



Upper Hunter Shire Council
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2027

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The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2027 is structured into 4 parts, as follows:

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PART 1

Introduction and Overview of Council

What is the Upper Hunter Shire Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2027?

The purpose of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2027 is to provide a road map of what is important to the Community and where it wants to be in 10 years. It is a shared vision of what the Upper Hunter Shire Community values and aspires to for the next 10 years.

The CSP 2027 is structured around the pillars of sustainability: environmental, social (referred to as Community Life) and economic (referred to as Economy and infrastructure). Leadership and Community Engagement is a fourth element. These have all been integrated in our long-term planning and decision making.

The Community Strategic Plan is the Community's plan for the future and it is important that it represents the diversity of views. The engagement of the Community is critical to help frame the conversation and to identify what issues need to be explored.

Council committed to a new Community Engagement approach to specifically reach out to people in the Upper Hunter Shire who are less likely to participate in conventional methods of consultation or have been traditionally 'hard to reach'. Council has gone out into the Upper Hunter Shire with the aim of encouraging participation of all members of the local community.

The Plan was developed through information gathered on 3 key questions put to the Community:

- What are the top three things you like about the Upper Hunter Shire;
- What are the top three improvements you would like to see happen across the Upper Hunter Shire? In other words, what could be done better?
- In the future - What does your ideal Upper Hunter Shire look like?

Council's role has been to guide the Community through these important discussions, document responses, identify the Community's priorities and develop strategic directions which will guide Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plans and budget over the next four years.

Useful Community Resource

Keeping in mind that although the Community Strategic Plan 2027 is a requirement, it is also a useful resource for the Community.

This document can be read in a variety of ways, as follows:

- **Review the whole Plan;**
- **Focus on Part 1 and 2 if you are wanting information about Council and development of the Plan;**
- **Focus on Part 3 and 4 if you are mainly interested in the Community**



Message from the Mayor

It is my privilege to present the Upper Hunter Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2027.

Council has enjoyed the opportunity to create a new roadmap for the Upper Hunter Shire that will guide local decision-making and community participation over the next decade.

We committed to a new approach in engagement to specifically reach out to people in the Upper Hunter Shire who are less likely to participate in conventional methods of consultation or have been traditionally 'hard to reach'. This plan reflects this commitment as it represents the diversity of views in the Shire, obtained when Council was 'Popping-up" and speaking openly with the Community about what they believe to be the main priorities and aspirations, as well as how things can be improved in the Upper Hunter Shire.

I would like to thank Councillors, Senior Management and Staff whose hard work is demonstrated within this report and look forward to working together to achieve the strategic direction set out in this Plan.

I would also like to extend Council's sincere appreciation to the many community members and organisations that were involved in the development of this plan. Going out into the Community and hearing from so many of you about how proud and happy you are to call this beautiful place home reflects my own feelings about the Upper Hunter Shire.

Council is committed to addressing our vulnerability to climate change and preparing for the future by building resilience. With this in mind we recognise the need to understand and proactively address the key impacts to the Upper Hunter Shire relating to natural hazards as an increased risk of flood, heat/fire and drought.

The development of the Upper Hunter Shire Community Strategic Plan 2027 may have been guided by the Council but it belongs to all of us as we each share the responsibility of making our community a better place for now and future generations.

Cr Wayne Bedggood

MAYOR - UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL



Our Councillors

Council Term 2016-2020

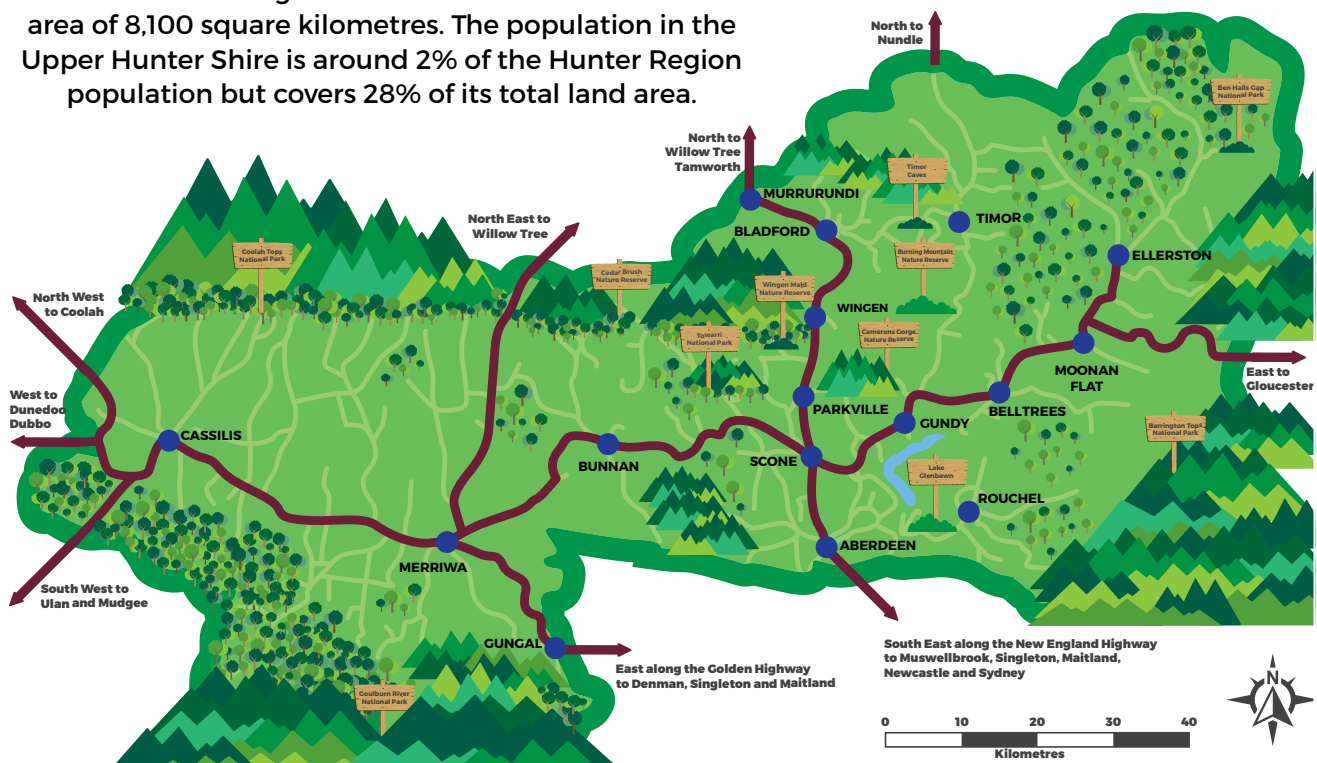


Back Row: Cr Kiwa Fisher, Cr Ron Campbell, Cr James Burns, Cr Sue Abbott, Cr Josh Brown
Front Row: Cr Lorna Driscoll, Mayor Wayne Bedggood, Deputy Mayor Maurice Collison, Cr Lee Watts



Our Shire

The Upper Hunter Shire is located inland of Newcastle in the Hunter Region of NSW and has a total land area of 8,100 square kilometres. The population in the Upper Hunter Shire is around 2% of the Hunter Region population but covers 28% of its total land area.



Council Manages

- 3 Council Branch Offices
- 8 Community Halls
- 5 Public Library Branches
- 3 Public Swimming Pools
- 2 Community Technology Centres
- 3 Youth Centres
 - Advice and referral
 - Skills Group
 - Casework
 - Counselling Early Intervention Services
- 3 Approved Children's Education and Care Services
 - The Early Learning Centre (ELC) Long Day Care
 - Family Day Care (FDC)
 - Scone Out of School Hours / Vacation Care Program (SOOSH)
- 17 Independent Living Units
- 1 Aged Hostel
- 2 Low Income Units
- 3 Animal Shelters
- 5 Waste depots
- More than 119 hectares of sports ground

4,700 residences are serviced by kerbside garbage and recycling.

Council is responsible for 1,770 kilometres of local road, 27.3 kilometres of footpath and 118.8 kilometres of kerb and gutter.

There are 93 bridges within the Upper Hunter Shire - 25% of these are timber bridges.

Council's Assets including infrastructure, property, plant and equipment are valued at almost \$700 million.

Vision, Values and Commitment

Vision

A Quality Rural Lifestyle – in a vibrant, caring and sustainable community.

Our Values

- Mutual respect for all people and cultures.
- Ensure staff and community safety.
- Efficient, effective and reliable service.
- Honest, open and accountable.
- Deliver on our Commitments.
- Improved Environmental Responsibility.

Our commitment to the Community

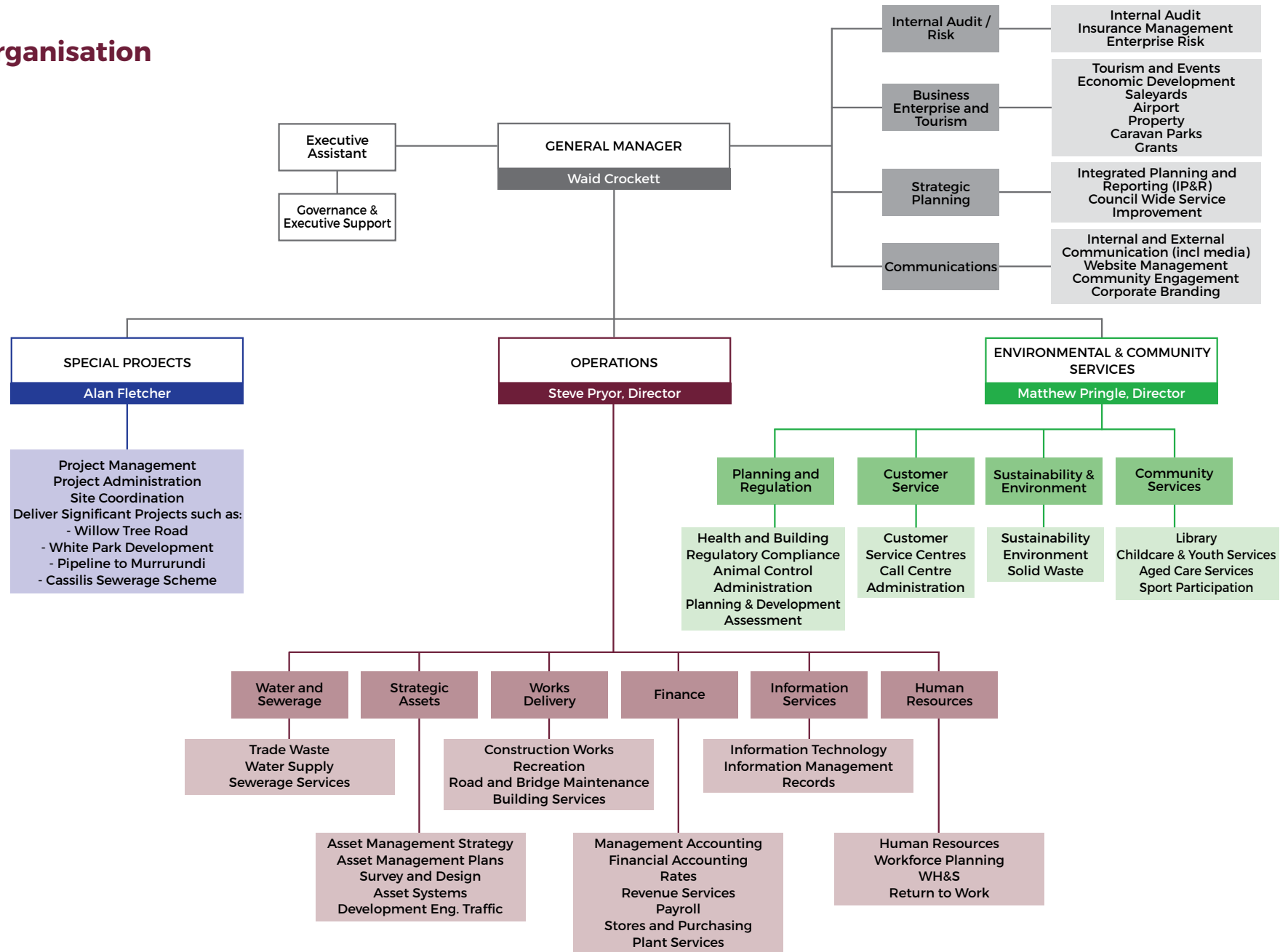
- We will deliver high quality, innovative, consistent and responsive services to the community.
- We respect the rights of everyone to be treated fairly.
- We will keep our community informed about Council services and financial position.
- We will continually strive to improve our services to the community and encourage community engagement.
- We will deliver increased effort in the protection of the environment.

Our commitment to each other

- We will conduct a safe, fair and open workplace where achievements are recognised and people are encouraged to develop personally.
- We will communicate openly and in clear and consistent language.



Our Organisation





PART 2

Creating Our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2027

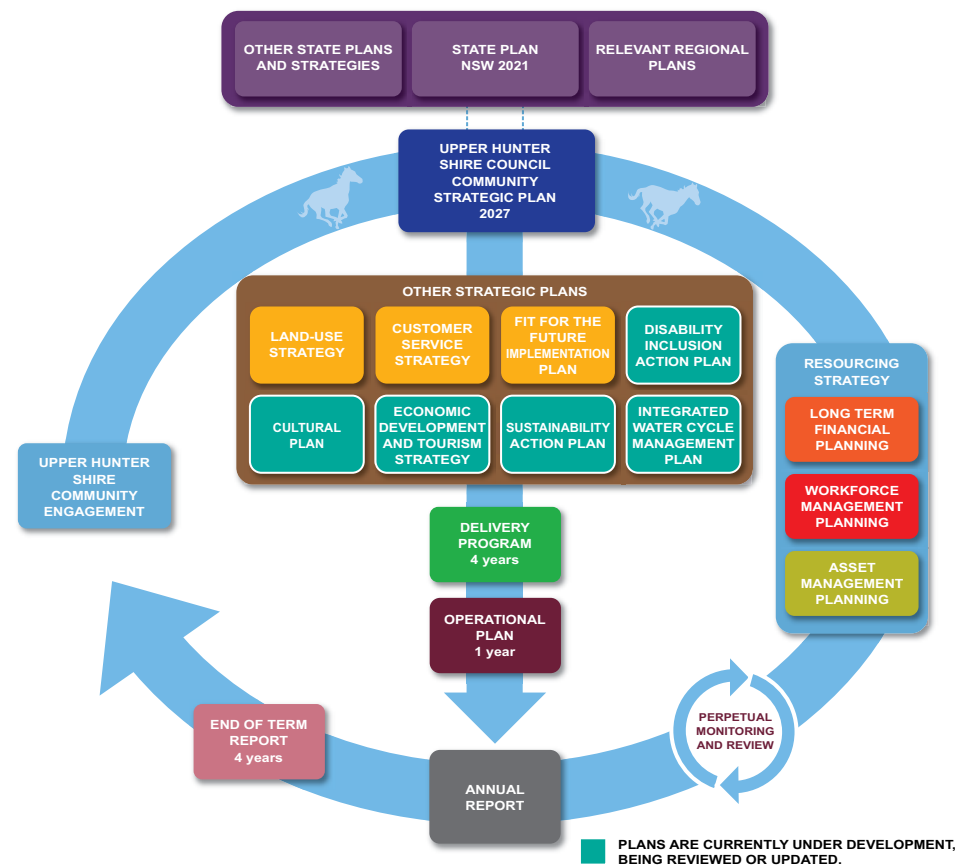
Our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework aims to ensure a more sustainable Local Government sector. The Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to work with the community to review the Community Strategic Plan and other documents within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework after the commencement of each four-year elected Council term.

Councils need to take a long term view and consider social, economic and environmental aspects and the needs of the current and future generations when making decisions. This underpins the Integrated, Planning and Reporting Framework. The importance of Civic Leadership and accountability and transparency in decision making should also underpin the Plan.

All NSW Councils are required to develop a Community Strategic Plan along with a Delivery Program (4 years) and Operational Plan (1 year). The CSP 2027 and its strategic objectives provide a foundation for our Delivery Program and Operational Plan. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan detail how each service addresses the CSP 2027 objectives, ongoing activities, priority projects and the strategies supporting this work.

These documents are informed by a Resourcing Strategy that is made up of a Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plans and Workforce Management Plan. In order to achieve the integration envisaged by the IP&R Framework, there is an alignment between the CSP 2027, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and the other key documents. This is identified on the Upper Hunter Shire Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.



Our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework - Colour Codes

Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is colour coded and each of the key documents has a marking with the corresponding colour.

This alignment of Councils Key Plans is formed through the 11 Community Priorities and the 4 Key Focus Areas:

- Community Life;
- Built and Natural Environment;
- Economic and Infrastructure; and
- Leadership and Community Engagement



Delivery Program



Operational Plan



Long Term Financial Plan Workforce Management Plan



Asset Management Plans



Annual Report



End of Term Report



Other Strategic Plan



Putting the Community Strategic Plan 2027 into Practice

Aligning the Plan

Upper Hunter Shire Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the Local Government Area, however it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Council, businesses, other levels of organisations, community groups and individuals all have a responsibility to work together to put the Plan into practice and build the Upper Hunter Shire we want in the future.

As a community, we acknowledge our place within a wider regional and state context with an understanding of our role and networks with other communities, industries and state-wide partners. The review of the Community Strategic Plan included consideration of a range of current strategic documents impacting on the Upper Hunter Shire and these are identified in Part 4 Strategic Directions for Upper Hunter Shire

Delivering and Monitoring the Plan

Council has facilitated the development of the Community Strategic Plan 2027 – the next step is to make sure it is implemented.

As the leading facilitator and advocate on behalf of the Upper Hunter Shire Community. Council will commit to its responsibility for key areas of the plan and advocate on behalf of the Community in areas not directly resourced by Council.

Upper Hunter Shire Council will undertake the following activities to implement and monitor the Community Strategic Plan 2027:

- Development of a four-year Delivery Program – Delivery Program 2017/2018-2020/2021;
- One-year Operational Plan;
- Regular Council Review;
- Annual Report;
- Community Engagement and Research; and
- End of Term Report.



Enterprise Risk Management

Upper Hunter Shire Council commits to a comprehensive program of Enterprise Risk Management that integrates all risks, including safety, environmental and business continuity risks into our decision making, planning and reporting at all levels.

A consistent, holistic approach to risk management strengthens Council's ability to deliver more efficient and effective services to the community. The program focuses on the ongoing identification and treatment of risk to build an organisation that is resilient, risk aware and at the forefront of good governance.

Council implements risk management on an organisation wide basis consistent with International Standard ISO 31000:2009. This approach creates sustainable value by both mitigating risks to the achievement of our objectives and by identifying potential opportunities.

Council's Enterprise Risk Management Program will integrate risk management into Council's Key Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Documents, structure, governance, policies, processes, strategies, and reporting. This will assist Council in long term planning and prioritising the needs of the community as the principles that underpin this framework are that risk management:

- Must create value whilst minimising the compliance and administrative burden;
- Is an integral part of organisational planning and decision making;
- Supports reduction of future loss and failure, realisation of opportunity and disciplined innovation;
- Is applied in a manner that is rigorous, structured and based on the best available information; and
- Must be responsive to change and capable of continuous improvement.



Climate Change

Climate change and its potential impacts will feature as a primary consideration in every aspect of Council's business, whilst appropriate actions in response to the causes and effects of climate change must be integrated as a core part of every strategic and operational management activity undertaken by Council.

We will ensure our Community is prepared for future climate change and we will work collaboratively to mitigate our impacts, committing to the following:

- Motivate positive changes in our response to climate change and monitor our impact over time; and
- Protect our community and respond to the risks posed by expected changes to the climate.



Community Engagement Strategy

Council developed and adopted a new Community Engagement Strategy - Community Strategic Plan 2027, which reflects Council's commitment to a new engagement approach.

Council undertook intensive Community Engagement as part of the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan 2027 to ensure that:

- Council builds a robust and sustainable Council and Community; and
- Services are aligned with the Community desires, needs and expectations.

Council engaged with over 980 members of the Community, the majority of these face to face.

A range of Engagement methods were used and they include:

- Community Research – telephone surveys;
- Infographics of Shire and main towns;
- Council Website;
- Media;
- Advertisements;
- Direct Communication with stakeholders;
- Displays/Exhibits at Council Customer Services;
- Community Survey Forms;
- Councillor Workshops;
- Staff CSP 2027 Presentations; and
- Community Engagement Pop-ups.

An engagement method that proved very popular was when Council went out into the Community using Infographics and Pop-up Engagements. The Community spoke openly about what they believe to be the main priorities and aspirations and how things can be improved in the Upper Hunter Shire.



Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

What are the Community priorities for the next 10 years?

What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?

What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?

Aberdeen

UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL 2027

Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?

What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?

Cassilis

UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL 2027

Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

What are the Community priorities for the next 10 years?

What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?

What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?

Merriwa

UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL 2027

Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?

What are the Community priorities for the next 10 years?

What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?

Murrurundi

UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL 2027

Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

This map shows the Upper Hunter Shire region with various towns and areas highlighted. Three callout boxes pose questions to the community:

- What are the Community priorities for the next 10 years?** (Top right)
- What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?** (Bottom left)
- What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?** (Bottom right)

The map includes labels for towns such as Bunnan, Merriwa, Parkville, Wingen, Blandford, Murrurundi, Tamworth, Gundy, Moonan, Devil Ark, Barrington, Aberdeen, and Muswellbrook. A scale bar indicates 0 to 0.5 Kilometres. The Upper Hunter Shire Council 2027 logo is in the bottom right corner.

Have Your Say Upper Hunter Shire!

This map shows the Upper Hunter Shire Council region with various towns and areas highlighted. Three callout boxes pose questions to the community:

- What are the Community priorities for the next 10 years?** (Top left)
- What do you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?** (Top right)
- What are the improvements you would like to see across the Upper Hunter Shire?** (Bottom left)

The map includes labels for towns such as Murrurundi, Blandford, Wingen, Timor, Ellerstoun, Moonan Flat, Parkville, Gundy, Belltrees, Scone, Rouchel, Aberdeen, Merriwa, and Cuncal. A scale bar indicates 0 to 40 Kilometres. The Upper Hunter Shire Council 2027 logo is in the bottom right corner.

The Pop-up Engagements were held at:

- Murrurundi Touch Football;
- Upper Hunter Shire Youth Council;
- Scone Touch Football;
- Cassilis Community Christmas Party;
- Christmas in Park Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre;
- The Royal Hotel (Merriwa);
- Story @ the Park, Wilson Memorial Oval Playground;

- Aberdeen Football Club Girls Tackle, McKinnon Field;
- Cricket Day, hosted by Belltrees Cricket Club;
- Merriwa District Progress Association Meeting;
- Merriwa Touch Football;
- Scone Men's Shed;
- Scone Probus Women's; and
- Scone Probus Men's





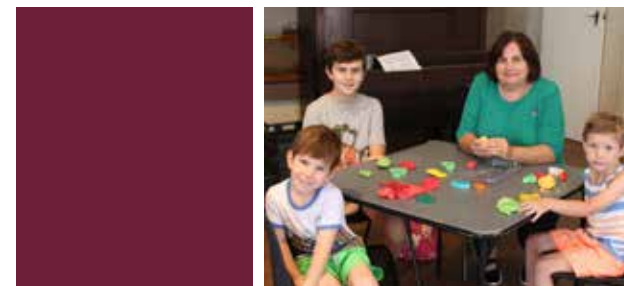
PART 3

Community Priorities

What did the Community Say?

What are the top three things you like about the Upper Hunter Shire?

- Relaxed rural lifestyle;
- Born and bred;
- Community spirit;
- Small Community;
- Friendly, supportive and generous Community;
- Country hospitality – Good place to raise a family;
- Pretty, quiet and clean;
- Safe compared to the City – nice place to walk around;
- Healthy Lifestyle;
- Sport Facilities and diverse Sport Opportunities;
- Beautiful Environment – Dams, Rivers, bushland and open space;
- Easy access – Hub – Central;
- Good support and facilities for the ageing population – Senior housing;
- Community Pride for the Upper Hunter Shire;
- Schooling opportunities good for the town size;
- Affordable living; and
- It has everything you need.



What did the Community Say? (Cont)

What are the top three improvements you would like to see happen across the Upper Hunter Shire?

- Improved and well maintained Roads;
- More, improved and better facilities (including sporting, community, public toilets, BBQ's, bmx tracks, skate parks, playgrounds and family facilities);
- Increased police presence;
- Increased tourism and visitor opportunities - Innovative options;
- More Community Services and activities accessible to everyone;
- More sporting opportunities;
- No more Vacant Shops - More locally owned business;
- Beautification of towns - Revitalisation of town centres;
- Improved signage;
- More activities for families ;
- More business opportunities and career opportunities for our children - so they do not have to leave the Shire;
- Mowing/maintenance of public spaces, more street trees - Usually linked to town beautification and presentation;
- Reliable and safe water supply;
- More Community Engagement - where you come to us;
- More opportunities to enjoy the Environment;
- More local shopping opportunities;
- Public transport - more options, services, bus shelters
- More opportunities for our youth; and
- More entertainment, leisure, art and culture opportunities.

In the Future - What does your ideal Upper Hunter Shire look like?

- Great the way it is just with some improvements;
- Rural, beautiful environment, country lifestyle, quiet but with improved roads, facilities, services and economy;
- Bring back and restore the heritage buildings;
- Increased focus on Upper Hunter Shire as Horse Capital;
- Attract traffic from bypass back into town - invigorate towns

Council reviewed all feedback from the community, identified key themes and priorities and used this to develop the Community Priorities.



Community Priorities

The 11 Upper Hunter Shire Community Priorities represent what the Community believes to be the 10 most important priorities for the future and the final icon is to highlight the importance for Council to continue to be Fit for the Future.

Council and the Community will be able to clearly see how we are working to achieve each of the Communities Priorities, as the icons will link directly to Council's Key Focus Areas, Goals and Strategic Directions.

These will also link directly into Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plan and staff performance plans.





PART 4

Strategic Directions for Upper Hunter Shire

Strategic Directions for Upper Hunter Shire

The Key focus Areas, Goals and Community Strategies (CS) which the CSP 2027 is structured around are as follows:

KEY FOCUS AREA - COMMUNITY LIFE

Goal 1 - A supported Community.

- G1 CS1 Advocate for, develop and implement programs, services and facilities for our ageing Community.
- G1 CS2 Form partnerships and participate in networks which address the needs and interests of disadvantaged and disability groups in the Community.
- G1 CS3 Advocate for, support and provide services and facilities for young people, children, families and people with a disability.
- G1 CS4 Facilitate partnerships which create and support a safe, inclusive and caring Community.

KEY FOCUS AREA - COMMUNITY LIFE

Goal 2 - Promote wellbeing and a connected, healthy and happy Community.

- G2 CS5 Advocate for, support and facilitate the provision of facilities for health and health related services.
- G2 CS6 Support existing education facilities and enhance learning opportunities.
- G2 CS7 Provide and support a broad range of sport, recreation, health and wellness programs to target age specific needs of residents including younger children, older children, adolescents, families, seniors and people with a disability.
- G2 CS8 Provide information and opportunities for everyone, especially those that are disadvantaged to participate fully in our Community life.
- G2 CS9 Value our heritage and cultural diversity, celebrating together and fostering creativity.

KEY FOCUS AREA - BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Goal 3 - Protect the natural environment.

- G3 CS10 Advocate for, facilitate and support programs that protect and sustain our diverse environment for our future generations.
- G3 CS11 Encourage and support active Community participation within our Community to care for our environment and provide for a sustainable future.
- G3 CS12 Ensure that all actions, decisions and policy response to natural hazards and climate change remain current and reflect capacity, Community expectations and changes in environmental and climate change information.



KEY FOCUS AREA - BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Goal 4 - Plan for a sustainable future.

- G4 CS13 Implement and regularly review Strategic Land Use Plans, Environmental Planning Instruments and Development Controls, which reflect the needs and expectations of the broad Community
- G4 CS14 Provide efficient and effective advisory, assessment and regulatory services focused on being Customer 'friendly', responsive and environmentally responsible.
- G4 CS15 Plan, facilitate and provide for a changing population for current and future generations.
- G4 CS16 Provide efficient and effective waste and recycling services and support improved waste minimisation and recycling practices.
- G4 CS17 Implement policies to ensure the protection of strategic agricultural lands, equine critical industry clusters, natural resources and heritage.

KEY FOCUS AREA - ECONOMY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 5 - A sustainable and prosperous economy.

- G5 CS18 Encourage a diverse economy whilst promoting and preserving our agriculture and equine industries.
- G5 CS19 Encourage retail and commercial business to locate and prosper within our Shire.
- G5 CS20 Encourage and support innovative industry and a diversity of businesses that provide a range of services and employment opportunities for current and future generations.
- G5 CS21 Facilitate and provide access to a range of local educational and training opportunities that complements the economy.
- G5 CS22 Provide attractive and functional town centres and support revitalisation of the towns and villages including investment in built heritage and improvement of existing buildings.
- G5 CS23 Facilitate and support increased and innovative tourism and marketing opportunities.

KEY FOCUS AREA - ECONOMY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 6 - Increase, enhance and maintain civil infrastructure, Community assets and open spaces to meet the needs of current and future generations.

- G6 CS24 Provide for replacement, improvement and additional Community and open space infrastructure through investment, best practice and risk management.
- G6 CS25 Provide inviting public spaces that are clean, green, properly maintained, well designed, encourage active participation, family friendly and accessible to all.
- G6 CS26 Provide safe and reliable water and sewerage services to meet the demands of current and future generations.



KEY FOCUS AREA - ECONOMY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 7 - Enhance and improve the road network and bridges to meet the needs of current and future generations and communicate priorities and progress to the Community.

G7 CS27 Maintain and upgrade the road network and bridges.

G7 CS28 Increased Community engagement and updates on infrastructure planning, road priorities, works and improvements.

G7 CS29 Advocate, facilitate and/or provide traffic management and public transport facilities to meet the needs of the Community

KEY FOCUS AREA - LEADERSHIP

Goal 8 - Provide Community leadership.

G8 CS30 Effectively and efficiently manage the business of Council, while encouraging an open and participatory Council with an emphasis on transparency, Community engagement, action and response.

G8 CS31 Council is focused on innovation and continuous improvement to ensure a high quality of service which is aligned with business needs and Community priorities.

G8 CS32 Promote and celebrate the achievements of Council and the local Community.

G8 CS33 Utilise emerging innovative communication technologies and techniques to increase awareness of Council's activities and services.

G8 CS34 Community is effectively engaged, can provide opinion and contribute to decisions that plan for the present and future of the Upper Hunter Shire.

G8 CS35 Develop and maintain effective reporting systems that enable Council to measure and report on performance.

G8 CS36 Effective management of risk underpins all Council decisions, service delivery and behaviours.

G8 CS37 Ensure long-term financial sustainability through short, medium and long term financial planning.

G8 CS38 Ensure Council is a great place to work by supporting Council employees in maximising their contribution.

G8 CS39 Develop opportunities and build capacity for Community leadership especially in Councillors and young people.

KEY FOCUS AREA - LEADERSHIP

Goal 9 - Advocate for the Community.

G9 CS40 Encourage and build strong partnerships between the Community, business and all levels of government to support implementation of the CSP 2027 and to deliver the Community priorities.

G9 CS41 To participate and encourage regional coordination and planning between Councils and other organisations.

G9 CS42 Provide timely and effective advocacy and leadership on key community issues and priorities.



COMMUNITY LIFE

GOAL 1: *A Supported Community.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter Shire will be a place where people continue to have access to a range of effective and diverse social services and programs that meet the changing needs of our community.





Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Population Changes	A population that will slowly increase from 14,200 in 2011 to 15,750 in 2031 (Census data and NSW Government's population forecast). This population increase can be attributed to an increase in rate of births. The Community has a high ratio of children to adults of parenting age combined with low retention of adults. The ratio of older people (65 and older) to the number of people aged 15-64 years will gradually increase from 0.25 in 2011 to 0.41 in 2031, increasing demand for aged services in the area.
Independent Living	To provide sufficient support services for older people and people with special need. The Council owned units are ageing and ongoing maintenance of the buildings is becoming an issue.
Increasing Carers	To provide support for the increasing number of carers in our Community.
Children's Services	To provide adequate children's services and facilities.
A Place for Young People	To include young people in the planning of community activities and facilities.
Community Safety	To address community safety concerns by working closely with the police and community.
People with a Disability	To improve inclusion and access for people with a disability.



COMMUNITY LIFE

GOAL 1: *A Supported Community.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
G1 CS1	Advocate for, develop and implement programs, services and facilities for our ageing Community.	 Rural lifestyle and Country feel are valued and protected and the Upper Hunter Shire remains quiet, safe, healthy and welcoming.  Upper Hunter Shire Council to support and provide community services which promote health wellbeing and the celebration of culture.
G1 CS2	Form partnerships and participate in networks which address the needs and interests of disadvantaged and disability groups in the Community.	
G1 CS3	Advocate for, support and provide services and facilities for young people, children, families and people with a disability.	
G1 CS4	Facilitate partnerships which create and support a safe, inclusive and caring Community.	
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Perception of safety in public areas	Percentage of residents who agree public areas in the Upper Hunter Shire are safe	Council Community Survey Biennial
Resident satisfaction with Community support	Increase or decrease in residents' level of satisfaction with services and facilities for older people and people with a disability. Increase or decrease in residents' level of satisfaction with Community support services.	Council Community Survey Biennial



COMMUNITY LIFE

GOAL 2: *Promote wellbeing and a connected, healthy and happy Community.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter Shire will be a community where people continue to have a sense of belonging, respect differences, care for each other and contribute to their local community and neighbourhood through participation in community life. People of all ages and backgrounds have access to learning opportunities, cultural and community activities. The local heritage of indigenous and modern cultures is protected and preserved.






Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Remote Communities	Working in a rural area encompassing approximately 8100km ² to foster a strong, happy and supported community.
Technology	A number of internet and mobile blackspots exist in the shire and Council continues to lobby for coverage.
Community Information	To engage and meet high expectations for access to information.
Library and Information Services	Engage and connect with time poor residents, young people and residents in geographically distant areas.
Cultural Partnerships and Hubs	Foster and maintain partnerships that encourage cultural and community activities and events. To provide and maintain facilities that encourage cultural and community services.
Health and Sport	To provide opportunities for children's play and youth activities. To ensure the community has access to sport through the availability of sporting facilities, public places and open spaces.
Aboriginal Heritage	To improve the knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal heritage in a Shire that has an indigenous population of 3.9%, which is higher than the State average of 2.5%.
Local Heritage and History	Retain and celebrate local history and heritage.
Diverse Community	To communicate and engage with a culturally diverse community.



COMMUNITY LIFE

GOAL 2: *Promote wellbeing and a connected, healthy and happy Community.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES	COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G2 CS5 Advocate for, support and facilitate the provision of facilities for health and health related services.</p> <p>G2 CS6 Support existing education facilities and enhance learning opportunities.</p> <p>G2 CS7 Provide and support a broad range of sport, recreation, health and wellness programs to target age specific needs of residents including younger children, older children, adolescents, families, seniors and people with a disability.</p> <p>G2 CS8 Provide information and opportunities for everyone, especially those that are disadvantaged to participate fully in our Community life.</p> <p>G2 CS9 Value our heritage and cultural diversity, celebrating together and fostering creativity.</p>	<p> Rural lifestyle and Country feel are valued and protected and the Upper Hunter Shire remains quiet, safe, healthy and welcoming.</p> <p> Upper Hunter Shire Council to support and provide community services which promote health wellbeing and the celebration of culture.</p> <p> Well maintained, safe, reliable and additional infrastructure, including sporting fields, parks, family and cultural facilities.</p>

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Community Wellbeing	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement "The Upper Hunter Shire offers a good quality of life."	Council Community Survey Biennial
Resident satisfaction with medical facilities and health services	Increase or decrease in residents' level of satisfaction with medical facilities and health services.	Council Community Survey Biennial
Resident satisfaction with sport and fitness opportunities	Increase or decrease in the level of importance residents place on the opportunities to participate in sport and ovals, sportsgrounds and swimming pools.	Council Community Survey Biennial
Satisfaction with local arts, entertainment and culture	Percentage of residents satisfied with the provision of arts, entertainment and culture.	Council Community Survey Biennial



COMMUNITY LIFE

State Plan

The 2 Goals in the Community Life Key Focus Area align with the following goals from the NSW 2021 State Plan:

- Keep people healthy and out of hospital;
- Better protect the most vulnerable members of our Community and break the cycle of disadvantage;
- Increase opportunities for people with a disability by providing support that meets their individual needs and realise their potential.
- Improve education and learning outcomes for all students.
- Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities;
- Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life;
- Foster opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people;
- Enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities;
- Improve road safety; and
- Prevent and reduce the level of crime.

Regional Plans

The two goals in the Community Life Key Focus Area align with the following Regional Plans.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 identified revitalisation of existing areas as a mechanism to create thriving communities that are a great place to live. Identifying that these places have unique histories and a strong sense of identity. This links to the Upper Hunter Shire Community priorities, in particular that the rural lifestyle and country feel are valued and protected.

The NSW Department of Justice's Strategic Plan 2015-2019 aims to create a safe, just and resilient place for the people of NSW, recognising that Communities are stronger when they participate in and celebrate arts and culture. This links to the Upper Hunter Shire Community priorities, in particular support and provide Community services which promote healthy wellbeing and the celebration of culture.



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 3: *Protect the natural environment.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter Shire will be a place where the natural environment will be protected and conserved from adverse impacts, to preserve our vegetation and wildlife habitats.




Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Environmental Impacts	To minimise impacts of development and land use on the environment and reduce pollution.
Biodiversity and Bushland	To improve biodiversity and protect threatened species. Preserve and regenerate bushland areas, to help protect and conserve our native flora and fauna.
Equine Industry	Protection of equine critical industry cluster consistent with Council policy.
Agricultural Industry	Protecting Agricultural land and business consistent with Council policy.
Climate Change	Increase capacity to adapt to climate change.



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 3: *Protect the natural environment.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G3 CS10 Advocate for, facilitate and support programs that protect and sustain our diverse environment for our future generations.</p> <p>G3 CS11 Encourage and support active Community participation within our Community to care for our environment and provide for a sustainable future.</p> <p>G3 CS12 Ensure that all actions, decisions and policy response to natural hazards and climate change remain current and reflect capacity, Community expectations and changes in environmental and climate change information.</p>		<p> Rural lifestyle and Country feel are valued and protected and the Upper Hunter Shire remains quiet, safe, healthy and welcoming.</p> <p> Protect the natural environment.</p>
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Protection of the Environment.	Percentage of residents satisfied with environment protection and conservation in the Upper Hunter Shire.	Council Community Survey Biennial



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 4: *Plan for a sustainable future.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter Shire will have well planned, high quality and sustainable development that protects our natural environment from adverse impacts and retains the rural character of our suburbs, villages and neighbourhoods.





Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Development	Protect the rural character of the area while balancing the pressure of new housing and jobs.
Sustainability	To encourage and support sustainable development.
Agricultural Land	Loss of productive agricultural land to development and biodiversity offsets and the subsequent environmental, social and economic impacts.
Equine Industry	Protection of equine critical industry cluster consistent with Council policy.
Housing Choice	To provide a diverse range of housing choices to meet the variety of household types, income and lifestyles.
Environmental Impacts	To minimise impacts of development and land use on the environment and reduce pollution.
Biodiversity and Bushland	To improve biodiversity and protect threatened species. Preserve and regenerate bushland areas, to help protect and conserve our native flora and fauna.



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 4: *Plan for a sustainable future.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G4 CS13 Implement and regularly review Strategic Land Use Plans, Environmental Planning Instruments and Development Controls, which reflect the needs and expectations of the broad Community.</p> <p>G4 CS14 Provide efficient and effective advisory, assessment and regulatory services focused on being Customer 'friendly', responsive and environmentally responsible.</p> <p>G4 CS15 Plan, facilitate and provide for a changing population for current and future generations.</p> <p>G4 CS16 Provide efficient and effective waste and recycling services and support improved waste minimisation and recycling practices.</p> <p>G4 CS17 Implement policies to ensure the protection of strategic agricultural lands, equine critical industry clusters, natural resources and heritage.</p>		<p> Rural lifestyle and Country feel are valued and protected and the Upper Hunter Shire remains quiet, safe, healthy and welcoming.</p> <p> Upper Hunter Shire Council is an effective and efficient organisation, focusing on community engagement, action and response.</p> <p> Protect the natural environment.</p>
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Domestic waste diverted from landfill	Percentage of waste diverted from landfill.	Council Statistic Annual
Access to housing	Increase or decrease in the level of importance residents place on access to housing.	Council Community Survey Biennial



BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

State Plan

The 2 Goals in the Environment Key Focus Area align with the following goals from the NSW 2021 State Plan:

- Protect our Natural Environment;
- Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments; and
- Restore confidence and integrity in the planning system.

Regional Plans

The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 identified protecting the environment and building greater resilience to natural hazards and climate change as mechanisms to ensure a biodiversity rich natural environment. This aligns to the 2 goals in the Built and Natural Environment Key Focus Area.



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 5: *A sustainable and prosperous economy.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter Shire Council will maintain the diversity of our local economic base and encourage new business and tourism into the area that will enhance and positively impact on rural community life and create certainty for those wishing to invest in the shire. A stronger economy will create more opportunities for our young people and attract and retain them in the Shire.







Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Economy	Boosting local business and tourism whilst protecting neighbourhood amenity. Rural industries represent the predominant land uses, and drive the Upper Hunter Shire's strong economic performance.
Local Business	Supporting local chambers and businesses.
Commercial Hubs	Enhance and revitalise the village atmosphere of our shopping areas, providing convenient and easy access to a range of shops and facilities.
Land Use Conflict	Land Use conflict between the Natural Environment, Equine, Agricultural and Mines.
Tourism and Events	Boost local economy by continuing to support local events and tourism activities.
Growth	Advocate to create certainty for investment in the Shire.



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 5: *A sustainable and prosperous economy.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
G5 CS18	Encourage a diverse economy whilst promoting and preserving our agriculture and equine industries.	 Rural lifestyle and Country feel are valued and protected and the Upper Hunter Shire remains quiet, safe, healthy and welcoming.  A stronger economic base to attract and retain residents, particularly our young people.  Increased and innovative tourism and visitor opportunities.  Increase focus on local business, shop occupation and revitalisation of the Town Centres.
G5 CS19	Encourage retail and commercial business to locate and prosper within our Shire.	
G5 CS20	Encourage and support innovative industry and a diversity of businesses that provide a range of services and employment opportunities for current and future generations.	
G5 CS21	Facilitate and provide access to a range of local educational and training opportunities that complements the economy.	
G5 CS22	Provide attractive and functional town centres and support revitalisation of the towns and villages including investment in built heritage and improvement of existing buildings.	
G5 CS23	Facilitate and support increased and innovative tourism and marketing opportunities.	
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Local economy	Number of vacant business premises in Central Business Districts (CBD's) and industrial areas as a percentage.	Council Statistic Annual
Tourism	Number of visitors through the Visitor Information Centres.	Council Statistic Annual



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 6: *Increase, enhance and maintain civil infrastructure, Community assets and open spaces to meet the needs of current and future generations.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter will be a community with accessible, integrated and well maintained water supply, sewerage services and community assets. Innovative planning, best practice, risk management and economically justifiable assessment will be used to prioritise projects that meet the needs of future generations.




Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Assets	To fund the capital works required to maintain valuable community assets.
Ageing Infrastructure	Maintaining, renewing and upgrading ageing infrastructure, including Community assets and stormwater drainage.
Water Supply	Provision of reliable and safe water supply.
Sewerage Service	Continuing to renew our ageing sewer infrastructure.
Large Geographical Area	High operational costs from different and geographically separate districts.



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 6: *Increase, enhance and maintain civil infrastructure, Community assets and open spaces to meet the needs of current and future generations.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G6 CS24 Provide for replacement, improvement and additional Community and open space infrastructure through investment, best practice and risk management.</p> <p>G6 CS25 Provide inviting public spaces that are clean, green, properly maintained, well designed, encourage active participation, family friendly and accessible to all.</p> <p>G6 CS26 Provide safe and reliable water and sewerage services to meet the demands of current and future generations.</p>		<p> Reliable and safe water supply.</p> <p> Well maintained, safe, reliable and additional infrastructure, including sporting fields, parks, family and cultural facilities.</p> <p> Increase focus on local business, shop occupation and revitalisation of the Town Centres.</p>
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Community infrastructure	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement “Community facilities are effective and in good repair.”	Council Community Survey Biennial



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 7: *Enhance and improve the road network and bridges to meet the needs of current and future generations and communicate priorities and progress to the Community.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter will be a community with accessible, integrated and well maintained road networks, bridges and public transport. Innovative planning, best practice, risk management and economically justifiable assessment will be used to prioritise projects that meet the needs of future generations.





Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Assets	To fund the capital works required to maintain valuable community assets.
Ageing Infrastructure	Maintaining, renewing and upgrading ageing infrastructure, including roads, footpaths and stormwater drainage.
Large Geographical Area	High operational costs from different and geographically separate districts.
Road Network	Extensive road network and high number of unsealed roads. Obtaining road making material is particularly difficult in the west.
Public Transport	Support local transport providers. Rail passenger transport is too infrequent to be useful.
Bridges	Continuing bridge replacement program, while aiming to preserve some of the history.



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL 7: *Enhance and improve the road network and bridges to meet the needs of current and future generations and communicate priorities and progress to the Community.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G7 CS27 Maintain and upgrade the road network and bridges.</p> <p>G7 CS28 Increased Community engagement and updates on infrastructure planning, road priorities, works and improvements.</p> <p>G7 CS29 Advocate, facilitate and/or provide traffic management and public transport facilities to meet the needs of the Community.</p>		<p> Upper Hunter Shire has improved and well maintained roads and bridges.</p> <p> Increase focus on local business, shop occupation and revitalisation of the Town Centres.</p>
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Road network	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement “The road network is effective and in good repair.”	Council Community Survey Biannual



ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

State Plan

The 3 Goals in the Economy and Infrastructure Key Focus Area align with the following goals from the NSW 2021 State Plan:

- Drive Economic growth in regional NSW
- Strengthen the NSW skill base
- Build liveable centres;
- Improve education and learning outcomes.
- Invest in critical infrastructure;
- Improve road safety; and
- Secure potable water supplies.

Regional Plans

The three goals in the Economy and Infrastructure Key Focus Area align with the following Regional Plans.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 identified it will be necessary to identify and protect employment lands to support the regional economy and to capitalise on its strengths.

The Hunter Plan for Regional Growth 2016-2019, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter identified three regional priorities on which to focus efforts to build a better future for the region. These are investment, innovation and infrastructure.

Department of Education's Five Year Strategic Plan (2012-2017) identified the following targets for rural and regional NSW:

- Increase to 90% the proportion of 20-24 year olds who have attained a Year 12 qualification or above by 2020;
- Increase by 20% the number of completions in higher level VET qualifications; and above by 2020: and
- Increase the number of completed apprenticeship and traineeships.



LEADERSHIP

GOAL 8: *Provide Community Leadership.*

What does this look like in 2027?

Upper Hunter will be open and accountable to all stakeholders, encourage participation in decision making and make decisions that are in the public interest. Through effective long-term planning we will develop and implement strategies and ensure ongoing resources to fulfill long term community goals.





Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

Decision Making	To effectively engage, consult and communicate with a changing community.
Responsive Council	To respond to community needs effectively and within an appropriate timeframe.
Policies and Strategies	To maintain effective, up-to-date strategies, policies, systems and processes that deliver effective and efficient service to our community.
Risk Management	To identify, assess and proactively manage the potential risks associated with all Council activities.
Business Continuity	To ensure Council can provide services at a predefined level following a disruptive incident.
Work Health and Safety	To ensure a thorough understanding of the workplace procedures, as is required under Work Health and Safety (WHS) regulations.
Council Finances	To maintain financial efficiency in a competing and demanding environment.
Coal and Coal Seam Gas	To continue commitment to the adopted Position Statement – Coal and Coal Seam Gas Activities.



LEADERSHIP

GOAL 8: *Provide Community Leadership.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES	COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G8 CS30 Effectively and efficiently manage the business of Council, while encouraging an open and participatory Council with an emphasis on transparency, Community engagement, action and response.</p> <p>G8 CS31 Council is focused on innovation and continuous improvement to ensure a high quality of service which is aligned with business needs and Community priorities.</p> <p>G8 CS32 Promote and celebrate the achievements of Council and the local Community.</p> <p>G8 CS33 Utilise emerging innovative communication technologies and techniques to increase awareness of Council’s activities and services.</p> <p>G8 CS34 Community is effectively engaged, can provide opinion and contribute to decisions that plan for the present and future of the Upper Hunter Shire.</p> <p>G8 CS35 Develop and maintain effective reporting systems that enable Council to measure and report on performance</p> <p>G8 CS36 Effective management of risk underpins all Council decisions, service delivery and behaviours.</p> <p>G8 CS37 Ensure long-term financial sustainability through short, medium and long term financial planning.</p> <p>G8 CS38 Ensure Council is a great place to work by supporting Council employees in maximising their contribution.</p> <p>G8 CS39 Develop opportunities and build capacity for Community leadership especially in Councillors and young people.</p>	<p> Upper Hunter Shire Council demonstrates it is Fit for the Future and can meet all State Government indicators for financial stability.</p> <p> Upper Hunter Shire Council is an effective and efficient organisation, focusing on community engagement, action and response.</p>



LEADERSHIP

GOAL 8: *Provide Community Leadership.*

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Performance of Council	Increase or decrease in residents' level of satisfaction with the performance of Council and differences with those living in towns or rural areas.	Council Statistic Annual
Financial health	Unrestricted current ratio – Current assets less all external restrictions over current liabilities less specific purpose liabilities.	Council Statistic Annual
Future planning	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement "There is a clear plan and direction for the future."	Council Community Survey Biennial



LEADERSHIP

GOAL 9: *Advocate for the Community.*

What does this look like in 2027?

The Upper Hunter Shire will continue to be confident that Council is representing the Community's vision to other levels of Government, to ensure equitable sharing of resources and government services for the Community.



Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Communication | To meet the diverse communication requirements of the Upper Hunter Community. |
| Community Engagement | To engage the broader Upper Hunter community in planning and decisions that affect the long term future of the area. |
| Strategic Partnerships | To build partnerships and strengthen relationships with Neighbouring Councils, Hunter Councils, Joint Organisation (JO), other levels of Government and community organisations. |



LEADERSHIP

GOAL 9: *Advocate for the Community.*

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES		COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
<p>G9 CS40 Encourage and build strong partnerships between the Community, business and all levels of government to support implementation of the CSP 2027 and to deliver the Community priorities.</p> <p>G9 CS41 To participate and encourage regional coordination and planning between Councils and other organisations.</p> <p>G9 CS42 Provide timely and effective advocacy and leadership on key community issues and priorities.</p>		<p> Upper Hunter Shire Council demonstrates it is Fit for the Future and can meet all State Government indicators for financial stability.</p> <p> Upper Hunter Shire Council is an effective and efficient organisation, focusing on community engagement, action and response.</p>
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS		
COMMUNITY INDICATOR	MEASURE	SOURCE
Cooperation between all levels of government	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement “There is good cooperation between all levels of government in the Upper Hunter Shire.”	Council Community Survey Biennial
Community Advocate	Residents asked to rate their agreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement “Council represents the Community’s priorities to other levels of government.”	Council Community Survey Biennial



LEADERSHIP

State Plan

This Goal aligns with the following goals from the NSW 2021 State Plan:

- Restore trust in State and Local Government as a service provider;
- Involve the Community in decision making on government policy, services and projects; and
- Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information.

Regional Plans

The two goals in the Leadership Key Focus Area align with the following paper from the Office of Local Government.

Background Paper Joint Organisations Towards a new model for regional collaboration, Office of Local Government (June 2016), noted that Joint Organisations would provide a forum for Councils and State Governments to work together on regional planning and help to provide better services and infrastructure for regional communities through resource sharing, lowering costs and reducing red tape.

