

LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

Community Strategic Plan

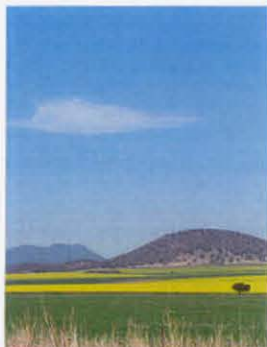
2014/15 to 2023/24

LIVERPOOL PLAINS
SHIRE COUNCIL



A postcard round every corner

Strategic Planning Framework



The **Community Strategic Plan** identifies the long-term aspirations our communities want to see delivered in the Shire. The Community Strategic Plan stretches beyond the next 10 years, identifying the outcomes and long term strategic responses needed to achieve the agreed directions. It demands strong leadership from Council in working with others to grow our Shire and towns into

the future.

The **Four-Year Delivery Program** links the "planning" in the Long Term Strategic Plan with the "implementing" in the annual Operational Plan. It is the strategic document that guides the organisation's work program over the Councillors' four year term. The Delivery program sets out clear priorities, ongoing activities and specific actions



Council will undertake, within its responsibilities and capacity, towards achieving the communities' outcomes

The annual **Operation Plan** is the 'implementing' part of Council's key strategic documents, and outlines all of Council's services. All services deliver a range of ongoing service activities, and may also identify specific tasks to be undertaken in

the year ahead. Both ongoing activities and specific tasks contribute to the implementation of Council's Delivery Program.

The **Resourcing Strategy** explains how the organisation will meet its obligations now and in the future, taking into account our workforce, our finances and our assets. The Resourcing Strategy enables us to deliver our services to the community in the most sustainable way. It comprises the Long Term Financial Plan, the Annual Workforce Plan, the Annual Financial Plan, the Asset Management Plan, the



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Message from The Mayor

“ It gives me great pleasure to present Liverpool Plains Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan for the ten year period 2014/15 – 2023/24. This Plan sets the long-term direction for our Shire and represents a new approach in how we seek community input to the Council's decision-making process and activities.

The aim of this new approach is to ensure that Council is better reflecting the aspirations of the community in determining the activities and projects it undertakes.

The Community Strategic Plan sets out the community's main priorities and aspirations over the next ten years. This plan includes a community Vision Statement with a series of strategic priorities for the community. It also sets out a range of strategies for achieving each priority.

The Community Strategic Plan needs to be read in conjunction with a suite of accompanying documents including a one year Operational Plan, a four year Delivery Program and a Resourcing Strategy which includes a Long Term Financial Plan, an Asset Management Plan and a Workforce Plan.

Emanating from the Community Strategic Plan is the Delivery Program. This program details the activities Council will undertake over the next four years to achieve the Strategic Priorities identified by the Community Strategic Plan.

A sub-Plan of the Delivery Program is the Operational Plan. The Operational Plan looks at the specific activities which will be undertaken by Council in the next financial year to achieve the commitments outlined in the Delivery Program. The Operational Plan identifies the projects, programs and activities that Council will undertake within the financial year to address the actions outlined in the Delivery Program.

Council is currently facing a number of challenges of which financial sustainability is the prime challenge for Council. To ensure we are safe from potential amalgamations and to address our infrastructure backlog we must be financially sustainable in the long term and for these reasons Council is proposing a 12.5% permanent rate increase from 2014/15 onwards.



Council understands that this may cause hardship for some residents however we will look at individual payment plans that can help alleviate the burden. The additional revenue raised will be used to improve road infrastructure, fund depreciation expenses and ensure a viable Council into the future.”

Ian Lobsey OAM
Mayor, Liverpool Plains Shire Council

1. Liverpool Plains Region – where are we now?

Who We Are

History

The Liverpool Plains area was inhabited by the Aboriginal Kamilaroi tribe and the site of the original Quirindi township was a well known Aboriginal camping ground.

The first known explorer to discover the Liverpool Plains was John Oxley in 1818 – he entered the Plains from the west as he was heading homewards to the coast. Other explorers followed, however the most significant of them was Henry Dangar. In 1825 he crossed the Liverpool Range and discovered the Plains from the south. The route he took became a track, then a road and today is used as the New England Highway.

The Liverpool Plains didn't require much clearing as it was fairly treeless due to the black soil's inability to retain moisture during hot weather and droughts, although trees grew on the hillier parts of the district.

The Australian Agricultural Company was granted one million acres by the British Government in the Port Stephens area, however the land wasn't suitable for sheep, so they exchanged half a million acres and received permission to take up grants over the Liverpool Range for two parcels of land in the Warrah and Goonoo Goonoo districts. The original Warrah grant was 30 miles long and 13 miles wide and stock was established on the grant in 1833.

In 1861 the Crown Lands Alienation Act and the Crown Lands Occupation Act permitted selection of land before survey. People who took up the land were called Selectors and could select between 40 and 320 acres in a lease-hold area. The idea was to encourage families to occupy and farm the land and the increased population had a big impact on the area. Some agriculture was gradually introduced due to the increase of local residents and the abundance of ground water.

People and teamsters travelled the area and tracks eventually evolved into roads. Wayside inns emerged along the roads around the 1840s. These inns were usually one day's horse ride apart, to accommodate travellers, teamsters and delivery wagons. People built homes in the vicinity of the inns and small villages developed.

The railway opened in Quirindi in 1877 and by 1878 it had pushed through to Tamworth with a branch line to Gunnedah. Quirindi grew into a rural service town for the district and has remained in that capacity to this day.

After the first and second world wars, soldier settlers were given rural allotments which swelled the population with their families. In the 1960s large underground reservoirs of water were discovered and tapped into for irrigation purposes and this single factor altered the character of the Plains to an agricultural area with broad acre farming.

The soldier settler allotments were planned as 'living areas' and were considered adequate acreages at the time and they thrived whilst wheat prices were high. But economics and other factors eventually affected their viability and many sold out, with amalgamations of properties occurring to form bigger farms in some areas and follow a trend of mixed farming, still current today.

Our Community

- Liverpool Plains Shire is home to 7,997 people (ABS Population Estimates)
- Total number of dwellings is 3,578 with 627 of these unoccupied
- Twenty per cent (20.0%) of the population is under 14 years of age
- Thirty five per cent (35.0%) of the population is over 55 years of age
- Ten point nine per cent (10.9%) of the population are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- Ninety four point five per cent (94.5%) of the population only spoke English at home
- Twenty two per cent (22.0%) of the workforce is classified as Managers (2011 Census)
- Twenty four per cent (24.0%) work in Agriculture, forestry and fishing (2011 Census)

Our Shire

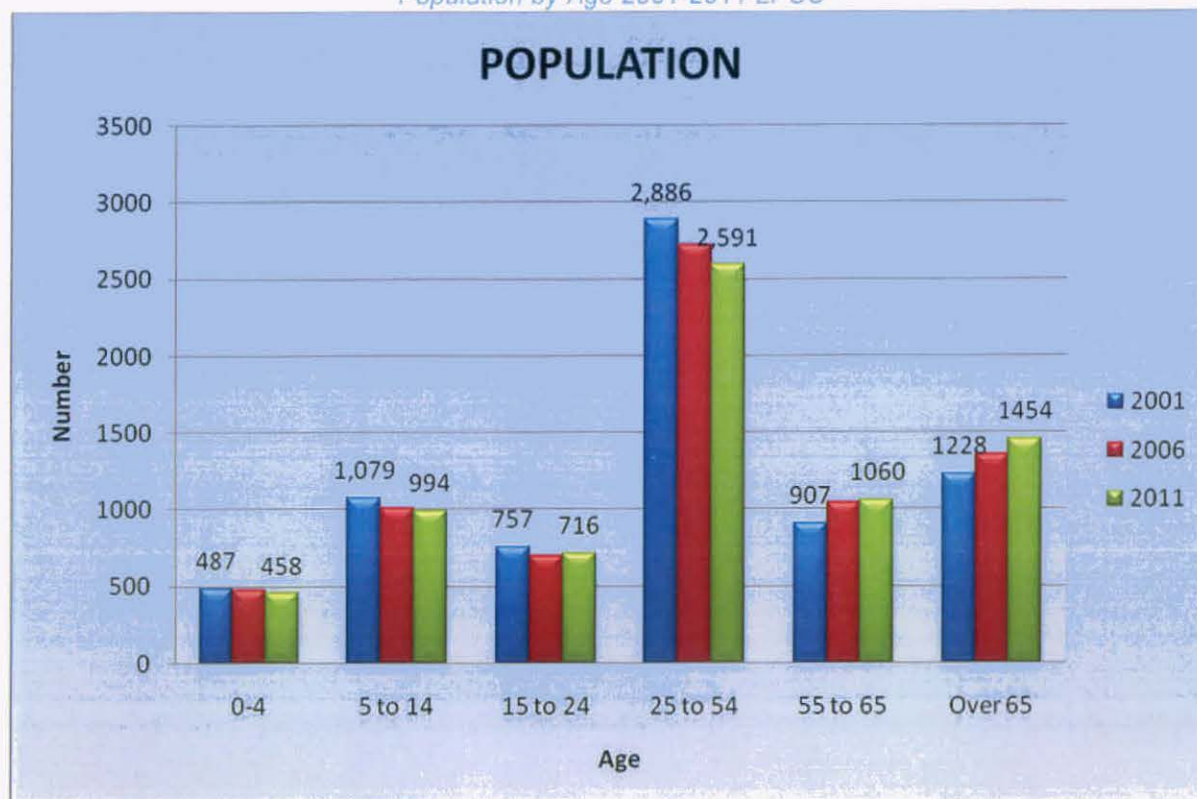
- The area comprises 5,002 square kilometres
- Our Shire is located on the North West Slopes and Plains Region of New South Wales
- There are 4,133 rateable properties within our Shire
- The predominant industry is Agriculture, with emerging mining and mining support industries likely to be the main employers within the next 10 years
- Urban areas within our Shire contain 65% of the population

Map of Shire showing surrounding shires



Population Estimates

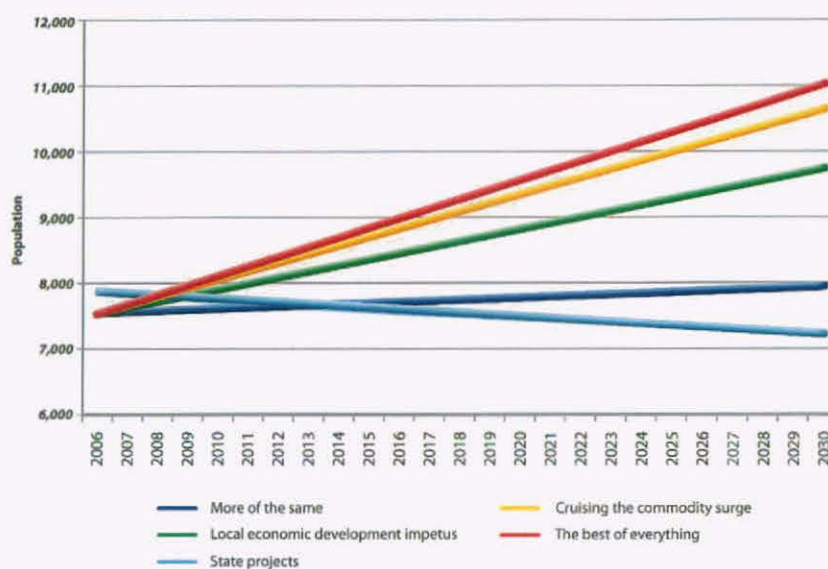
Population by Age 2001-2011 LPSC



The above graph shows the under representation of the 15–24 age group. According to the 2011 Census, the average age for Liverpool Plains Shire (LPS) is 43. This will improve with increased economic activity.

As part of the Namoi 2030 Study, the Centre for Agriculture and Resource Economics (CARE) provided the following scenario results for LPS based on the development of coal and local economic impetus within the Shire.

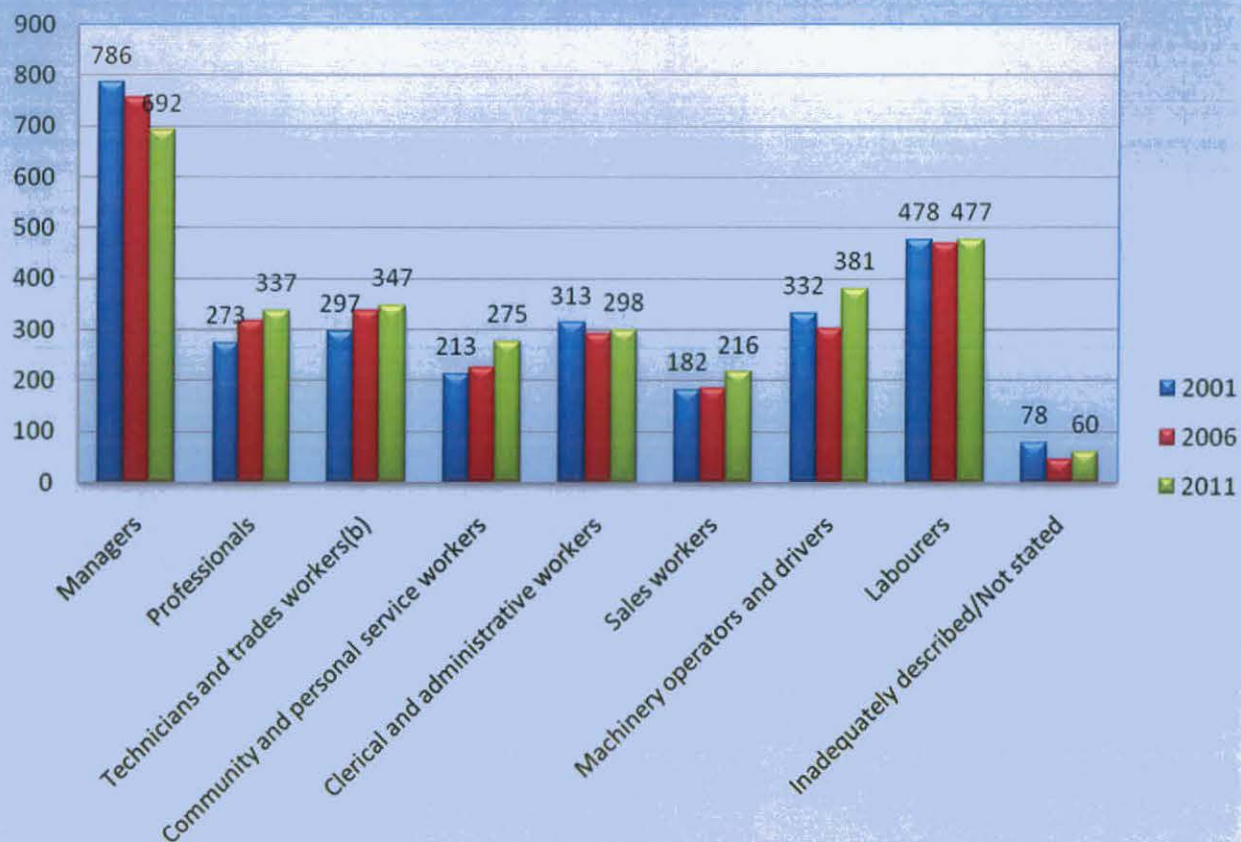
Liverpool Plains Shire's Projected Population



Occupation and Industry

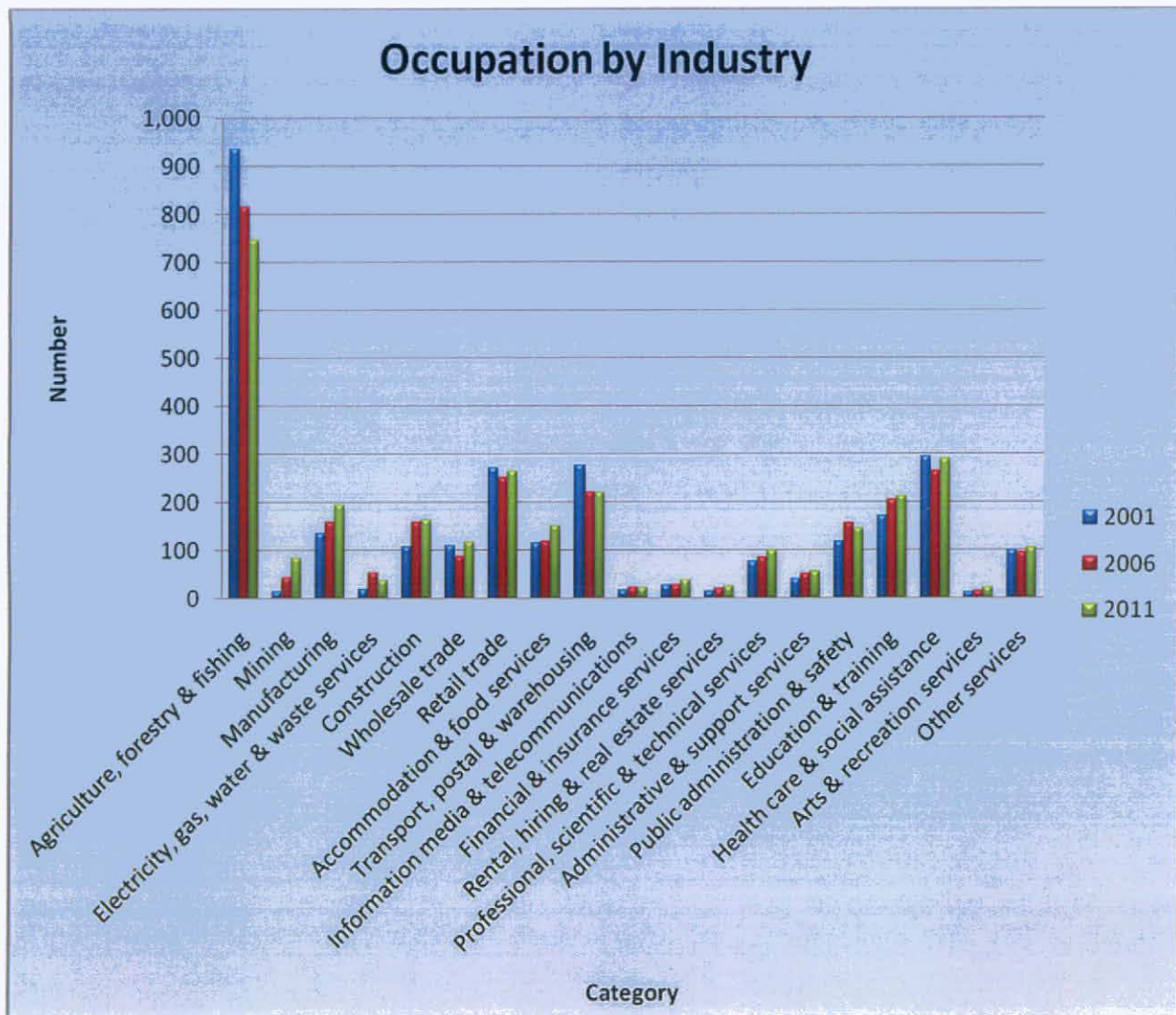
Occupation

Occupation 2001-2011 Liverpool Plains



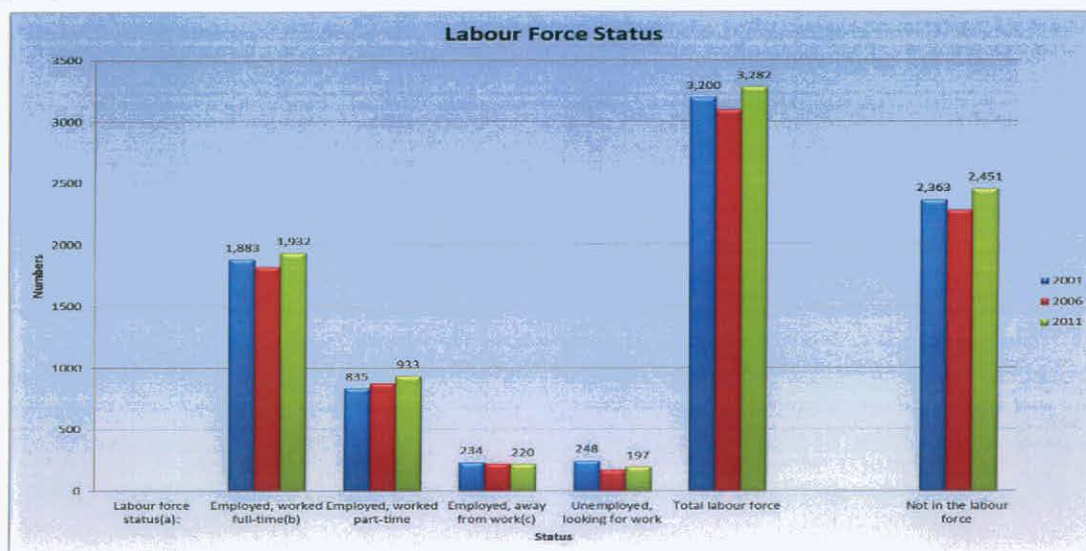
The high number of managers reflects agricultural industries and farm consolidation. Growth is occurring in the professions, trade and sales areas.





Agriculture remains the dominant though declining industry employment sector. Growth has appeared in mining, manufacturing, construction, professional, and education. Wholesale and Transport has suffered which in the main is related to agriculture. There may be significant variation as a result of mining and exploration.

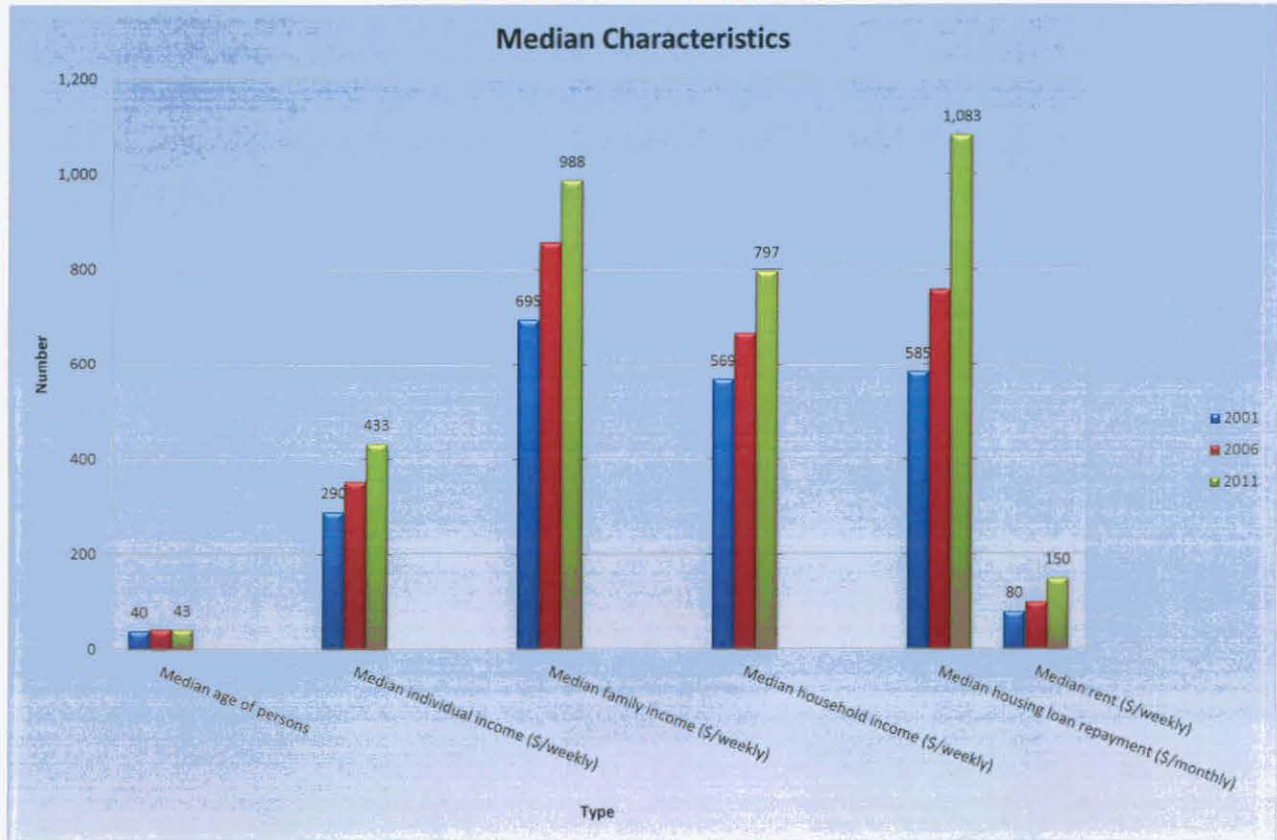
Unemployment



Unemployment continues to be relatively low with a slight decline in workforce participation as the population ages.

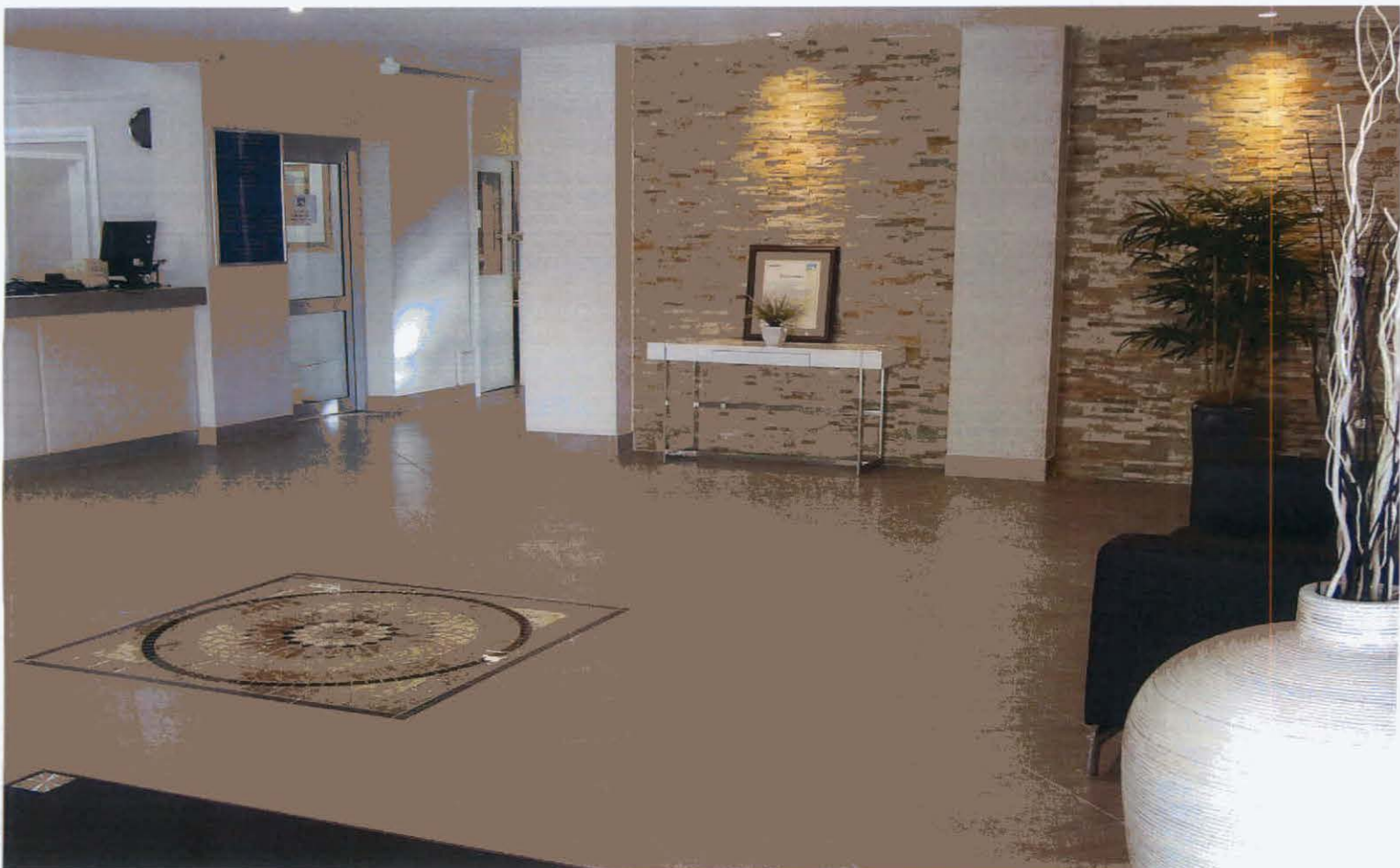
Income

Income – Selected Characteristics



Income appears to have risen modestly between 2006 and 2011.

The new customer service area in the Council Administration Centre



2. Community Strategic Plan

The **Long Term Community Strategic Plan** is the highest level plan that a council will prepare. The Community Strategic Plan identifies the long term aspirations our communities want to see delivered in the Shire. The Strategic Plan stretches over the next ten years, identifying the outcomes and long term strategic responses needed to achieve the agreed directions.

While council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as State agencies and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long-term objectives of the plan.

The **Four-Year Delivery Program** links the 'planning' in the long term Strategic Plan with the 'implementing' in the annual Operational Plan. It is the strategic document that guides the organisation's work program over the Councillors' four-year term. The Delivery Program sets out clear priorities, ongoing activities and specific actions Council will undertake, within its responsibilities and capacity, towards achieving the communities' outcomes.

The **Annual Operational Plan** is the 'implementing' part of Council's key strategic documents, and outlines all of Council's services. All services deliver a range of ongoing service activities, and may also identify specific tasks to be undertaken in the year ahead. Both ongoing activities and specific tasks contribute to the implementation of Council's Delivery Program.

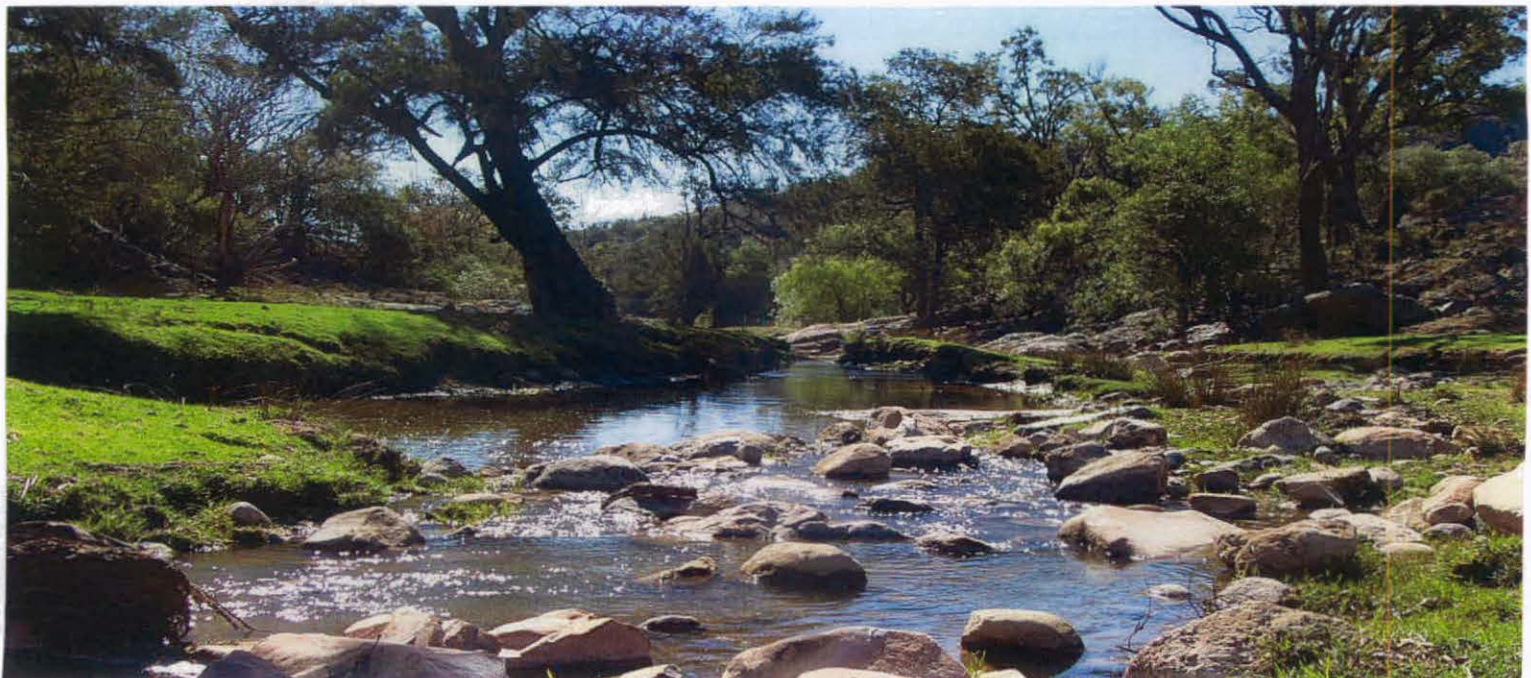
The Community Strategic Plan provides a vehicle for expressing long-term community aspirations. However, these will not be achieved without sufficient resources – time, money, assets and people – to actually carry them out. The **Resourcing Strategy** consists of three components:

1. Long Term Financial Planning
2. Workforce Management Planning
3. Asset Management Planning.

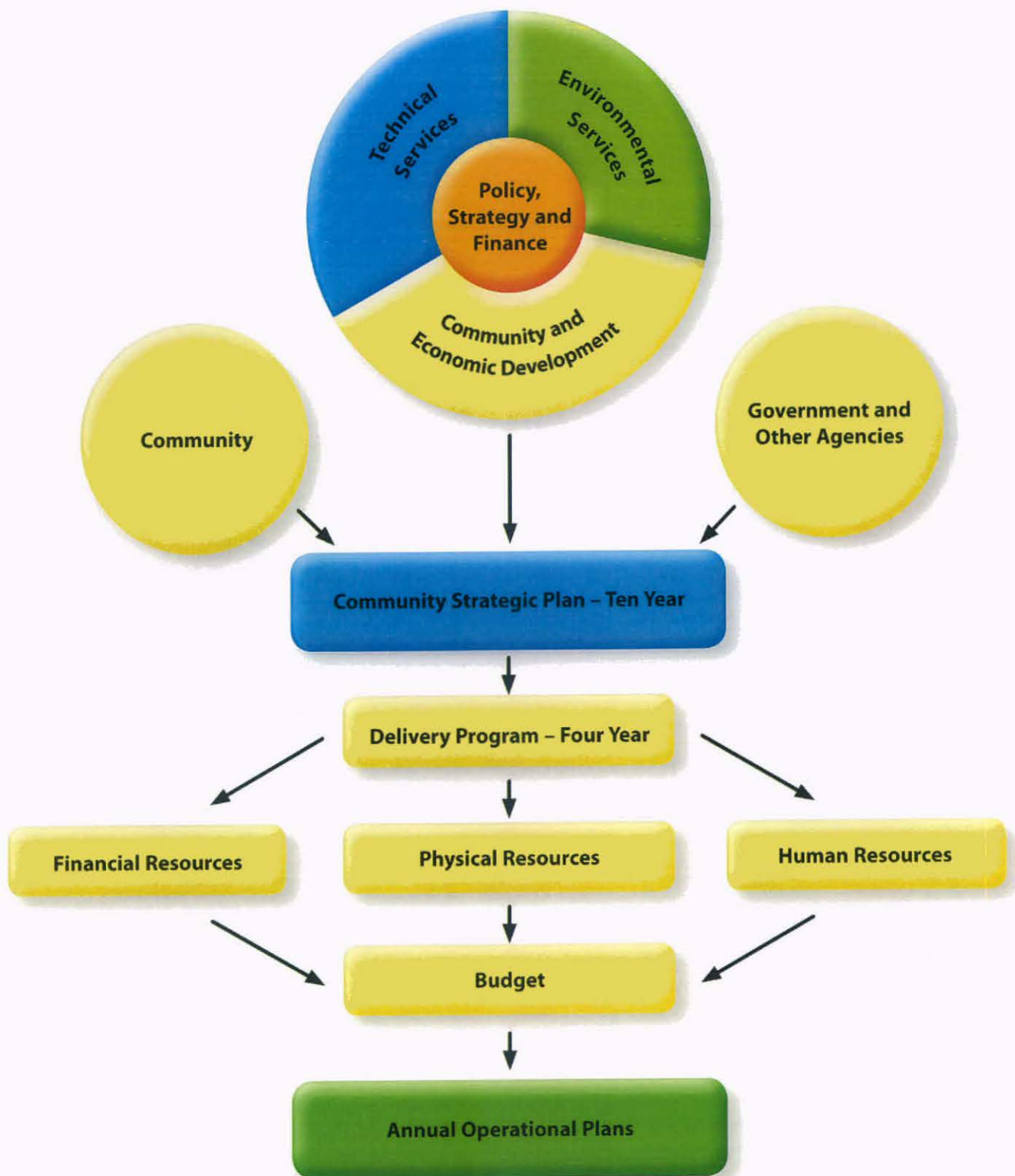
The **Resourcing Strategy** explains how the organisation will meet its obligations now and in the future, taking into account our workforce, our finances and our assets. The Resourcing Strategy enables us to deliver our services to the community in the most sustainable way.

The **Community Engagement Strategy** outlines how Council will engage with its communities and relevant stakeholders in developing and finalising the Community Strategic Plan. Over time it will be reviewed to outline how Council will ensure regular engagement and discussion with our communities about their needs and aspirations for The Shire.

At the end of the Council Term, Council must provide a detailed **Report** on how it achieved the priorities in the Delivery Program over its four-year term.



3. Corporate Planning Strategy



4. Council's Stakeholders

The strategic direction of this Council has been formulated by determining the best way for Council to conduct its core business. It is recognised that four key sectors affect the business of Council and each is a vital stakeholder in the setting of our future.

1. Community

It is the charter of Council to provide services for the existing and future residents of Liverpool Plains Shire and it is the responsibility of Council to understand and respond to the needs expressed. To ensure that the Liverpool Plains community plays an important part in the planning process, Council is committed to providing the community with:

- An open, accessible and honest Council displaying appropriate leadership
- The capacity to listen, communicate and respond effectively to all sectors of the community
- A safe and healthy environment
- Efficient, quality services, facilities and amenities.

2. Councillors

As the elected representatives of the community, Councillors provide the link between the community and Council staff. Elected members expect of management:

- Good communication
- Timely advice and information
- Truth, integrity and good reporting
- An appropriate level of professional support and guidance to assist the role of elected members.

3. Staff

The staff of Liverpool Plains Shire Council are the most important asset of the organisation. They provide and maintain the services, facilities and amenities available to the community and are entitled to work in an environment enabling them to have:

- A safe and healthy workplace
- Equal opportunity
- Appropriate information resources to perform their duties effectively
- Training, development and career opportunities
- Effective communication channels
- The opportunity to contribute to the organisation.

4. Suppliers

Council suppliers are strategic business partners and assist the Council in delivering quality services and products. It is an obligation that Council is able to provide business partners with:

- Quality specifications and instructions
- Regular feedback on the quality of the products and services provided
- Fair and equitable opportunities for existing and potential suppliers
- A Statement of Business Ethics under which Council operates.

5. Guiding Principles

The Local Government Act 1993 defines the role of Council under Section 8(1). This role is explained through a set of principles to help guide Council towards an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable Shire:

1. Provide directly or on behalf of other levels of government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively
2. Exercise community leadership
3. Exercise our functions in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism
4. Promote, provide and plan for the needs of the community and particularly children
5. Properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development
6. Have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of our decisions
7. Acknowledge that we are the custodian and trustee of public assets and to effectively plan for, account for and manage the assets for which we are responsible
8. Engage in long-term strategic planning on behalf of the local community
9. Exercise our functions in a manner that is consistent with and promotes social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights
10. Facilitate the involvement of councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government
11. Raise funds for local purposes by the fair imposition of rates, charges and fees, by income earned from investments and, when appropriate, by borrowings and grants
12. Keep the local community and the State Government (and through it, the wider community) informed about our activities
13. Ensure that, in the exercise of our regulatory functions, we act consistently and without bias, particularly where an activity of the Council is affected
14. Be a responsible employer.

6. Community Vision and Mission Statements



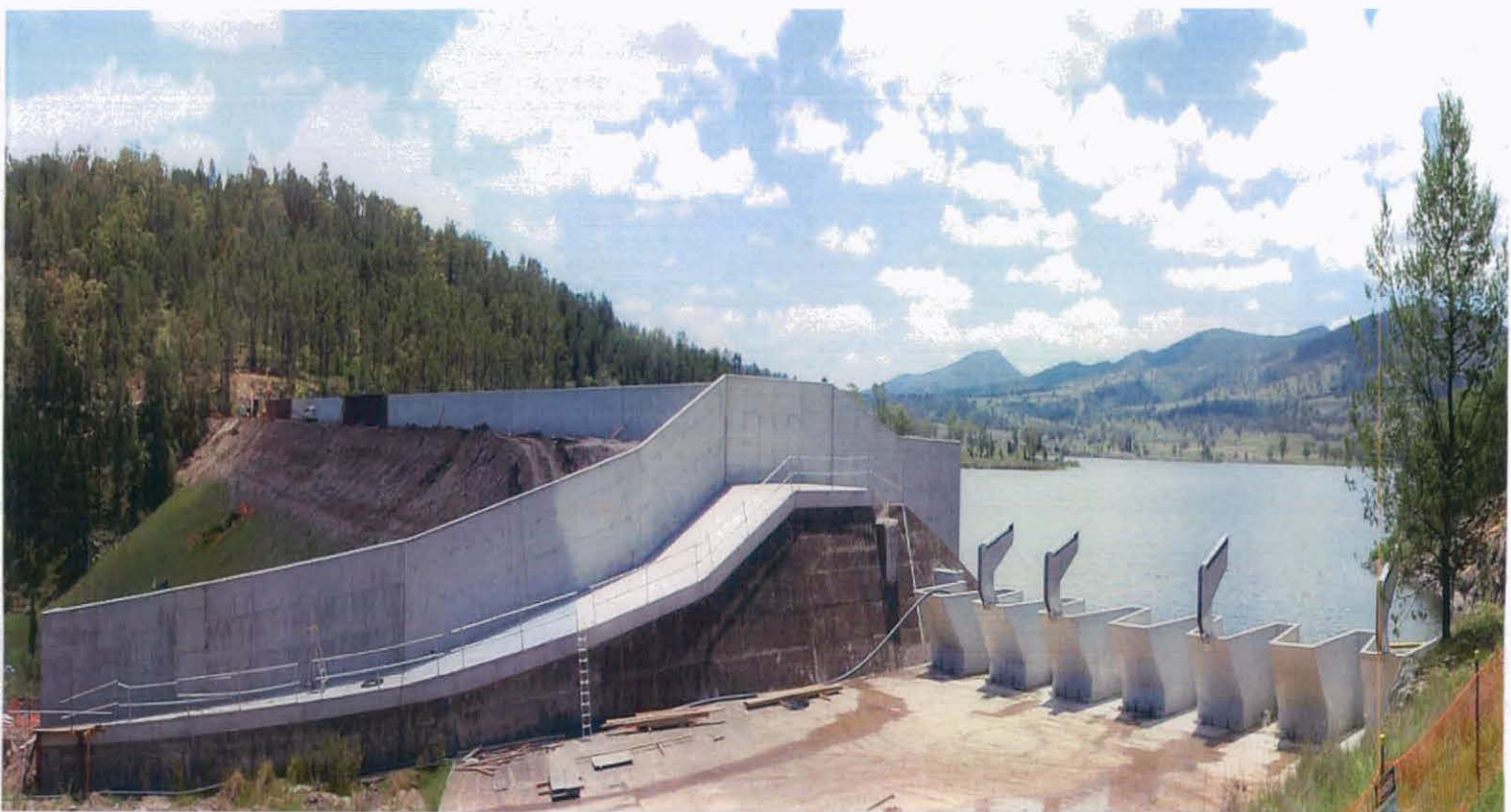
Vision

That the Liverpool Plains Shire area achieves higher levels of growth and generates improved quality of life through expanded opportunities for economic and social development being realised within an environmentally and financially sustainable framework.



Mission

To achieve the vision through a proactive community focus, delivering best value and practice services that are recognised by the community for their quality and positive impact on development.



The elected members, management and staff of Liverpool Plains Shire are committed to Council's Vision and Mission and through mutual respect and trust will strive ...

FOR OUR RESIDENTS

- To provide professional, friendly and innovative service.
- To apply principles of access and equity with facilities and services to encourage and promote a strong sense of community.

FOR OUR COMMUNITY

- To maintain principles of democracy, public participation and fairness in decision making.
- To have a positive influence on community attitudes.
- To promote, provide and plan for the needs of people of all ages.
- To encourage and stimulate economic growth and prosperity in The Shire.
- To establish a safe, caring and clean community environment.
- To create a dynamic area sustaining its agricultural and natural heritage.

FOR OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- To promote a safe working environment that fosters innovation, equal opportunity, job satisfaction and performance.
- To encourage strong community partnership in the provision of services and facilities.
- To seek continuous improvement in the way that Council does business.
- To encourage and appreciate the contribution of community volunteers.

FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

- To maintain and enhance the reputation of the built environment.
- To protect and enjoy the natural, built and cultural environment.
- To promote economic sustainability and technological advantage for agriculture and industry.
- To develop and maintain effective road, transport and infrastructure networks.

FOR CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS

- To conduct business with integrity and respect.
- To ensure consistency and accountability in service relationships.
- To communicate requirements accurately and precisely.
- To exercise and expect honesty in business dealings.

8. Plan Implementation Criteria

Obligations to undertake the actions or strategies outlined in the Delivery Program and Operational Plans will be subject to the following criteria:

- **Contestability** – the supply of facilities and services will be cost effective and contested in appropriate circumstances
- **Customer Focus** – the supply of facilities and services will recognise the rights of the end user against the rights of the broader community
- **Responsible Pricing** – pricing will balance the true cost of providing facilities and services with current social and economic objectives
- **Reform** – results, capabilities and methods will be systematically and continuously improved
- **Performance** – will be periodically measured and monitored
- **Teamwork** – culture and organisation will accord with team based principles
- **Open Government** – policies, programs and results will be able to be discussed in the public forum and decision-making, or enforcement will be fair and equitable.

9. Statement of Levels of Service

The determination of levels of service for all Council activities is very important in terms of community satisfaction, value for money and available funding. Council has conducted an independent random survey of residents to determine which existing service levels are important and the level of satisfaction of those services. This will then determine the service levels Council needs to either be maintained, improved or reduced. Of course there is only a certain amount of funding to be distributed as shown in the Long Term Financial Plan and any increase in a service level means either a reduction in another service or additional revenue raising measures. The results of the independent community survey to determine service levels for a variety of services can be found in Section 12 Community Engagement.

With regard to the level of servicing of Council's assets, the Asset Management Plan details the condition of assets and what funds are required to bring them to a satisfactory condition (estimated at \$5m). Council does not currently have the funds to increase service levels on all assets to a satisfactory condition and will continue with current service levels. Subject to approval of a rate increase by IPART in 2014/15 Council will increase service levels on roads and related infrastructure.

10. Strategic Programs

The following Programs are aligned with Council's portfolio governance and committee systems.

The Annual Operating Plan details the various income and expenditures relating to the planned works and services and is developed under the principles outlined in this Strategic Plan. The Operating Plan, the Four Year Delivery Program and the Resourcing Strategy are separate documents underpinning this Strategic Plan.

The following Programs address four main themes:

1. **Social** – a socially mixed community characterised by diversity of income, age, culture, housing tenure, etc and there are opportunities to move freely through life's cycles without the need to relocate
2. **Environmental** – ecologically balanced with impacts from human activity being accommodated without degradation to the environment
3. **Economic** – diverse employment opportunities exist which underpin a quality of life matched with community prosperity expectations
4. **Governance** – participative and open local government, strong leadership and stewardship and ensuring sound infrastructure with facilities and services matched to community needs.

The various strategies and actions within the programs are linked to Council's Guiding Principles and to the State and Regional Plan Goals and Priorities. The State Plan can be found on the NSW Government website:

<www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan/pdf/Summary_complete.pdf>

See also the *New England North West Regional Action Plan* on that website.

For the Regional Development Australia Northern Inland Plan go to:

<www.rdani.org.au/our-region/regional-plan.php>

Council also consulted the NSW Government's State of the Catchment Report 2010 for the Namoi and the Namoi 2030 Regional Resource Strategy.

Program 1: Policy, Strategy and Finance

Vision Statement

Participative and open local government for the Liverpool Plains Shire community and effective management and service delivery achieved by:

- Council exercising leadership
- Consulting with the community as necessary in the development of operational, social, environmental and economic policies
- Making open, fair and equitable decisions in the public interest
- Delivering and providing high quality services and facilities
- Monitoring and measuring Council financial performance.

Objectives

1. To be satisfied that Council's stewardship of the area is in the best public interest through leadership, care and responsibility, efficiency in service delivery and proper custody of public assets in conjunction with processes of consultation.
2. To ensure the good management and governance of the Shire and the wellbeing of its residents and to develop and apply model policies for the effective delivery of core business activities.
3. To observe the statutory requirements of the Local government Act and other relevant legislation.

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
1. Ensure residents have the opportunity to have a say on important issues	Develop community engagement strategy and review periodically	Community survey question - percentage of people in survey who feel they do have a say	Bi-annual	9	32
	Councillors to be available for community members to raise issues. Council to have a greater presence in outlying areas		On-going	10	
2. Foster and support community leadership and encourage innovation	Develop scholarships for young people to foster leadership.	Shire and council are recognised as leading and innovative by the community and its peers	On-going	2	23
	Promote volunteering and develop partnerships with community leaders Improve the efficiency and transparency of council processes Encourage staff to be innovative			14	

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
3. Advocate for an increase in the resources committed by the Commonwealth and State Government to Local Government and Liverpool Plains Shire Council, in particular, for infrastructure	Council will advocate strongly for improved funding to Local Government by lobbying Local Members of Parliament, and supporting Namoi Councils and LGSA proposals.	Quantum of additional resources allocated to Council as a result of lobbying	As required	11	2
4. To seek constitutional recognition of local government to enable direct funding from the Commonwealth	Council will actively support constitutional recognition of local government via media campaigns in conjunction with the ALGA.	Local Government is recognised in the constitution after the next Referendum	Unknown	11	30
5. Demonstrate accountability, transparency and ethical conduct	Provide relevant staff training and offer competitive working conditions and remuneration. Ensure decision making processes are fair, open and equitable	Council is seen as a leading employer Council recognised as a transparent, accountable and ethical organisation	On-going	7 8 9 13 14	30
6. Improve the gender equity on Council	Prior to elections promote the need for greater gender equity on councils via media outlets, newsletters and community forums	Percentage of females nominating for Council	Every four years	9	24
7. Explore options for an enhanced local government sector as detailed in the Destination 2036 Action Plan	Discuss resource sharing opportunities with Namoi Councils Contribute to Regional Action plans that link with the State Plan Determine relevance of other key activities	Discussions held Regional Plans contributed to Other key activities in the Action Plan implemented where relevant	Short to medium term	1 10 12	30
8. Enhance the future financial sustainability of Council	Develop long term financial plans that improve council's financial position.	Council to have a strong financial position	Ongoing	11	30

Program 2: Environmental Services

Vision Statement

A quality environment for the community of Liverpool Plains Shire achieved by:

- Enhancing and protecting the social, environmental, economic, heritage and physical well-being of the community
- Contemporary land use planning and assessment
- Effective management and minimisation of waste collection and disposal.

Objectives

1. To develop strategies that facilitates growth and guide Council toward ecological sustainability through responsible management of both the natural and built environments.
2. To be recognised as a leader in environmental management.

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
1. Support and develop programs which protect and enhance the Shire's natural environment and "rural" character.	Undertake creek clearing projects. Seek grant funding opportunities. Ensure LEP protects rural areas.	Health of rivers and creeks is improving. Rural character maintained.	ongoing	5	22
2. Ensure that environmental and development standards satisfy community needs and aspirations.	Council will review its LEP every five years.	LEP reviewed every 5 years Level of community satisfaction in surveys	Short - Medium Bi-annual	5	29
3. Assist in the provision of infrastructure and resources associated with the emergency services requirements of the Shire	Provision of funding and accommodation in annual operational plans for RFS, VRA and SES. A comprehensive emergency management response and capacity Plan will be developed through the EMPlan in co-operation with relevant agencies such as NSW FB, NSW RFS, SES, VRA, Police and Department of Health.	EMPlan developed and reviewed. Level of community satisfaction in surveys for emergency services.	Ongoing Bi-annual	13 1	28

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
4. Council uses its resources wisely to reduce its ecological footprint	Implement results of water, waste and energy audits. Seek grants to lower energy consumption in council buildings	Council's ecological footprint is smaller.	Ongoing	5	22
5. Council will work for the retention, restoration and protection of the Shire's heritage.	Complete a community heritage plan Obtain funding for a shire wide Aboriginal Heritage Study	By 30/06/2014 Funding obtained by 30/6/2014	Short Short	6 7 3	27
6. Ensure the importance of the black soil Liverpool Plains to agricultural production and wealth of the Shire, Region and State will be recognised.	Advocate for greater protection of valuable black soil plains from mining and gas extraction. Encourage sustainable farming and technologies	Black soil plains protected and mining and CSG approvals do not allow encroachment on the black soil plains	Ongoing	5 6	22
7. Ensure best practice principles are adopted for waste management and recycling	Expand waste resource services and facilities. Increase education to community on benefits of recycling.	Level of community satisfaction in community survey	Bi-annual	1 5	22



Program 3: Community Services

Vision Statement

A dynamic and inclusive community motivated and achieved by Council through:

- engaging the community in activities and business of Council
- advocating equity, participation, rights and access for all services
- maximising lifestyle qualities for residents of Liverpool Plains Shire
- establishing programs for future lifestyle and recreational pursuits

Objectives

1. To provide a fair and equitable distribution of social and community services that are developed in consultation with the stakeholders and to act as facilitator in the provision of new and expanded services.
2. To facilitate, support and provide opportunities for our community to participate in activities that will assist in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing.

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
1. The community builds on its strengths and values its heritage and cultural diversity	Promote and support cultural festivals and events within the Shire	Festivals, events and promotions are celebrated	On-going	3	27
2. Access to Health services are improved	Council will monitor and advocate for the provision of health services to ensure residents have access to quality services and facilities that meet community expectations.	Current health services are at least maintained and/or improved and new health services are introduced to meet local demand	On-going	4	12
	Continue with the provision of subsidies to attract new GP's		On-going	9	12
	Advocate better services for people with special needs		On-going		14
	Advocate better services to address mental health issues		On-going		14

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
3. Provide a range of community and human services that accord with Council policy and ensure the quality of services provided directly or facilitated through Council	Council will lobby to have more government decisions and activity decentralised to the regional and local level provided that appropriate levels of funding are made available	The quantum of new human services activity attracted to The Shire	On-going	1 4 9	3
4. Provide opportunities to facilitate utilisation of the skills and expertise of women in the community within the work force	Provide adequate day care facilities through the Eastside CCC and the provision of assistance to pre-schools and play groups	Number of women in the workforce as per the census statistics compared to last Census	Ongoing	4	6
7. Improve the health & well being of residents and ensure they play an active role in the community	Encourage & develop vibrant & creative open space areas & public infrastructure for use by residents & particularly young people	<p>Increase in people being active and using facilities.</p> <p>Level of satisfaction in the community survey for recreational facilities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Bi-annual</p>	1	11 25 27



Vision Statement

A dynamic and inclusive community motivated and achieved by Council through promoting the areas potential and advantage.

Objective

1. To maximise the tourism and economic development potential of the Shire and facilitate increased growth and sustained development.

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
1. Increase tourism infrastructure and visitation to The Shire	Maintain local tourism committee, maintain involvement with NENW Tourism and Kamilaroi Highway Promotion Committee and review tourism plan. Implement strategies in the tourism plan	Level of satisfaction in the community survey with tourism services and facilities	Ongoing	1	3
				4	
				8	
2. Strengthen and grow the economic prospects of the Shire and create more sustainable job opportunities	Promote and market the area to attract businesses and new residents.	Increase in resident population as per ABS projections	Ongoing	1	3
				4	4
				8	
	Make industrial and commercial land available along with the provision of associated infrastructure.	Net number of new businesses established in the Shire. Reduced number of vacant commercial premises in Quirindi & Werris Creek	Ongoing		
		Level of satisfaction in the community survey with economic development			

Program 5: Technical Services

Vision Statement

The best value, best practice delivery of safe and convenient roads and ancillary facilities.

The delivery of water and sewerage and other business enterprise services that are efficient and effective, produce a commercial return and are compliant with statutory obligations.

Objectives

1. The provision, maintenance and enhancement of Transport and Drainage Infrastructure that minimises risk to the community, is environmentally friendly and financially sustainable.
2. To ensure that Council's business activities operate at no cost to Council and generate sufficient revenue to provide the appropriate level of services, taking into account community service obligations for each business unit.
3. To provide safe, effective and resource efficient reticulated water supplies and environmentally responsible sewerage schemes in townships and villages within The Shire.

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
1. Maintain a footpath network that satisfies community needs	Undertake works as per the asset management plan subject to funding limits	Percentage of residents who express satisfaction in bi-annual survey	Ongoing	1	19
					20
					25
2. Maintain a road transport network that work towards satisfying community needs	Undertake survey of the entire road network. Undertake works as per the management plan subject to funding limits	Percentage of residents who express satisfaction in bi-annual survey	Ongoing	1	10
					19
					20
3. Ensure bridges and drains are well maintained and satisfy community expectations	Undertake maintenance and new works as funding permits	Percentage of residents who express satisfaction in bi-annual survey	Ongoing	1	10
					19
					20

Key Strategies	Actions	Performance Measure	Time Frame	Guiding Principal Link	State Plan Goal
4. Provide adequate and well maintained cemeteries, pools, parks, gardens, public toilets, showgrounds, playing fields and district facilities that are safe and developed to agreed standards	Develop forward works plans ensuring that local parks, gardens, public toilets, town centres, pools and playing fields continue to be enhanced to accommodate future needs	Percentage of residents who express satisfaction in Bi -annual survey for pools, cemeteries, parks, showgrounds and playing fields	Ongoing	1	19
	Deliver a programmed pro-active parks and reserves maintenance service.				20
5. Pursue best practice management of water supply and sewerage systems including resource sharing with other councils	Implement Best Practice Water Supply and Sewerage principles.	Achievement of 100% compliance with best practice principles	Short to medium	1	21
	Develop and expand alliance with Namoi Councils	Alliance operational and providing cost benefits	Ongoing		



11. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Location	Black soil and cost of building roads	Sister city	Government decisions
Lifestyle	Off highway	Housing development	Terrorism for major trading partners
Railway	Minimal National Parks	Retiree marketing	World economic downturn
Transport Links	No 24 hour Police	Tourism	Commodity prices/\$AUD
Diverse agriculture	Transport	Coal and gas resources	Low Police numbers
Skilled people	Ageing population	Grain production	Oil prices
Water availability and pricing	Water sharing plans	Worldwide resource demand	Amalgamation with other council(s)
Water strategy	Lack of employment, government agencies, trades people and job variety	Renewable energy	Climate change
Tamworth Airport and proximity to Tamworth	Climate	Strategic Alliance (other councils)	Worldwide – demand for resources
Existing health and recreation infrastructure	Absentee landlords	Resource sharing	Transport
Main Street in Quirindi	Accommodation – tourist	Timber Industry	Low doctor numbers
Scenic amenity	Restaurants, lack of	Heavy industry	Dam upgrade cost
Mt Helen community site	Main Street trucks	Equine industry	Coal/gas mining
Tourism	Tamworth Airport	Poultry Industry	Damage to water resources from mining
Low cost residential and commercial land and lot sizes	Attraction of qualified staff	Government funding	Staff losses
Educational facilities	Low population	Transport loading facility	Water utility review
Telecommunications	Small size of LPSC	Old Saleyards –redevelop	Road network due to rail closures
Council size (population)	Adaption to change	Quipolly Dam recreational area	
Political support	Retention of staff	Promotion of bird varieties	
Cemeteries	Flood prone land	Jobs in aged care	
Natural Resources	Telecommunications	Regional planning	
Environmental initiatives and sustainability	Railway line thru towns	Provide smaller acreage housing lots	
Bird varieties	Limited range of training courses	Railway overpasses or by-passes	
Rail heritage assets	Reducing volunteer numbers	Promote Tamworth Airport	
Climate	Coal trains delaying traffic at level crossings – emergency services delays	Bio technology	
Grain storage	No Indoor sports stadium	Accommodation for mine workers	
Indigenous population	No indoor Heated Pool	Culture, arts, innovation and youth activities	
Black soil plains productivity	Jobs for youth	Showground development to attract more events	
Potential for expansion			
Local businesses			
Rural Fire Service			
Quirindi Retirement Home			
Royal Theatre			

12. Community Engagement Strategy

In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Strategy, the Community Strategic Plan has a Level One impact on the community, as can be seen in the table below:

Level of Impact	Criteria for Determining Level of Impact	Examples of Projects/Initiatives
Level One	<p>A project that impacts a substantial and significant range of the community (area or people)</p> <p>High level of real or perceived positive or negative impact, or risk across The Shire</p> <p>Potential for a high risk controversy and/or conflict across The Shire</p> <p>Likely high level of interest from the community</p> <p>Any significant impact or attributes that are considered to be of value to the whole community, such as regional facilities</p> <p>Potential high impact on state or regional strategies or directions</p> <p>Any impact on the health, safety, or wellbeing of the broader community</p>	<p>Community Strategic Plan and its components (Operational Plan, Delivery program, Resource strategy)</p> <p>Significant policies / plans / strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability Action Plan - Capital Works Program - Social Plans - Environmental Plan <p>Removal or changes to a district or regional facility / service</p> <p>Provision of a district or regional facility/service (for example, Library)</p> <p>Changes to Shire-wide services, (eg: waste management)</p> <p>Planning for a regional/district wide facility/activity</p> <p>New heavy industries to the shire such as mining</p>
Level Two	<p>Some lower level real or perceived positive or negative impact, or risk across The Shire</p> <p>Potential for some controversy, or conflict across The Shire</p> <p>Potential for some, although not significant impact on state or regional strategies or directions</p>	<p>Revising the Capital Works Program</p> <p>Minor modifications to fees and charges</p> <p>Minor changes to service delivery</p>
Level Three	<p>High level of real or perceived positive or negative impact, or risk on a local area, specific community or user group/s of a facility or service</p> <p>Significant change or loss to any facility or service to a specific community/ target group</p> <p>Potential for a high risk controversy and/ or conflict in the local community</p>	<p>Removal, or changes to a local facility/service, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playgrounds (eg: changes of equipment) - Roads (eg: local road closures) - Sports grounds (eg: development of amenity building) - Parks (eg: changes to use of park) - Childcare facilities (eg: changes to ages) <p>Removal or changes to a local activity (eg: sports activity)</p> <p>Review of or Planning for a local area facility / activity</p> <p>Major works on local facilities or infrastructure</p>

Level One Impacts require the following types of consultation, as shown in column two below:

Type of Consultation	Level 1 High Impact: Shire	Level 2 Lower Impact: Shire	Level 3 High Impact: Local	Level 4 Lower Impact: Local
Informing	E	E	E	E
Personal Telephone Contact	O	D	O	O
In Person Meeting	O	D	O	D
Written Correspondence	D	D	D	N/A
Website/Internet	E	E	O	O
Establish email distribution list on specific issue/project	O	O	O	O
Pamphlet	O	N/A	O	O
Letter Box Drop	O	D	O	O
Notice in Local Paper	E	O	D	O
Notice in Tamworth Paper	D	O	O	O
Media Release	E	N/A	O	N/A
Site Display	O	O	O	O
Displays in Other Locations (eg: library)	O	O	O	N/A
Seeking Information	E	E	E	D
Suggestion Box	N/A	N/A	O	O
Telephone Survey	D	O	O	O
Written Survey	O	O	O	N/A
Website/Internet	E	E	O	O
Establish email distribution list on specific issue/project	O	O	O	O
Hotline/Phone-in	O	O	O	N/A
Letter or Media Promotion Inviting Submissions	E	O	O	N/A
Public Exhibition	E	O	O	N/A
Interview	O	D	O	O
Focus Group Session	D	D	D	D
Involving	E	E	D	D
Meetings with User or Stakeholder Groups	E	E	D	D
Meeting with Existing Group, eg: parents, school children, youth, aged, business	D	O	D	D
Website/Internet	E	E	O	O
Workshop Session	D	D	D	D
Meeting by Invite	D	D	D	O
Site Tour/Meeting	D	D	O	O
Public Meeting	O	O	O	N/A
Partnerships	D	O	O	O
Taskforce or Working Party	D	O	O	N/A
Joint Venture	O	O	O	O

Key: **E** = Essential **D** = Desirable **O** = Optional **N/A** = Not Applicable

Reference to the full details of Council's Communication Strategy/Policy number 1.32 can be made on The Council's website www.lpsc.nsw.gov.au

Council's community engagement strategy for this plan was to distribute a newsletter to residents, hold public and specific group meetings, seek views on our website, Facebook and Twitter and conduct an independent community survey of a sample of 200 persons in March and December 2013. This was to ensure the principles of social justice comprising equity, participation, access and rights were adhered to.

1. Consultation on Special Rate Variation

Liverpool Plains Shire Council has run a vigorous campaign to inform and encourage community participation in the debate over the need for Council to apply for a 19% rate variation. The campaign has been mounted using both traditional forms of communication, Council's website and social media.

In Council's September newsletter the Mayor highlighted that rate increases were needed for upgrading infrastructure and reducing its backlog. Council's December newsletter provides information on T-Corps' recommendations for a special rate variation and, as in all releases on the issue, an invitation for individual residents to discuss the proposal with either Council's General Manager or Director Corporate Services. As with all Council issues, residents have also been able to discuss this proposal with individual Councillors.

Following the 2013 Mayoral election a media release was issued on 27-09-13 - *Community consultation to be undertaken to determine path to long-term financial sustainability for Shire* – This release was run by The Quirindi Advocate and several of the regional media outlets. 165 people saw the post on Facebook/twitter with one comment by a resident –

“Good to see that our council appears to be acting responsibly”.

Council's major campaign to inform the public of the proposed community meetings began the week commencing 25th November 2013 and the main exposure on 27th November 2013 with paid advertisements in the Quirindi Advocate and Werris Creek Flyer and a media release - **COMMUNITY MEETINGS Proposed 19% Rate Increase** – gained coverage on Prime TV, ABC Local Radio, 2TM/FM92.9, the Quirindi Advocate and in the Northern Daily Leader.

1,038 people saw this post on Facebook/twitter – There were 27 comments made by 11 people – Only two posts plainly stated “opposed to rate rise” – the others were mainly negative with broad brush comments like –

“Why should Werris Creek residents cop a rate hike to pay for Quirindi to be upgraded??? How about fixing the drainage, kerbs and gutters and roads here???”

“ARE YOU SERIOUS COUNCIL??! That's an absolute joke!! How do you justify ANOTHER rate increase and 19% too? Do you get to buy more flowers to put in Main Street gardens with that? Or do you all get a pay rise?”

“19% is a joke. It's expensive enough as it is. You reported a profit last financial year. That is what stings most!;”

Council responded to the Facebook comments with a general invitation to attend the meetings. Also on 27th November 2013 in response to comments on rate levels, Council posted a Table from the Division of Local Government's website that shows Average Rates - Comparative Performance Indicators 2011/12. Under Council's proposal the average Quirindi residential rate increase will be \$2.42 per week while in Werris Creek and the villages the increase will be less than \$1.75 per week – 194 people saw this post with no comments and it was also shared with the 1,038 who had linked to the original post.

There were also four reminders regarding meetings posted on Facebook/twitter over the period 2nd and 3rd December 2013.

(AM – 2nd December) REMINDER - LPSC is holding two Community Meetings this week. 1) Tonight (02/12) in Werris Creek from 6pm at the Werris Creek Bowling and Tennis Club. 2) Tomorrow (03/12) at Quirindi Council Chambers from 6pm. These meetings are to discuss a proposal for a special rate variation application to IPART for a rate increase from July 2014. All comments/questions received to date through this and other forums will be addressed and answered at these meetings. – 373 people sighted this post – No comments.

(4PM – 2nd December) - LPSC Community Meeting in Werris Creek - Tonight from 6pm at the Werris Creek Bowling and Tennis Club – 618 people saw this post – 4 people (who also contributed comments on 27-11 post made 15 comments – again these appear to be individual grievances, broad brush statements and after the event unwillingness to understand or accept the information.

(AM 3rd December) - REMINDER - LPSC Community Meeting tonight in Quirindi at the Council Chambers from 6pm – 166 people saw this post with no comments.

(4PM 3rd December) - LPSC Community Meeting 6pm tonight in the Quirindi Council Chambers – 140 people saw this post with no comments.

Following this campaign to reach the Shire's 8,000 residents approximately 70 people attended the Werris Creek meeting and a similar number in Quirindi. There appeared to be basically four categories of people who attended, those who arrived cynical and left the same way, people who couldn't differentiate between Local Government and State/Federal issues and who couldn't seem to grasp Council's responsibilities, people with individual issues most of which could be dealt with in the normal course of business, and those people who were interested in the actual subject, the proposed rate increase.

After the meetings it was fairly obvious that while 'nobody wants a rate rise' many people who came for the issue on the agenda were genuinely grateful for the presentation and better understood Council's position.

Comments from the meetings included:

"I am on a fixed pension and even though its only \$2.28 extra per week I still have to find that money from somewhere" – lady at Quirindi Meeting

"I am a pensioner and have to live within my means and Council must do the same" – Werris Creek resident

"Roads must be improved out west" – Farmer

"Don't spend \$1.1m on the main street upgrade" – Quirindi resident

"The meeting gave the facts of where the council stands and the rate increase. I felt it was a very negative meeting. No one likes increases, but we need to look at the big picture of where the Council is and where we are likely to end up if we don't take action" – Quirindi business owner.

"I have been to Gunnedah and there is no way we would want to be in that Council area" – local farmer



Photo above - Community members who attended the Quirindi Meeting

The **Community Survey** of 200 residents conducted independently by Micromex Research Pty Ltd in December 2013 revealed the following results:

- That 74% were at least somewhat supportive or supportive of continuing the 6.5% expiring special rate variation
- 39% were somewhat supportive or supportive of the full 19% rate increase while 61% were not supportive of the increase.
- The lead in questions revealed that 77% were at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of local infrastructure.
- 76% were at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of long term planning for local infrastructure.
- The survey showed that 94% indicated it was important for Council to implement plans and programs that will maintain or renew community infrastructure.

The feedback from those who were not supportive of the 19% rate increase is that the rate is too high or they haven't noticed any improvements from the 6.5% already in place.

As a result of this community consultation Council, at its Ordinary Meeting held 18th December, 2013 resolved to reduce the rate increase from 19% to 12.5% and thus lessen the rate burden on the community. Further cost savings and fee increases of around \$471,000 were foreshadowed and subsequently adopted at the Special Meeting of Council held 5th February 2014.

2. Results from Past Community Meetings on Services & Infrastructure

Numerous meetings were held in 2013 with community groups and many suggestions for improvements were offered with the main ones being as follows:

Social

- Bus/transport for nursing home clients to travel to medical appointments
- Toilets required at Quirindi cemetery and Walhallow cemetery
- Lobby for increased police presence in towns and villages
- Town centre library square and Rose Lee park need more seating
- Council to take a more active role in NAIDOC week
- Improve public toilets and ensure doors open outwards for people with a disability
- Lobby to expand courses for trades at local TAFE
- Financial assistance required to expand Historical Society Museum
- Tennis courts in Quirindi require synthetic surfacing
- New roof required at Spring Ridge Hall
- Shade shelters at parks in Spring Ridge
- Indoor sports stadium required
- Skate park for Currabubula
- Increased activities at Royal theatre with disabled and aged care persons

Environmental

- Continue to lobby for covering of coal wagons to reduce dust
- Sullage disposal for caravans
- Simplify development application forms and processes
- Significant indigenous sites around the shire should be recognised with a plaque
- Continue to clean out creeks from trees and vegetation that may cause flooding
- Determine and advocate community position on coal seam gas

Economic

- Improved grading of road shoulders for drainage required
- Rail by-pass/overpass needed in Quirindi, Willow Tree and Werris Creek

- Upgrade Carroona to Werris Creek road (Gap Rd) as it is becoming dangerous
- Upgrade the Quirindi Showground facilities
- Water supply pressure upgrade at Spring Ridge
- Water supply security for Willow Tree
- Advocate for increased road funding to local government
- Complete bitumen sealing of MR 358
- Stage 2 CBD upgrades for Quirindi and Werris Creek

Civic Leadership

- Councillors should get out more often and not just at major events
- Should be greater indigenous representation on Council indoor staff as over representation on the outdoor staff
- Council to lobby for increased electricity rebates for community halls run by volunteers
- Regular bi monthly meetings with High School SRC

3. Results of Random Community Surveys

Council engaged Micromex Research Pty Ltd in 2009, February 2011, December 2011 and March 2013 to undertake random telephone surveys of 200 residents across the Shire. The surveys gauged community satisfaction with Council services and benchmarked these against other Councils.

Overall the survey found a generally positive result with 28 of the 35 services/facilities rated as being moderate to very high satisfaction. The 7 services with lower satisfaction are sealed and unsealed rural roads, economic development, opportunities to participate in council decision making, management of development, youth services and indoor recreation services.

Comparisons with the December 2011 Survey show that satisfaction has reduced in two services; tourism management and swimming pools, with the remainder statistically similar to 2011.

Residents are more satisfied than the **LGA Benchmark** score for 8 of the 22 comparable measures, including "overall satisfaction with Council", equal to seven and below the benchmark in 7 measures including overall satisfaction in the way contact was made with council in person, parks, communication, environmental & sustainability initiatives, management of development and opportunities to participate in Council decision making.

The survey also asked residents what infrastructure and services Council should focus on over the next 10 years. , the predominant responses included:

- Improvement of roads, 45%
- Local employment opportunities, 12%
- Water Supply, 10%
- Youth services and facilities, 9%
- Footpath & Bridge maintenance, 7%
- Encourage local businesses, 7%

- Aged care services & facilities, 6%

Analysis of Results

Explaining the four quadrants in the following table;

Attributes in the top right quadrant, **MAINTAIN**, such as ‘aged services’, are Council’s core strengths, and should be treated as such. We need to maintain, or even attempt to improve our position in these areas, as they are influential and address clear community needs.

Attributes in the top left quadrant, **IMPROVE**, such as ‘sealed rural roads’, are areas where Council is perceived to be currently under-performing and are key concerns in the eyes of our residents. In the vast majority of cases we should aim to improve our performance in these areas to better meet the community’s expectations.

Attributes in the bottom left quadrant, **NICHE**, such as ‘youth facilities’, are of a relatively lower priority (and the word ‘relatively’ should be stressed – they are still important). These areas tend to be important to a particular segment of the community.

Finally, attributes in the bottom right quadrant, **SECONDARY**, such as parks, are core strengths, but in relative terms they are less important than other areas and Council’s servicing in these areas may already be exceeding expectation. Consideration could be given to rationalising focus in these areas as they are not community priorities for improvement.

Recommendations based only on stated importance and satisfaction have major limitations, as the actual questionnaire process essentially ‘silos’ facilities and services as if they are independent variables, when they are in fact all part of the broader community perception of Council performance.

Residents’ priorities identified in stated importance/satisfaction analysis often tend to be in areas that are problematic. No matter how much focus a Council dedicates to ‘road maintenance’ for example, it will often be found in the **IMPROVE** quadrant. This is because, perceptually, the condition of local roads can always be better.

The left hand column in the following table relates to services of lower satisfaction, while the right-hand column indicates services of higher satisfaction.

Higher Importance

Improve	Maintain
Unsealed and Sealed Rural Roads	Aged Services
Economic Development	Recycling
Public toilets	Cemetery Maintenance
Urban Roads	Bridges
Financial Management	Support for Volunteers
Customer Service	Emergency Services – VRA, SES, RFS
Water Supply	General garbage collection
Management of Development	
Environmental & Sustainability initiatives	
Opportunities to participate in Council decision making	
Disability Access	
Drainage/flood management	

Niche	Secondary
Tourism Management	Heritage conservation/promotion
Footpaths	Relationship with indigenous residents
Animal Control	Parks & Sporting ovals
Youth Services	Sewerage management
Indoor Recreation Centres	Child Care Services
	Quality of town centres & public spaces
	Swimming pools
	Racecourse/Showground
	Libraries

Lower Importance

With regard to infrastructure, Council needs to find additional resources or reallocate resources from other areas to improve its roads, drainage and public toilets. These funds could be obtained by lobbying other levels of Government for increased funding, increasing rates above rate pegging or by the reallocation of funds from areas such as parks, sporting ovals, swimming pools, libraries and showgrounds which, according to the survey results, appear to be currently over serviced.

The results of this survey are very similar to the 2009 and February 2011 surveys conducted by Micromex with roads being by far the major issue with the community. The long-term financial

plan contained within the Resourcing Strategy Document indicates the additional funds and their source allocated by Council over the next ten years to try and increase community satisfaction with roads while simultaneously addressing the infrastructure backlog.

Please access the Liverpool Plains Shire Council's website <www.lpsc.nsw.gov.au> for full survey results.

4. Results from LPSC Website, Facebook and Twitter

There were some 71 responses on Council's website (but not all sections were completed) with the following results:

Community facilities – Importance rating of each service was similar with satisfaction being marginally better than the Micromex Survey.

Infrastructure – Importance rating is similar as is satisfaction levels with sealed and unsealed rural roads marginally better than the Micromex Survey.

Human Services – Importance ratings marginally lower than the Micromex Survey with satisfaction levels generally lower than the telephone survey.

Corporate Services & Management – Importance ratings very similar with satisfaction ratings generally being lower than the telephone survey.

Overall the results show a similar pattern to the Micromex Survey with regard to the importance and satisfaction for each of the 35 services.



Liverpool Plains Shire Council

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