



BLAYNEY SHIRE **2025**
All the pieces together

The strategic plan of the Blayney Shire community



Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor and Councillors.....	3
Our present situation.....	4
Blayney – At a glance.....	4
Key strengths and challenges.....	6
The Community Strategic Plan structure.....	7
Integrated planning and reporting.....	7
Community Strategic Plan.....	7
10 years+.....	7
The whole shire not just Council.....	8
Needs a community engagement strategy.....	8
How the Community Strategic Plan is organised.....	8
Council’s roles.....	8
Our Community - definition.....	8
Blayney 2025: All the pieces together.....	9
Our preferred future.....	9
Values.....	9
Future Directions.....	10
Grow the wealth of the Shire.....	11
Future Direction 1: Grow the wealth of the Shire.....	11
A centre for sports and culture.....	13
Future Direction 2: A centre for sports and culture.....	13
Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes.....	14
Future Direction 3: Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes.....	14
Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure.....	15
Future Direction 4: Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure.....	15

Develop strong and connected communities.....	17
Future Direction 5: Develop strong and connected communities.....	17
Leadership.....	18
Future Direction 6: Leadership.....	18
The principles of social justice and sustainability.....	19
Social Justice.....	19
Sustainability.....	19
Quadruple bottom line.....	20
Links to NSW state plan.....	23
Community Engagement.....	25
The engagement process to develop the plan.....	25
Engagement process overview summary.....	26
Our ongoing community engagement framework.....	28
Language and meaning.....	28
The benefits of community engagement.....	28
The risks associated with community engagement.....	29
Guiding principles for community engagement.....	29
The Characteristics of successful community engagement in our Shire.....	30
The levels of engagement.....	31
Steps in planning community engagement and questions to ask.....	32
The engagement decision making tree.....	33
Community Engagement for future financial funding (Special Rate Variations) and service delivery.....	34

Message from the Mayor and Councillors

Blayney Shire Council

Blayney 2025 represents the vision, aspirations and priorities of our community and signifies a change in the way planning by Council and the Community is developed and implemented.

From the outset of the planning process we asked our community to '**Add their piece**' and help create the picture of what they want Blayney to be like in the future. The participation and contribution was positive and productive and the end community strategic plan, **Blayney 2025: All the pieces together**, provides the blueprint for our future.

The purpose of the community strategic plan is to:

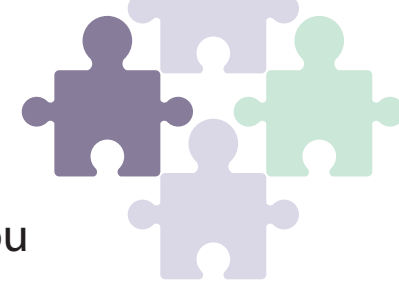
- Describe the preferred future;
- Describe the values to guide future choice and how we will work together as a community;
- Outline the strategic outcomes to achieve the preferred future;
- Provide a long-term focus for decision making and resource allocation – finances, workforce and asset management;
- Provide a basis for measuring our progress;
- Provide opportunities for community participation in decision making;
- Address social, economic, environmental and civic leadership issues.

We all have a responsibility and role to play in achieving Blayney 2025. Council is only one player. We cannot and should not do everything. We will do the things we have to do but there are many other groups and organisations who will be able to work on the strategic outcomes of the plan and our future.

We now look forward to working with you on **Blayney 2025: All the pieces together**.



The development of the documents of the Integrated Planning and Reporting has been a joint project of the WBC Alliance. All three councils and Central Tablelands Water have undertaken the same engagement and development processes. It is the intent of the Alliance that a combined strategic plan be developed that will identify future joint projects and resource sharing initiatives.



Thank you

Council would like to offer sincere thanks to all the people who contributed to the development of this community strategic plan and community engagement framework. Participants who engaged in workshops and meetings were representative of all the groups that influence what happens in Blayney Shire – Council, Government and our Neighbours, Agriculture, Mining, Business, Education, Training and Learning, Arts and Culture, Health and Wellbeing, Transport and Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation and Emergency Services. Throughout the development of other plans we also engaged with many individuals, groups and organisations. The combined processes have given us a deep understanding of what is important to our community and has both informed and guided the development of Blayney 2025: All the pieces together.

Contact details:

Blayney 2025: All the pieces together

In the first instance please contact:
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Our present situation

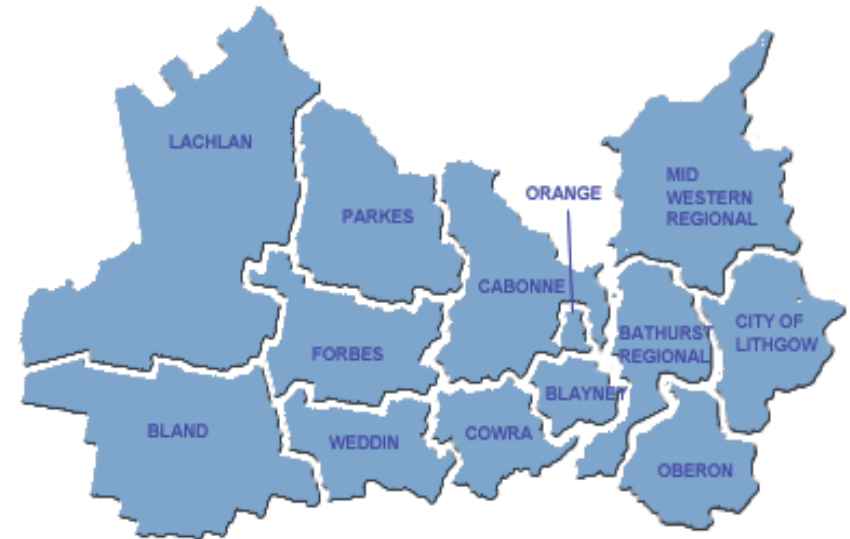
Blayney – At a glance

Blayney Shire has an area of 1,524.7 square kilometres and is located in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales, approximately three hours by road from the centre of Sydney. The principal town in the Shire is Blayney, situated some 37km southwest of Bathurst and approximately 244km by road from Sydney. It is the centre of a district, which stretches east to Bathurst, southwest to Cowra and north to Orange. Blayney Shire is comprised of a number of villages including Millthorpe; Carcoar; Mandurama; Lyndhurst; Neville; Newbridge; Hobbys Yards and Barry. The Shire sits at an altitude of 850 metres above sea level

Map of Blayney Shire boundaries

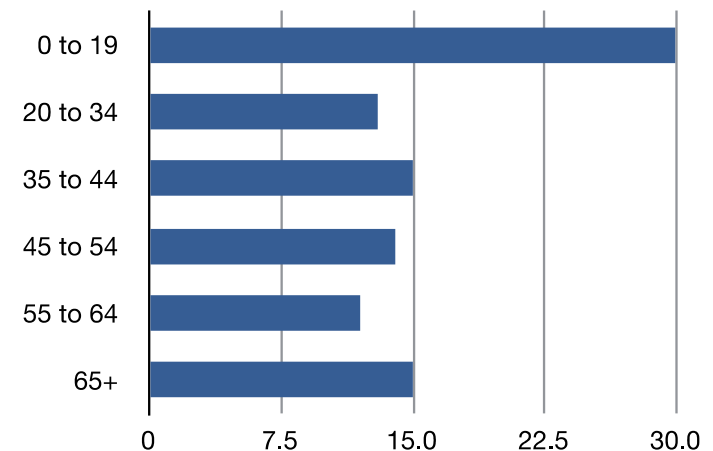


Location of Blayney Shire in the NSW Central West



At the 2006 census the Shire had a population of 6,593 persons equally distributed between men and women. As the table shows the Shire has a relatively young population and even distribution across the age groups. The median age was 39 years compared to 37 for Australia. Of all occupied properties at the time of the 2006 census 72% were family households compared to 67% for Australia.

Percentage of Blayney population by age groups



Transport

Council owns and maintains 751 kilometres of road throughout the Shire. Transport is a key issue and the Shire is serviced by the Mid-Western Highway that links Bathurst (35km) in the east with Marsden to the west, and services the larger regional centre of Cowra (69km) south of Blayney. Blayney is also linked to Orange via a road to the north-west. Other roads provide connections to Canberra via Goulbourn and Forbes via Canowindra.

In addition to road linkages there is also rail. The Main Western Railway traverses the Shire providing a daily commuter service between Dubbo and Sydney stopping at Blayney. At Blayney there is also a link to the main southern line at Demondrille via Cowra.

Economy

Key industries: Blayney Shire is predominately rural in nature, supporting primary industries such as dairying, beef, lamb, wool, viticulture, orchards, potatoes, canola and other grains. Mining is also a key industry and the area supports other industrial activities such as manufacturing, transportation and food processing.

At the time of the 2006 census the median household income was \$862 per week compared with \$1,027 for Australia.



Employment spread per industry sector

	<i>Total</i>
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	451
Mining	161
Manufacturing	280
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	38
Construction	188
Wholesale trade	90
Retail trade	231
Accommodation & food services	143
Transport, postal & warehousing	138
Information media & telecommunications	24
Financial & insurance services	34
Rental, hiring & real estate services	29
Professional, scientific & technical services	106
Administrative & support services	49
Public administration & safety	184
Education & training	210
Health care & social assistance	304
Arts & recreation services	34
Other services	114

Education

In the Shire there are 8 Primary Schools: 7 public and 1 Catholic and one high School.

Key strengths and challenges

Blayney is an agricultural shire with strong mining heritage. Our town, villages and settlements are spread throughout a beautiful landscape of undulating hills and tablelands. Here the Blayney Shire communities enjoy a pace of living that is relaxing, genuine and in tune with the changes of a temperate climate with four distinct seasons.

The spirit of community is strong. A history of supporting one another when times get tough continues today. The Shire has quality schools, and facilities support participation in sports, recreation and healthy lifestyles.

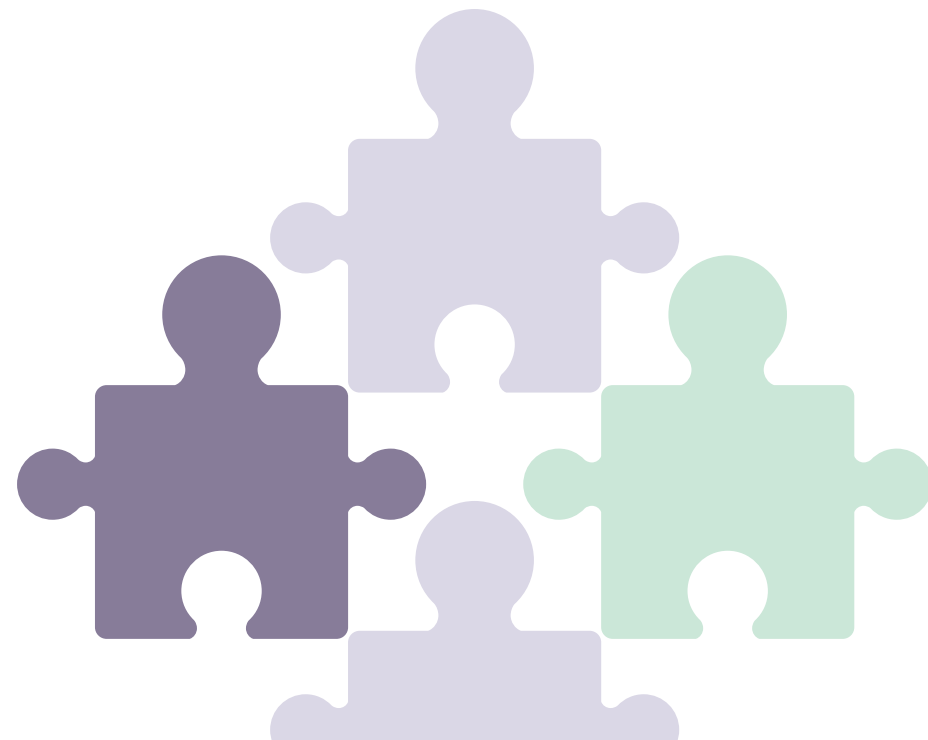
Although people in the Shire have good access to medical facilities at neighbouring centres there is a need for a doctor to operate the existing emergency centre. If these facilities are not used there is a risk they will be lost. Law enforcement is also not as readily available as it could be in emergencies. These issues bring about unease in the community.

There are many opportunities for economic growth in building on agriculture, transport, tourism, industry and mining activities. Mining however can be a double-edged sword. It benefits the local economy, but causes pressures in housing, employment and tourism. Shift patterns also affect participation in sport and community life.

Our settlements are spread out and need to be connected. Contemporary information and communication technologies offer an opportunity to improve connections between each other and the rest of the world.

Retailing needs to complement larger neighbouring centres and also focus on differentiation. Many of our heritage and other buildings along with our town and villages would benefit from beautification and improved physical access.

Like many rural areas we need to provide the opportunities and facilities for our younger and older community members to live in the Shire and fully engage in community life.



The Community Strategic Plan structure

Integrated planning and reporting

The following diagram shows the relationship between the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Council's Delivery Program and Council's Annual Operational Plan.

The delivery program deals with the work Council can do to achieve the CSP. The Strategic Outcomes in the CSP where Council has a role come across into the Delivery Program. It needs to be stated that Council alone cannot deliver all the strategic outcomes in the CSP. Many will require cooperation across the various sectors of the Blayney shire community.

<p>Community Strategic Plan 10 years+ The whole shire not just Council Needs a community engagement strategy</p>		
<p>Vision (what we want the Shire to be) Values (to guide future choices and behaviour) Future directions (Groupings of similar work)</p>	<p>Delivery Program (4 years) Where Council has a role Supported by: Financial plan Asset management plan Workforce plan</p>	
<p>Strategic Outcomes Councils role Provider, Facilitator Advocate</p>	<p>Strategic Outcomes (Where Council has a role)</p>	<p>Operational Plan Annual</p>
	<p>Actions Programs Projects</p>	<p>Actions Programs Projects Budget</p>
<p>Performance measures</p>	<p>Performance measures</p>	<p>Tasks</p>
<p>What</p>	<p>What and How</p>	<p>How</p>

How the Community Strategic Plan is organised

Blayney 2025: *All the pieces together* has the following components:

- A vision of the preferred future for the Shire;
- A values statement to guide future choices and how we will work together as a community;
- Six future directions and associated strategic outcomes to follow to achieve the preferred future. The future directions and strategic outcomes are written in the present tense. They describe the ideal outcomes that the community want to see happen.
- The role council will play in achieving each of the strategic outcomes;
- Those groups or organisations that could collaborate around the strategic outcomes;
- Performance measures to help us now if our efforts are making a difference

Council's roles

The Community Strategic Plan is for the whole shire and Council cannot deliver all the strategic outcomes. Council will only be able to contribute where there is a role. Broadly speaking Council has four roles:

- **Provider:** Council does the work e.g. road maintenance or undertakes regulatory responsibilities. e.g. the local planning scheme
- **Facilitator:** Council will help out or work with others to get things done.
- **Advocate:** Council will speak up for and support a community initiative or issue.

Where council does not have a role the various sections of the Blayney community will need to work together and collaborate.

Our Community - definition

Throughout the *Blayney 2025: All the pieces together* the terms 'our' and 'community' are used. Whilst the primary concern will always be the residents of the Shire, we acknowledge that 'our community' includes all those who live here, own property here, do business here and visit Blayney Shire.



Blayney 2025: *All the pieces together*

The Community Strategic Plan

Our preferred future

(What we want Blayney Shire to be in 2025)

Our Shire of welcoming communities

The many communities of the Shire's town, villages and settlements are supportive and welcoming to those who live here and also those who visit.

Beautiful and productive landscapes

The landscape in which we live is both beautiful and productive.

Rural and mining heritage

Our heritage of rural living amidst agricultural and mining production has taught us much about the nature of these activities and how they can exist in harmony.

Showing the world how agriculture, mining and industry can work together for the greatest good

We are eager to share these lessons and learnings with other communities around the world.

A place to live your dreams

In Blayney Shire there is both space and time to make and live your dreams!

Values

These are the values that will guide our future choices and the way we work together as a community.

With a generosity of spirit we will:

Be inclusive and united

Act honestly and respect each other

Have a "can do" attitude

Think outside the square and

Back ourselves

Future Directions

1. Grow the wealth of the Shire
2. A centre for sports and culture
3. Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes
4. Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure
5. Develop strong and connected communities
6. Leadership

Grow the wealth of the Shire

Future Direction 1: Grow the wealth of the Shire

Employment is needed to keep people in and attract people to the Shire. There are opportunities for growth in niche agriculture, mining and tourism. Retailing needs greater levels of local support to remain viable and grow. There is also a need for the water, energy and transport sectors to be sustainable and provide a platform for future growth.

Growth, however, needs to respect the environment and rural landscapes. Mining brings economic benefits but also pressures on accommodation, wages and shift work constraints on community living. There is the potential for the community and mining industry to work together for mutual benefit. The world needs to know about the benefits of living and working in Blayney Shire through the development of a well recognised brand and communication activities.

Strategic outcome		Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 1.1	A viable agricultural sector with niche opportunities and products coupled with lifestyle.	Provider (planning and promotion) Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Industry bodies • State and Australian Governments • Educational institutions
CSP 1.2	A thriving mining industry that supports and works well with the community.	Provider Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining industry • Industry bodies • Community • Educational institutions • State and Australian Governments
CSP 1.3	A well established, connected and prosperous tourism industry.	Provider Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local tourism businesses • State and Australian Governments • Other LGA's • Industry bodies • Community groups • Business sector • Mine

	Strategic outcome	Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 1.4	Internationally recognised brand for Blayney Shire.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Australian Governments • Other LGA's • Industry bodies, • Community groups • Business sector, • Mine
CSP 1.5	Sustainable water, energy and transport sectors to support future growth.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Australian Governments • Central Tablelands Water • Industry bodies
CSP 1.6	A vibrant local retail and business sector.	Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire Businesses • Community • State and Australian Governments

Performance indicators:

1. GDP for the Shire
2. Visitation numbers and spend
3. People employed in mining
4. Reduction in vacant shops
5. Brand development and recognition
6. Transport utilisation
7. Water storage statistics
8. New start up businesses

A centre for sports and culture

Future Direction 2: A centre for sports and culture

Participation in sports and cultural activities and events has and will continue to bring the community together. A coordinated program of events also has the potential to attract visitors and help to grow and sustain local businesses.

Events can be subject to funding pressures, red tape, regulation and rising insurance costs. A cooperative community approach to events can help overcome these issues. The aim is for Blayney Shire to become known as a centre where sports, arts and entertainment are central to an enviable lifestyle and great visitor experience.

Strategic outcome	Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 2.1 Cultural and sporting events are coordinated and resourced.	Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event organisers • Sponsors • Newcrest Mining Operations • Schools • Sport and recreation • Village Associations
CSP 2.2 Strong participation in sporting events and competitions.	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • State and Australian Governments • Business sector • Sponsors • Families • Village Associations
CSP 2.3 Blayney Shire - a centre for arts, performance and entertainment.	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcrest Mining Operations • Sponsors • State Government • Schools • Village Associations

Performance indicators:

1. Number of community and cultural events
2. Attendance levels at events
3. Cost of insurance
4. Levels of sponsorship
5. Number of sporting teams and participants

Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes

Future Direction 3: Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes

Although the rural landscapes are beautiful, the environmental facts are that less than 10% of native vegetation remains in the Shire and there are issues with erosion and salinity. Action must be taken to encourage sustainable land use practices particularly if population increases. The biodiversity of our water ways is also important and there are rich and productive soil types that need to be mapped and protected.

Our heritage stories need to be interpreted and made accessible. We have a built heritage that gives character to our villages. This can be enhanced and supported through sympathetic urban design and landscaping.

	Strategic outcome	Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 3.1	Retention of native vegetation with linking corridors.	Provider Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Groups Village Associations State and Australian Governments Private enterprise Mine Farmers Schools Catchment Management Authorities
CSP 3.2	Biodiversity of waterways.	Facilitate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catchment Management Authorities Water users Land holders Land Care State and Australian Governments
CSP 3.3	Heritage sites in the natural and built environment are identified and understood.	Provider Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups State Government Historical Society
CSP 3.4	Sustainable land use practices across the Shire.	Provider (planning LEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community

Performance indicators:

1. Increased signage and information about heritage
2. Increased percentage of native vegetation
3. Decreased erosion
4. Carbon offsets
5. Willow removal
6. Protection of soil types
7. River water quality

Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure

Future Direction 4: Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure

Social and physical infrastructure is the skeleton that supports a community. Transport, rail and roads connect the Shire to the region and help people and goods move in to, out of and around.

Information and communication technologies are the new highways to the world and it is important that there is coverage across the Shire so everyone can be connected.

Water and sewer infrastructure are essential for public health and economic growth through property development.

Social infrastructure includes schools, government and emergency services, medical facilities, aged care and housing. This infrastructure needs to be funded, maintained and developed to ensure it meets the needs of the community.

	Strategic outcome	Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 4.1	Adequate provision of transport, roads, rail, information and communication technologies and community social assets.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments Industry Community members
CSP 4.2	Every village has access to water and sewerage services.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments Central Tablelands Water Village Associations
CSP 4.3	Improved access to community and public transport between villages and centres.	Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Government Transport operators Industry
CSP 4.4	Integrated medical and aged care facilities across the Shire	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments Facility operators

Strategic outcome		Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 4.5	Preservation and continued development of rail infrastructure.	Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments Industry
CSP 4.6	Sustainable waste management	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments Facility operators

Performance indicators:

1. Transport patronage
2. Properties connected to water and sewer
3. Aged care accommodation waiting lists and occupancy rates
4. Number of rail movements and tonnages carried
5. Community survey results
6. Infrastructure service levels

Develop strong and connected communities

Future Direction 5: Develop strong and connected communities

The geographic spread and distances between our town, villages and settlements can cause a lack of cohesion on occasions. There is a need to integrate, improve communication and linkages between our communities so that they can share, support and learn from one another. This will also help build their capacity to be self reliant. Both transport and modern technology can help with this.

Strong communities are healthy and fit communities and this is especially important as the population ages. Access to medical facilities when needed is important particularly in emergencies. Balanced communities retain both younger and older members and this helps maintain viable population levels. Both age groups need the facilities and opportunities to participate and contribute to community life.

	Strategic outcome	Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 5.1	A diverse and sustainable population in our communities and villages.	Provider (land use planning) Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Associations Progress Associations State and Australian Governments Industry Landowners Developers
CSP 5.2	Fit and healthy community members.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Local produce providers Sport and recreation groups Community groups Australian Government
CSP 5.3	Full and equitable access and strong usage of Information and communication technologies across the Shire.	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Australian Governments NBN Co Telco's
CSP 5.4	Capable, self sufficient communities engaged in decision making about issues that affect them.	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents Schools Community groups Service clubs Village Associations Progress Associations

Performance indicators:

1. Population
2. Technology coverage
3. Health statistics
4. Community calendar of events
5. Community survey results

Leadership

Future Direction 6: Leadership

To achieve our preferred future we will all need to work together. Working together will be easily achieved if we have strong relationships and networks. Present relationships and networks will benefit from a planned approach to community engagement and involvement in decisions and activities that are important to people.

Building the capacity of existing and emerging community leaders throughout the Shire will strengthen networks, build trust and result in more successful outcomes.

Elected representatives need to work as a team and the Council organization needs to be well run and resourced to do the work it has to do to help achieve the preferred future. Governance needs to be open with every interaction an opportunity to build trust, confidence and credibility.

Strategic outcome		Council Role	Who should collaborate
CSP 6.1	Good governance across our communities	Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Local Government • Community groups and committees • State and Australian Governments
CSP 6.2	Meaningful communication between the Shires communities and Council.	Provider Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Local Government • Community groups and committees • Australian and NSW Governments
CSP 6.3	A well-run Council organisation.	Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Local Government • State and Australian Governments • ALGA • LGSA
CSP 6.4	A safe community	Provider Facilitator Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency services • Roads & Maritime Services • State and Australian Governments • Australian Local Government Association • Local Government & Shires Associations of NSW

Performance indicators:

1. Engagement activities
2. Community satisfaction
3. Resource sharing projects
4. Communication processes

The principles of social justice and sustainability

The principles that underpin the **Blayney 2025: All the pieces together** are social justice and sustainability. All future directions and strategic outcomes seek to achieve sustainability and aspire for equity, access, participation and equal rights particularly for the disadvantaged and vulnerable within our community.

Social Justice

Equity: Decisions should reflect equality in the prioritising and allocation of resources.

Access: All people should have access to services, resources and opportunities to maintain and improve their quality of life.

Participation: Everyone should have the opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Rights: Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Sustainability

Sustainability describes the integration of environmental, social, economic and governance goals, processes and performances. However, these elements are not always in harmony.

Blayney Shire has many competing elements and a balance is required to ensure that the environment, agriculture, natural resources and economic development is considered at a local, state and national level; and that the Shire area remains attractive to residents and visitors.

Quadruple bottom line

The quadruple bottom line approach ensures that the Community strategic Plan is balanced. The CSP needs to adequately address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership considerations. The following table shows the relationship of the strategic outcomes in each future direction to the quadruple bottom line framework. Some strategic outcomes address more than one area of the quadruple bottom line framework. The plan has 21 social linkages, 9 environmental, 12 economic and 4 civic leadership.

Future direction	Strategic Outcome	Social	Environment	Economic	Civic leadership
Grow the wealth of the Shire	A viable agricultural sector with niche opportunities and products couples with Lifestyle	Employment	Sustainable farming practices	Key component of the economy now and in future	
	A thriving mining industry that supports and works well with the community	Employment and community support	Sustainable mining practices	Key contributor to the local economy	
	A well established, connected and prosperous tourism industry	Employment		Potential source of revenues	
	Internationally recognised brand for Blayney Shire				
	Sustainable water energy and transport sectors to support future growth				
	A vibrant local retail and business sector	Local employment			
	A centre for sports and culture	Cultural and sporting events are coordinated and resourced			

Future direction	Strategic Outcome	Social	Environment	Economic	Civic leadership
	Strong participation in sporting events and competitions				
	Blayney Shire a centre for arts, performance and entertainment			Will assist tourism	
Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes	Retention of native vegetation with linking corridors				
	Biodiversity of waterways				
	Heritage sites in the natural and built environment are identified and understood	Gives character to villages		Will assist tourism	
	Sustainable land use practices across the shire				
Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure	Adequate provision of transport, roads, rail, information and communication technologies and community social assets				
	Every village has access to water and sewerage services	Community health			
	Improved access to community and public transport between villages and centres				
	Integrated medical and aged care facilities across the Shire				

Future direction	Strategic Outcome	Social	Environment	Economic	Civic leadership
	Preservation and continued development of rail infrastructure	Public transport			
	Sustainable waste management	Community health			
Develop strong and connected communities	A diverse and sustainable population in our communities and villages				
	Fit and healthy community members				
	Full and equitable access and string usage of information and communication technologies across the Shire				
	Capable self sufficient communities engaged in decision making about issues that affect them				
Leadership	Good governance across our communities				
	Meaningful communication between Shire communities and Council				
	A well run Council organisation				
		21	9	12	4

Links to NSW state plan

NSW 2021 is the ten-year strategic plan to make New South Wales number one in the nation. It is based around five strategies. The table below shows the linkages between the future directions and strategic outcomes of the Blayney Community Strategic plan for Blayney Shire and the NSW 2021 strategies. There are many areas where the State and Blayney plan share directions.

NSW 2021 Strategies	Blayney CSP future directions and strategic outcomes
<p>Rebuild the economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve performance of the NSW economy • Rebuild State finances • Drive economic growth in regional NSW • Competitiveness of doing business in NSW • Downward pressure on the cost of living • Strengthen NSW skill base 	<p>Grow the wealth of the Shire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A viable agricultural sector with niche opportunities and products couples with Lifestyle • A thriving mining industry that supports and works well with the community • A well established, connected and prosperous tourism industry • Internationally recognised brand for Blayney Shire • Sustainable water energy and transport sectors to support future growth • A vibrant local retail and business sector
<p>Return quality services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Health • Family and community services • Education • Police and justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate provision of transport, roads, rail, information and communication technologies and community social assets • Improved access to community and public transport between villages and centres • Integrated medical and aged care facilities across the Shire • Preservation and continued development of rail infrastructure • Fit and healthy community members
<p>Renovate infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in critical infrastructure • Build liveable centres • Secure potable water supplies 	<p>Develop and maintain Shire infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every village has access to water and sewerage services • Full and equitable access and string usage of information and communication technologies across the Shire • Sustainable waste management

NSW 2021 Strategies	Blayney CSP future directions and strategic outcomes
<p>Strengthen our local environment and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect local environment • Opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments • Easier for people to be involved in their communities • Increase opportunities for seniors • Opportunity and partnership with the Aboriginal People • Cultural creative sporting and recreation opportunities • Prepared for major emergencies and natural disasters 	<p>A centre for sports and culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and sporting events are coordinated and resourced • Strong participation in sporting events and competitions • Blayney Shire a centre for arts, performance and entertainment <p>Preserve and enhance our heritage and rural landscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of native vegetation with linking corridors • Biodiversity of waterways • Heritage sites in the natural and built environment are identified and understood • Sustainable land use practices across the shire <p>Develop strong and connected communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse and sustainable population in our communities and villages • Capable self sufficient communities engaged in decision making about issues that affect them
<p>Restore accountability to Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence and integrity in the planning system • Trust in State and Local governments as service providers • Government transparency and access to government information • Involve the community in decision making 	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance across our communities • Meaningful communication between Shire communities and Council • A well run Council organisation

Community Engagement

The engagement process to develop the plan

The process for engaging the community in the development of the Community Strategic Plan began with identifying the 'whole system' of Blayney Shire; the complex network of groups, organisations and networks that influence or are influenced by what happens in the Shire.

The following groups were identified:

- Council, government and neighbours
- Agriculture
- Mining
- Business
- Education, training and learning
- Arts and culture
- Health and Well being
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Sports and Recreation
- Emergency Services

Representatives from each of these groups were invited to participate in a major, day long planning workshop to reflect on the areas past, explore the present situation – internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats; and design the preferred future.

On 25th July, 2011, 74 passionate community members, representative of the Shire's whole system and demographic profile, worked together to create the framework of what became Blayney 2025: *All the pieces together*. Using this approach all perspectives from all communities of interest and demographic profiles were heard.

Almost a month later on 22nd August 2011 a smaller representative group of community members, Councillors and Council management came together again for a day to "shape" the Community Strategic Plan using the unedited outputs of the planning workshop, other relevant plans – national, state and local – and an understanding of the present situation.

The draft plan was then distributed for comment to all those who had participated in the process. Minor modifications were made before it was presented to the November 2011 Council meeting and put on public display during December 2011. Again, minor modifications were made before being formally adopted by the Blayney Shire Council on behalf of the entire Blayney Shire Community on 12 March 2012.

Engagement with the community will be ongoing throughout the life of the Plan.

Engagement process overview

Step	Activity	Output/Outcome
1. Planning to Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning workshop involving Councillors and Council Management 	<p>Identification of Blayney Shire's whole system groups</p> <p>Identification of relevant groups within</p> <p>Development of key message to engage the community in the process</p> <p>Communication plan</p>
2. Communication and Recruitment	<p>Communication and recruitment activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail – letter of invite to participate + registration form • Advertising – monthly newspaper advertisement • Publicity – articles and segments in press and on radio, included in community newsletters • Council website • Presentations to raise awareness at village and community group meetings 	<p>Participants in planning process</p> <p>Comments on what is important to the community</p>
3. Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future planning workshop – day long workshop involving representatives from each of the 'whole system' groups working together. • Council staff workshops x 3 • Meetings • Individual contributions 	<p>Blayney Shire's present situation</p> <p>Preferred future</p> <p>Guiding values</p> <p>Differentiation</p>

Step	Activity	Output/Outcome
4. Shaping the Community Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning workshop with Councillors, Council management and community representatives working with :- unedited outputs of planning workshop, present situation information, other plans – LEP, Tourism Plan, Social Plan and relevant State and Federal plans and policies 	<p>Draft Community Strategic Plan</p> <p>Vision</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Future directions</p> <p>Strategic outcomes</p> <p>Council's role in achieving each of the strategic outcomes</p> <p>Others to collaborate</p> <p>Performance measures</p>
5. Public exhibition and comment period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulated to workshop participants and all who engaged with the process Circulated to Council staff Advertised Placed on website Made available to Village Associations and community groups 	<p>Comments on the draft plan</p> <p>Modifications to draft plan</p>
6. Adoption of the Community Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council meeting of 14 March 2012 	<p>Blayney 2025: All the pieces together – the Community Strategic Plan</p>

Our ongoing community engagement framework

Language and meaning

Community Engagement

- Community Engagement is a term that covers all the ways a Council and its' Community come together to improve decision-making, build relationships and partnerships, raising awareness and complementing representative democracy. It is a way of working side-by-side and building support for the shared goal of making the community a better place to live. Community engagement is an outcome.

Consultation

- The process of developing understanding of the issues and boundaries around a particular topic or issue before decisions are made. We consult with one another when the boundaries around a decision are not understood.

Communication

- The exchange of information. We communicate when the boundaries around a decision are understood.

Capacity building

- The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve a purpose.

Communities of interest

- All those who influence or are influenced by a particular proposed project, programme, issue or action

The benefits of community engagement

It is central to participatory democracy

Communities rightfully expect to have input into matters that affect them and seek involvement and engagement beyond the election of their political representatives. Community engagement complements the official electoral process and is a key method of participatory democracy.

Decision making is improved

Better decisions are made when information and all points of view are heard and understood. Where feasible and desirable, Council's decisions need to match the needs and aspirations of the community.

It builds trust

Trust and understanding are likely to grow in an environment where engagement and involvement is taken seriously and is well done.

It builds networks

When we work together we build relationships and have the opportunity to form purposeful networks and partnerships. In this environment collaboration, occurs more easily.

It helps build resilience and stronger communities

Trusting, confident and involved communities tend to be stronger and able to respond to change and circumstances 'together', combining expertise, experience and resources.

The risks associated with community engagement

The costs of poor engagement processes and tools

Communities recognise poor engagement processes and tools. Poorly managed community engagement will lead to scepticism and loss of trust. You need to use the right process in the right way.

Managing expectations

Engagement does not give decision-making powers to non-elected representatives. Sometimes engagement can raise unrealistic expectations of both Council and Community. Again, this is usually a product of poor practices.

Balancing the act

More is not necessarily better. The most appropriate form of engagement needs to be understood and well undertaken.

Budget and project management

Community engagement is 'part of' not an 'add on' to any project or programme.

The cost of not collaborating or sharing resources

Working on things that matter to the community without engagement can lead to conflict and costly rework.

Guiding principles for community engagement

The design and development of engagement activities in Blayney Shire will be guided by the following principles. We will strive to make all engagement – communication, consultation, involvement, collaboration and partnerships

- Inclusive and accessible
- Productive and enterprising
- Approachable and welcoming
- Consistent so we know where we stand
- Engaging, exciting and inspiring

The characteristics of successful community engagement in our Shire

These 'characteristics of success' will guide and inform how we design, implement and provide feedback on the outputs and outcomes of our community engagement activities.

The purpose of the engagement and how the input of the engagement will be used is clearly stated:

The purpose of the engagement is to be stated clearly from the outset. Checking the understanding of the purpose should also be undertaken at the beginning of any interaction so there is no confusion or unrealistic expectations. Similarly how the engagement input will be used should also be stated from the outset.

Activities are timely, held at the right time and given enough time.

Input is sought before decisions are made. Engagement activities are held so they do not clash with other events or activities; at a convenient time for those participating and enough time is given to discussion, comment capture and agreeing outcomes and actions.

Include all groups and organisations that have an interest in the engagement topic or issue

This will include demographic groupings, different cultural backgrounds, social economic-groups and geographic representation.

Create safe space and a positive atmosphere

Engagement should be seen as part of community life where people come together to discuss issues, opportunities and challenges. The atmosphere needs to be positive and welcoming, not combative. It should be a space where all alternatives can be explored in safety. Respect for one another and actively listening to understand the different points of view will help create 'safe space'. Just as community views and priorities are heard, so too are Council's views and priorities. It is a two-way activity.

Information is accessible

Information is written in plain English so it is easily understood. The implications of the information are also explained.

Existing networks are used

Communities are made up of different networks. Geographically based networks and communities of interested need to be understood and motivated to support engagement activities. Using this approach you are building and working from what already exists.

The capacity and capabilities of community leaders is developed and strengthened

The capacity of community leaders within these networks is developed and strengthened. Each community engagement activity is an opportunity to learn more about our community and the things that affect the Shire. Engagement knowledge, skills and attitudes can be built both within Council and also with community leaders.

It is not a 'one size fits all'

Different processes and mediums are used to engage different groups in the community.

The levels of engagement...

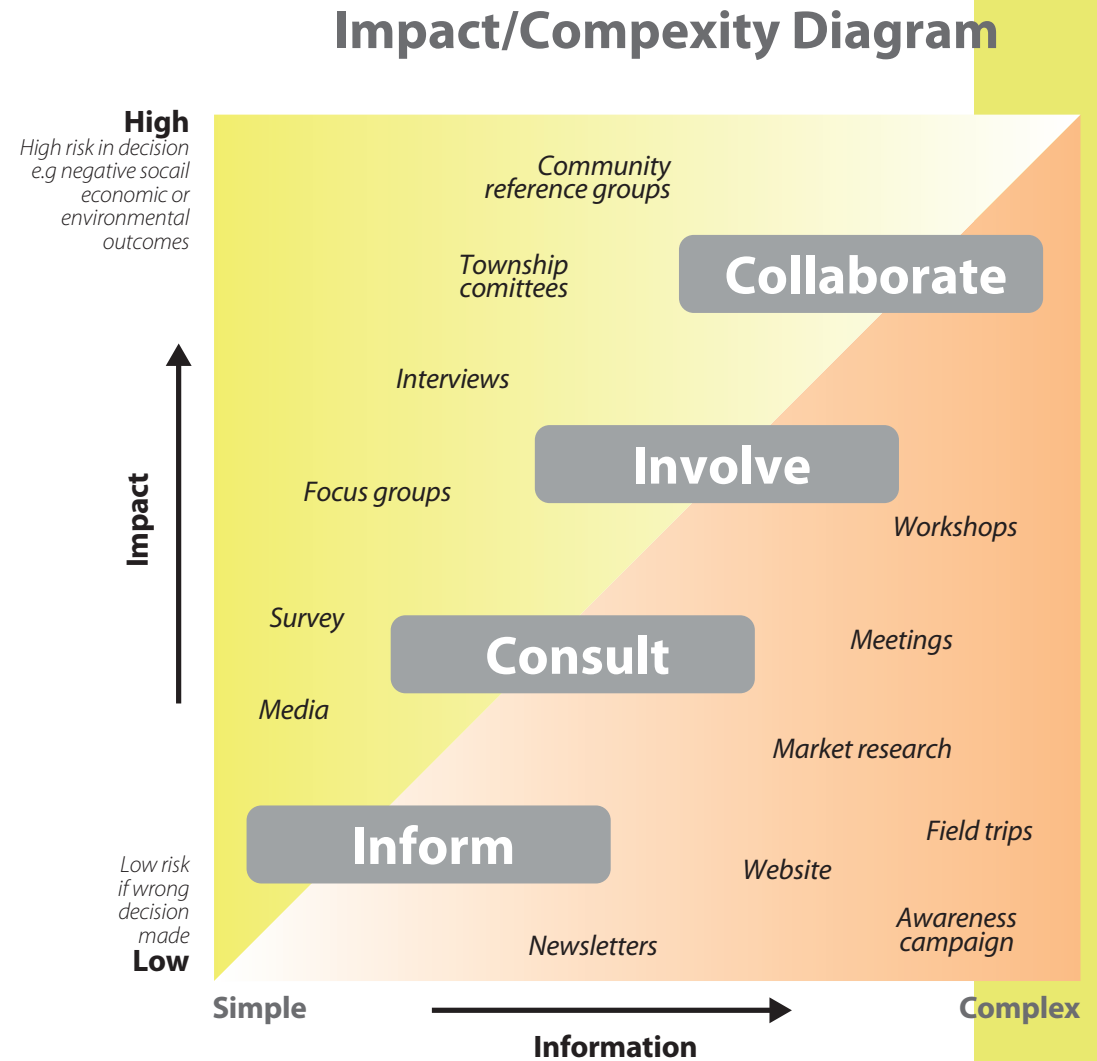
There are four levels of engagement and each level comes with the promise of what Council will do.

Levels of Community Engagement	
Level	Our promise
Inform	We will make sure you have the information you need and that the implications of the information are explained.
Consult	We will work with you to understand the issues and boundaries associated with a particular decision before the decision is made
Involve	We will explore options and priorities together so we all know what is the preferred
Collaborate	We will work together and share the responsibility

What level to use

The level of engagement is directly related to the complexity of the information needed and the degree of impact a project, programme or action could have on the community. The higher the impact, the more complex the information, the greater the potential risk within the decision and therefore the more engagement is needed.

The following Impact/Complexity Matrix links the likely impact and complexity of information with the types of community engagement that might be considered.



Steps in planning community engagement and questions to ask

When undertaking community engagement, Council will follow six steps and ask a series of associated questions:

Establish the level of impact and complexity of the project, programme or action

Council will ask:

- What is the likely impact of the project, programme, issue or action on the community? High? Low? Or somewhere In-between?
- Is it localised or does it involve the broader community?
- Is the issue or project straightforward and easy to understand or is it and the implications, complex?
- Where does it sit on the Risk/Complexity matrix?

Identify all those communities of interest who have an interest around the issue

Council will ask:

- Who has an interest in this project, program, issue or action?
- List all the individuals, groups and organisations.
- Make sure those who engage are 'representative' of all these relevant communities of interest

Plan the engagement process and gather or develop relevant information and resources

Council will ask:

- What is the purpose of the engagement?
- What processes will we use?
- What information do people need to engage well?
- If there is an engagement event, what are the logistics of the event we have to organise e.g. venue, catering, materials, technology

Engage the relevant and identified communities of interest

Council will ask:

- Have we given people enough notice?
- Does it clash with another event or priority in the community?
- Have we considered the convenience of participants?
- Am I fully prepared for the engagement?
- How we made it clear what the purpose of the engagement is?
- Does everyone know how their input will be used?

Feedback results of engagement and decision making if relevant

Council will ask:

- Have we let participants know and got agreement over how their input will be used?
- Have we let people know the outcome of their input?

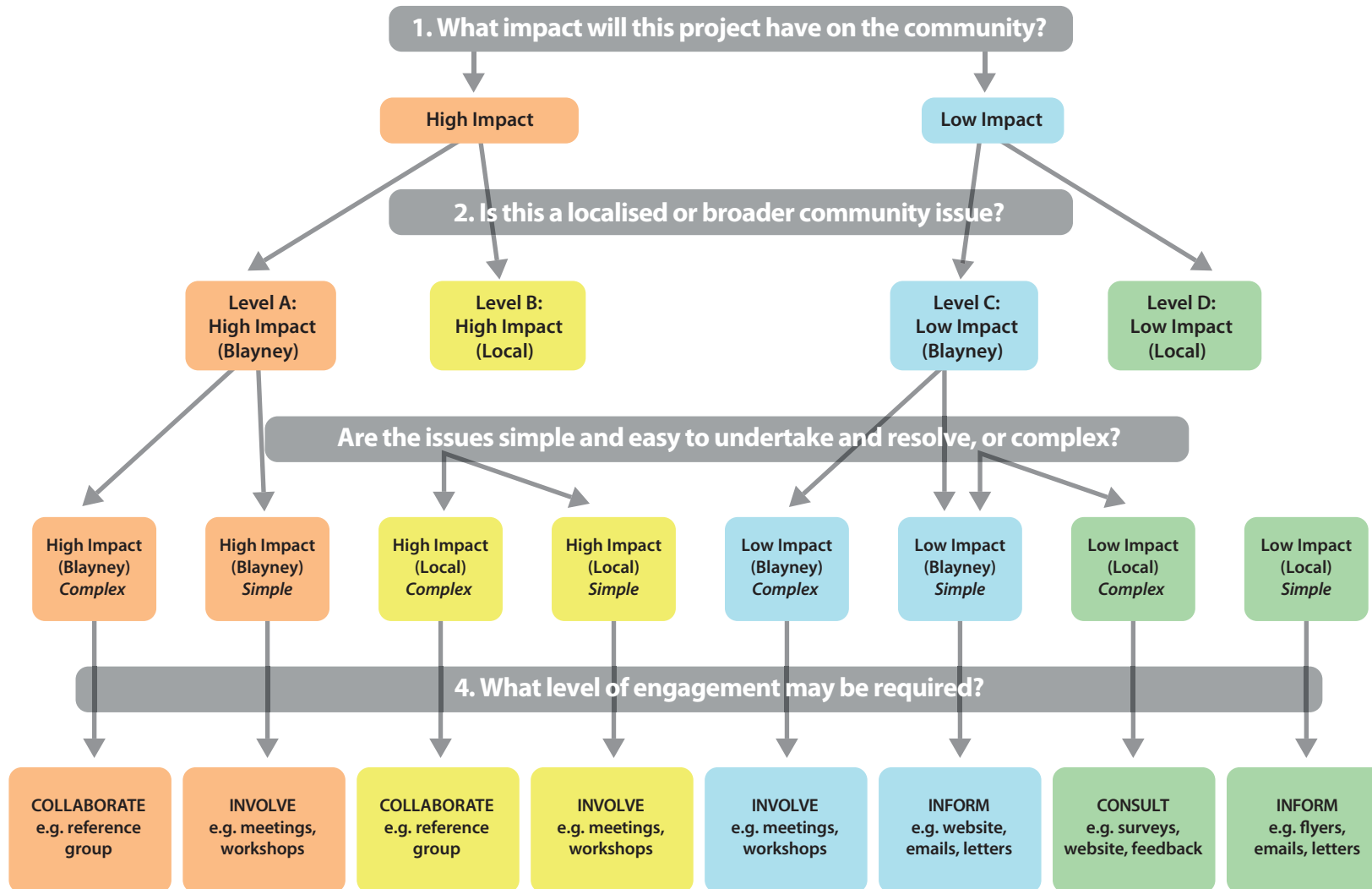
Evaluate the process

Council will ask:

- What would we do differently next time to improve the process?

The engagement decision making tree

Engagement Level Decision-Making Guide



Community Engagement for future financial funding (Special Rate Variations) and service delivery

As shown by the community engagement actions in this plan, council has determined that to meet the long term future delivery needs of the community that its current levels of funding are not adequate. This has been identified in the Long Term Financial Plan and is based round the shortfall in funds to renew, replace or maintain assets (roads, bridges, buildings, etc.) across the Shire.

Council has been working to reduce the infrastructure backlog and to determine the service levels that the community can accept as it worked through its asset, workforce and financial plans since 2011.

As shown on page 31 of this document, Council and its staff have made changes to how it engages with its community. It has restructured its committees to be predominantly of a community representative nature and to ensure that it is receiving the advice from village committees, sporting groups, business, and special interest groups and from a wide community cross section.

Council has been consulting with town and village committees to increase their knowledge of how and why council functions and to provide support to these committees and the residents to promote, enhance and comment on council's future service and financial delivery.

Council has also commenced the surveying of the community and its staff members to identify priorities and to become aware of how it may enhance its delivery of services both within the rural sector and to the villages. Council has extended this to develop focus groups such as through the Women's Forum and to ask people to register as email participants on the council web site, face book and twitter.

Council has also undertaken research as to the community's ability to meet long term financial commitments and to review how the rate payers across the shire are impacted currently and in the future.

To ensure that the community is informed, Council has utilised websites, Facebook and other social media sources, print media, radio and television. Council has also provided information for surveys, special rate variation and other communications in written form and web based. Council has posted community newsletters, surveys and information on special rate variations too ratepayers, households and made these available on its web sites.

Decisions made by Council for the Special Rate Variation have been made based on the principles of community engagement under this plan and reflect the levels of engagement of Involve, Consult and Inform.

Special Rate Variation decisions and outcomes are contained in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Documents placed on public display and are available on the Councils web site.

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BLAYNEY SHIRE  2025
All the pieces together

