (9)	Albert Park: Remodelling of old dressing shed	Cootamundra	Dec 2013	\$21,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP1 (9)	Captains Walk: Concrete path through the Captains Walk	Cootamundra	Nov 2013	\$25,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP1 (12)	Stadium: building upgrade	Cootamundra	Nov 2013	\$10,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP1 (9)	Muttama Creek Parklands: Isometric Exercise Equipment, Lighting	Cootamundra	Sept 2013	\$50,000	80%	Revenue	Murrumbidgee CMA
DPP1 (9)	Cootamundra Showground: Upgrades to buildings	Cootamundra	Nov 2013	\$13,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP3 (17)	Water Mains Reviews: Renewals under the renewal program	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$38,000	100%	Revenue	Nil

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Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
DPP3 (18)	Effluent Reuse Scheme: New Filtratoin System	Cootamundra	April 2014	\$91,000	100%	Sewer Fund Reserve	Nil
DPP3 (18)	Sewerage Treatment Works: Upgrade to aeration system	Cootamundra	Feb 2014	\$16,000	72%	Sewer Fund Reserve	Nil
DPP2 (20)	Waste Management: Purchase of green waste bins	Cootamundra	Nov 2013	\$130,000	100%	Waste Reserve	Nil
DPP2 (20)	Waste Depot: Improvements to Waste Transfer Station	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$51,000	100%	Waste Reserve	Nil
DPP3 (21)	State Roads: Storm damage restoration	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$61,000	-	NA	RMS
DPP3 (21)	State Roads: RMCC Contract, including heavy patching and resealing program	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$944,000	-	NA	RMS
DPP3 (21)	State Roads: Tanyinna Railway level crossing safety works	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$126,000	-	NA	RMS
DPP3 (21)	State Roads: Hovell St rehabilitation	Cootamundra	Sept 2013	\$791,000	-	NA	RMS
DPP3 (22)	Regional Roads: Capital works under the Repair program	Cootamundra	April 2014	\$135,000	-	NA	RMS

Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
DPP3 (25)	R2R – Hovell Street Laneway: Reconstruct Laneway	Cootamundra	Sept 2013	\$105,000	6%	Revenue	Federal Dept. Infrastructure & Regional Development
DPP1 (9)	Fisher Park: Bike Rack and Bike Safety Initiative	Cootamundra	Sept 2013	\$5930	41%	Revenue	Transport for NSW & NSW Police
DPP3 (23)	R2R – Old Cootamundra Road: Reconstruct intersection, correcting road dip	Cootamundra	March 2014	\$175,650	-	NA	Federal Dept. Infrastructure & Regional Development
DPP3 (23)	R2R – Carool Road: Reconstruct and initial seal	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$181,000	-	NA	Federal Dept. Infrastructure & Regional Development
DPP3 (23)	Bitumen Shire Roads	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$201,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP3 (24)	Gravel Shire Roads: Gravel re-sheeting	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$117,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP3 (25)	March 2012 Flood Damage: Local and regional renewal works	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$1,446,000	2%	Revenue	RMS

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Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
DPP3 (25)	Muttama Creek Cycleway and Pedestrian Path: Footpath Construction and renewal	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$94,000	50%	Revenue	RMS
DPP3 (25)	Town & Village Footpaths: Footpath construction and renewal works	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$28,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP1 (28)	Tree planting and street beautification	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$41,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
DPP1 (28)	Library: Community programs and events	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$5,800	-	NA	NSW Arts
DPP3 (33)	Library: New Computers and Library furniture	Cootamundra	Feb 2014	\$14,900	67%	Revenue	NSW Arts
DPP3 (35)	Tourism: Printing and distribution of Cootamundra brochures	Cootamundra	Jan 2014	\$31,000	100%	Reserves	Nil
DPP1 (37)	Nuring Home: Council contribution for fire sprinkler system	Cootamundra	June 2014	\$160,000	100%	Revenue	Nil
	Streetscape commercial area reconstruction East and Neill Streets Harden Stage 2 Local Roads Special Grant	Harden	January - June 2015	\$1.45 million dollars	0%		RMS and Kruger Trust, Essential Energy.
	Newson park replacement toilet block including unisex disabled toilet	Harden	January 2015	\$108,000	100	Revenue	Nil

Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
	Trinity centre Unisex Disabled toilet facility completion revenue funds 100 %.	Harden	September 2014	\$45,000	100	Revenue	Nil.
	Streetscape Project stage 1 Neill, Station and Whitton Streets of Harden Commercial area.	Harden	December 2013	\$1.6 million dollars	90%	Revenue.Reserves and Kruger Trust	Nil
	Flood grant works 2012 – 14 RMS grant works on rural local flood affected roads including pavement, drainage and table drain wash away. Works included betterment works to safeguard recurrences.	Harden	2014	\$4,000,000	0	NA	RMS
	Bathurst Street Footbridge Co funded flood grant works to replace a suddenly lost (washed away) footbridge that contained a main town sewer main and water main in Harden	Harden	2012	\$200,000	50%	Sewerage fund	RMS
	Murrumburrah CBD footpath upgrade works.	Harden	2008-2012	\$500,000	80%	Revenue	Department of Regional Australia Local Government, Arts and Sport.

Ref	Nature of project	Council	Date completed	Total cost	% Council funds	Source of Council Funds	State and Federal agency partners
	Truck wash project. reconstruct existing truck wash to a complaint system.	Harden	Dec 2014	\$200,000	50 %	Revenue and Kruger Trust	RMS and Department of Infrastructure under the Nation Building Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Ability to employ a wider range of skilled staff

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

Both councils have well established programs of training staff in house, with Cootamundra having averaged over 10% of the workforce as trainees or apprentices over the past seven years and Harden averaging 7% over the same period. This has included:

- Trainee Engineers – Degree and Diploma level
- Trainee Accountants – Degree level
- Trainee Building Surveyors – Diploma level
- Trainee Environmental Health Officers - Diploma level
- Trainee Horticulturalists – Certificate IV level
- Trainee Arborists - Certificate IV level
- Apprentice Plumbers - Certificate IV level
- Apprentice Parks & Gardens - Certificate IV level
- Apprentice Plant Mechanics - Certificate IV level
- Apprentice Carpenters - Certificate IV level
- Trainee Plant Operators – Certificate III level
- Trainee Lifeguards - Certificate III level
- Trainee Customer Services Officers - Certificate III level

Cootamundra has recently expanded this 'train your own' philosophy by partnering with NSW Health to employ an Aboriginal Environmental Health Officer Trainee under the Aboriginal Environmental Health Officer Trainee program. This is a six year joint commitment with a BSc degree qualification as the outcome.

Both councils also use consultancy and contract labour where that is deemed more appropriate than seeking to employ staff. In the past few years this has included:

- Outsourced IT / managed services
- Engineering design
- Asset management planning
- Valuation services
- External audit
- Access to regional expertise through resource sharing (internal audit / town planning / building surveyor / Sutherland Shire sister city)

Table: Awards and citations for existing staff

Date	Winner	Award
October 2014	Cootamundra Shire Council	Winner - AR Bluett Memorial Award, Rural Category <i>The greatest accolade a council can achieve, awarded annually since 1945 to the most progressive Council in NSW¹¹</i>

¹¹ Cootamundra Shire Council's winning submission for the AR Bluett Memorial Award, <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/files/imce-uploads/127/bluett-award-2014-cootamundra.pdf>

Date	Winner	Award
April 2015	Cootamundra Revenue Officer, Susan Pardy	TAFE Wagga Wagga Campus Outstanding Achievement Award. <i>Awarded to the top student in the campus (of 1,200) each year.</i> TAFE Riverina Business Management Excellence Award
October 2014	Harden Shire Council	IPWEA 2014 Engineering Excellence Awards Complete Multi Disciplinary Project Management Highly Commended Award for Harden Streetscape Improvement Project Stage 1.
June 2014	Cootamundra Trainee Building Surveyor, Luke Izzard	ATEL Trainee of the Year Award at the Cootamundra Business Awards
May 2014	Cootamundra Library	Nominated as one of Australia's favourite libraries with the Australian Library and Information Association
March 2014	Cootamundra Revenue Officer, Susan Pardy	Nominated for the Ministers Awards for Women in Local Government
June 2013	Cootamundra Trainee Accountant, Matilda Cowan	ATEL Trainee of the Year Award at the Cootamundra Business Awards
June 2012	Cootamundra Public Relations Officer, Linda Wiles	Award for Tourism and Promotion at the Cootamundra Business Awards
October 2011	Harden Shire Council	IPWEA 2011 Engineering Excellence Awards Three R's Recovering Recycling and Reusing Award.. Winner Murrumburrah Footpath Boardwalk Project,
August 2011	Cootamundra Shire Council	Winner A Division – Small Town – Big Solar at the Local Government & Shires Associations' Excellence in the Environment Awards – Energy Savings & Climate Change Adaptation / Mitigation

Knowledge, creativity and innovation

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Cootamundra heated pool project. Design and construction undertaken by Council using subcontract and council day labour. All new change rooms, kiosk, offices and indoor 25 metre heated pool using the latest solar heating and cooling technologies. Resulted in project being finished \$100k under budget (\$2.4M) allowing additional upgrades in pool complex.
- Scores on Doors App. Council partnered with software developer Point Duty Local Government Solutions to test a new mobile App designed to allow easy public access to information about individual food premises standards and provide food businesses with an accessible online food premises assessment.
- Harden Wifi project – as a result of Teltstra being unable to provide adequate internet Harden investigated alternative providers and ultimately invited South Western Wireless Communications (SWW) to set up an alternative local network, which provides free wifi in the main shopping area and alternative commercial services to the town. Cootamundra Council will consider a partnership with SWW to extend the network in to Cootamundra.¹²
- Effluent reuse system. Over 12 years all Cootamundra parks and gardens and sporting fields, plus the private 18 hole golf course, plus the State high School and two State Primary Schools have been supplied with tertiary treated and chlorinated effluent reuse irrigation water. In the last year all pumping and filtration systems have been upgraded to increase capacity to deliver effluent as needed.
- Contaminated soil rehabilitation in partnership with private industry (See Waste Science in 'More robust revenue' above)
- Green waste implementation. Cootamundra now collects all greenwaste, which is composted and returned as soil on parks and gardens, provided free to residents and used to rehabilitate old waste sites.
- Harden Management of State of the Art Kruger Hydrotherapy Pool – Harden partnered with the Kruger Trust (a local benevolent trust) to build and operate a medical centre and hydrotherapy pool. The medical centre is now leased to a medical group providing medical services to Harden and surrounds, and the Hydrotherapy Pool opened with Harden and the Kruger Trust both making a commitment for the first 12 months to cover the operational costs.
- Harden has retained its knowledge base in the Bitumen spray seal areas of design and management of its spray seal operations including bitumen sprayer and support vehicles. One of only two Council in NSW still operating such, the other being Gosford City Council. All works design and works staff are fully trained in the respective areas.

Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Responsive to policy change and able to achieve IPR within existing resources
- LEP, DCP undertaken in-house
- FFTF undertaken in-house

¹² <http://www.swwcc.com.au/index.html>

Cootamundra Council is working with South Western Wireless Communication Company who are interested in extending the high speed internet network already implemented in Harden, to Cootamundra. The detail of the proposal will be included in the July 2015 Cootamundra Council Meeting Business Paper. <http://www.cootamundra.nsw.gov.au/council/council-meeting-documents/2015-council-meetings.aspx>

Effective regional collaboration

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils¹³:

- Cootamundra is a foundation member of the Riverina Eastern Region of Councils (REROC) and having held the Chair and played an active role in all REROC projects can claim to have played more than a passing role in REROC's considerable achievements.¹⁴
- Both Cootamundra and Harden have been in an alliance with RFS, Young and Boorowa for more than a decade to provide bushfire services to the South west Slopes Zone of the RFS.
- Both Harden and Cootamundra have been part of a seven council waste management group (SWRWMG) to provide a full waste disposal services to the region, with Harden being the management council on behalf of the group.
- Cootamundra operates a Materials Recycling Facility in conjunction with its waste depot providing recycling services to the councils of Harden, Young, Junee, Gundagai, Coolamon and Temora.
- Cootamundra operates a regional airport from which activities such as fire fighting, aerial crop spraying, aircraft maintenance and pilot training are provided to the surrounding region.
- Cootamundra operates a Stock Selling Centre which services the agricultural industry in an approximately 100 kilometre radius, with particularly high representation from properties in Harden, Young, Yass and Temora.
- Harden Shire Council has a collaborative "Sister City" arrangement with Sutherland Shire Council that provides mutually beneficial outcomes.¹⁵

Credibility for more effective advocacy

Leadership roles and positions of influence in the local government industry

Position holder	Title	Organisation
State Level Positions		
Cr Paul Braybrooks (OAM) Cootamundra Councillor	Treasurer	Local Government NSW (LGNSW) The peak industry association that represents the interests of all 152 NSW general purpose councils, 12 special purpose councils and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.
Cr Paul Braybrooks (OAM)	Director	StateCover Mutual Limited Specialised workers compensation insurer of NSW Local Government organisations.
Cr Paul Braybrooks (OAM)	Board Member	Murrumbidgee Local Health District Care and control of the Murrumbidgee District Hospital system under NSW Health.

¹³ Page 8, Merger Business Plan provides a list of existing Regional Partnership Arrangements.

¹⁴ REROC Report - Achieving Strategic Capacity through Regional Collaboration
<http://www.cootamundra.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/6.-REROC-Report-Achieving-Strategic-Capacity-through-Regional-Collaboration.pdf>

¹⁵ Letter of support from JW Rayner, General Manager, Sutherland Shire Council.

Position holder	Title	Organisation
Cr Paul Braybrooks (OAM)	Board Member	Museums and Galleries NSW Responsible for museums and galleries in NSW under NSW Arts.
Cr Chris Manchester Harden Councillor	Director	Local Government NSW (LGNSW)
Chris Imrie Cootamundra Manager Development Services	Member	NSW Department of Fair Trading 'Plumbing Industry Round Table' A consultative group established by NSW Fair Trading to facilitate consultation between the agency and plumbing industry stakeholders related to the regulation of plumbing under the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 and the Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2012.
Greg Ewings Cootamundra Manager Facilities and Services	Conference Presenter	Waste 2015 – The Coffs Harbour Waste Conference
Glen McAtear Cootamundra Compliance Officer	Vice President	United Services Union The largest local government union in NSW, with over 30,000 members.
Glen McAtear Cootamundra Quality & Compliance Officer	Delegate	Australian Services Union One of the largest trade unions in Australia, representing members across the country, including in local government.
Susan Pardy Cootamundra Revenue Officer	Executive Committee	NSW Revenue Professionals Professional association for local government rating and revenue functions, promoting best practice and elevating general and technical knowledge of practitioners.
Regional Positions		
Cr John Horton Harden Mayor	Member	Australia National University Rural Clinical Doctors Advisory Committee
Cr John Horton Harden Mayor	Member	Southern NSW Grain Supply Chain Infrastructure Development Committee

Position holder	Title	Organisation
Gary Arthur Cootamundra Director Engineering Services	Chair	Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) NSW South West Group Leading professional association that connects, represents and leads public works professionals.
Cr John Horton Harden Mayor	Deputy Chair	South West Slopes Noxious Plants Authority
Cr Paul Braybrooks (OAM) Cootamundra Councillor	Chair	REROC and Riverina JO Regional advocacy, resource sharing and collaboration of 12 member councils in the Riverina.
Mark Ellis Cootamundra Manager Works and Services	Secretary / Treasurer	IPWEA NSW South West Group
Chris Imrie Cootamundra Manager Development Services	President	Riverina Environmental Health and Building Professionals Group An organisation dedicated to the advancement of regional professionals engaged in environmental development assessment, building control, environmental health regulation and town planning disciplines.
Cr Chris Manchester Harden Councillor	Deputy Chairperson	Goldenfields Water County Council Regional water supply and infrastructure, based in the Riverina Region, for 8 LGAs. Supply to the Cootamundra Town area and the Harden Shire is provided in bulk and reticulation and is handled by the councils.
Susan Pardy Cootamundra Revenue Officer	Chairperson	NSW Revenue Professionals – Riverina Group
Cr Doug Phillips Cootamundra Councillor	Board Member	Murrumbidgee Medicare Local Murrumbidgee Regional Health Services.
Cr John Horton Harden Mayor	Board Member	Murrumbidgee Medicare Local Murrumbidgee Regional Health Services.

Position holder	Title	Organisation
Cr Denis Palmer Cootamundra Councillor	Councillor	Goldenfields Water County Council
Ken Trethewey General Manager	Delegate & Executive Member	Riverina Regional Library

Capable partner for State and Federal agencies

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Regional Freight Transport Planning – Cootamundra has a leading role in REROC/Riverina JO Pilot in this project being undertaken with the support of the DPC, RMS, NSW Trade and Investment, Transport for NSW and Regional Development Australia- Riverina. It builds on REROC's existing Regional Freight Transport Plan¹⁶ to focus on industry specific transport routes to provide a coherent picture of freight movements, the volume and value of those movements, obstacles to efficient movement and to identify where future investment in road and rail infrastructure should be focussed.
- Regional Planning Initiatives – Cootamundra is also playing a leading role in this project of REROC/Riverina JO Pilot to explore opportunities to undertake and deliver more regional landuse planning. Initially the project is focusing on mapping all current and planned industrial land in the region. This information will be provided spatially, on-line as an additional layer to REROC's existing Regional Transport Plan. The project has been identified by NSW Trade and Investment, Department of Planning and Environment and Regional Development Australia-Riverina as being needed to assist in progressing economic development in the region. The project is facilitated by the DPC.
- Regional Organics Management Plan – initially prepared in 2005, the Regional Organics Management Plan (ROMP) responded to an identified need to better understand the supply and demand for organic waste in the region in order to determine whether efficiencies could be achieved in the management of the waste stream. The ROMP looked at the organic waste stream on an industry by industry basis and also on an LGA by LGA basis estimating the total volume of waste generated and identifying how and where the waste was disposed. It also considered the organic waste processors already operating in the region and their capacity to increase processing. Ultimately the Plan found that the cost of transport undermined the viability of processing the waste in a central location and it concluded that REROC and its member councils needed to identify ways in which the waste stream could be processed locally. This lead directly to REROC's involvement in the Closed Loop Composting project and ultimately the Cluster Composting Trial undertaken by Cootamundra on behalf of Gundagai, Junee, Coolamon.
- Strong committee structure that links council with key agencies (traffic plan, emergency management.)
- Both councils are trusted financial partners of the State and Federal governments for delivery of major projects (e.g. recent grants for Fixing Country Roads/HVSPP Suttons Lane and Cunningar Road).
- Harden Council has recently passed an audit of its adminisatraion systems for the Roads to Recovery grants from the Federal governments Department of Infrastructure.

¹⁶ <http://reroc.com.au/projects/regional-freight-transport-plan>

Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

- Skilled, experienced staff to develop plans and react to events e.g. flood, section 44 emergencies.
- Risk management plans and practices in place.

High quality political and managerial leadership

Current attributes and practices in Cootamundra and Harden Shire Councils:

Both Harden and Cootamundra councils are active participants in the local government arena and regularly advocate for the local communities they serve. Over a number of years, both councils have been active in making their views known in an effort to improve the local government sector overall and to improve relationships with other levels of government. Both councils' actively advocate community needs to other levels of government and regularly make submissions to and become involved in all issues effecting local government.

Both councils' believe that whilst their primary current responsibility is the good of their citizens, there is a wider responsibility towards the future, which requires each Council to be involved in and extend influence in areas that may impinge on its long term ability to care for and service its community.

Councillors from both councils' also actively participate through holding leadership and decision making positions in many State and Regional organisations. An example of this during 2014/15 was Councillors from both Cootamundra and Harden holding executive roles on the governing body of Local Government NSW, and Councillors holding leadership positions in organisations such as Local Government Procurement, StateCover, Murrumbidgee Local Health Board, Museums and Galleries NSW, REROC, CBRJO and Goldenfields Water County Council.