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GunnedahShire
Open New Horizons



Local Strategic Planning Statement

FUTURE 2040

ADOPTED: 12 AUGUST 2020 | RESOLUTION: 11.08/20



Acknowledgement of Country

In presenting this plan to the community, Gunnedah Shire Council would like to acknowledge the Kamilaroi (Gamilaraay) Aboriginal Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and in doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders past and present as well as to the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

Citation

Future 2040 - Gunnedah Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement

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Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of Gunnedah Shire, I am pleased to present the *'Future 2040 – Gunnedah Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement'*.

Future 2040 has four (4) key themes, eleven (11) planning priorities and fifty (50) actions that will provide a road map for the future land use planning in the Shire for the next twenty (20) years. This important document responds to NSW Government requirements but most importantly, it responds to feedback from our community. Feedback gathered as a result of an extensive engagement process.

It seeks to align future land use planning with the outcomes identified in the Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 and also gives effect to the New England North West Regional Plan 2036 by implementing those goals, directions, and actions relevant to our Shire, at a local level.

Gunnedah Shire is continuing to experience significant transformation, with ongoing growth, infrastructure development and investment. Council is working hard to ensure that growth is managed effectively and responsibly, and that our community values are retained over time. The document builds on our history, our character and heritage, and our beautiful surrounds and identifies our strategic advantages, strengths and opportunities moving forward.



Thank you to the countless community members, businesses and organisations that participated in the engagement activities, and provided such value input into this exciting planning chapter.

On behalf of Council, I invite you to continue on this journey with us and help us realise the vision to build a successful and sustainable future for generations to come.



Jamie Chaffey
Mayor of Gunnedah Shire

Contents

1.	An Introduction to Future 2040	1
2.	Future 2040 for the community – prepared with the community	7
3.	Vision - Our Statement for Future 2040	9
4.	Strategic Context - The Big Picture	10
5.	Boundless Opportunity	16
6.	Places for People	27
7.	Connected and Accessible	37
8.	Sustainable and Resilient	44
9.	Transformers	49
10.	Implementation and Monitoring	52
	Appendix A - Summary of Local Planning Priorities and Actions	53
	Appendix B - Glossary and Acronyms	62
	Appendix C - Residential Lands in the Gunnedah Shire	63
	Appendix D - Employment Lands in the Gunnedah Shire	64

1. An Introduction to Future 2040

About the Local Strategic Planning Statement

To prepare for the next 20 years Gunnedah Shire Council brought the community together to refresh current ideas and identify future goals. Future 2040 sets out the community's aspirations for the Gunnedah Shire that focuses on land use planning.

This plan provides a vision and framework to guide detailed land use planning so Gunnedah Shire will continue to become more vibrant, competitive and sustainable. It investigates what makes the Gunnedah Shire unique, what the community values and how to continue to grow into the future.

The Gunnedah Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) builds and responds to community aspirations, regional connections and global megatrends. In doing so it supports how we will move forward over the next 20 years.

The Gunnedah Shire LSPS aims to:

- Strengthen Gunnedah Shire's productivity and competitiveness
- Nurture quality lifestyles and sustain population growth
- Value, protect and diversify Gunnedah Shire's primary production land and natural resources
- Promote regional connections to ensure a diverse industry base with a skilled and stable workforce
- Build effective responses to climate change and natural hazards
- Preserve the environment and protect the heritage, history and character of Gunnedah Shire

In March 2018, amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) introduced new requirements for all councils to prepare and make a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). The Gunnedah Shire LSPS has been prepared in line with the requirements set out in the EP&A Act.



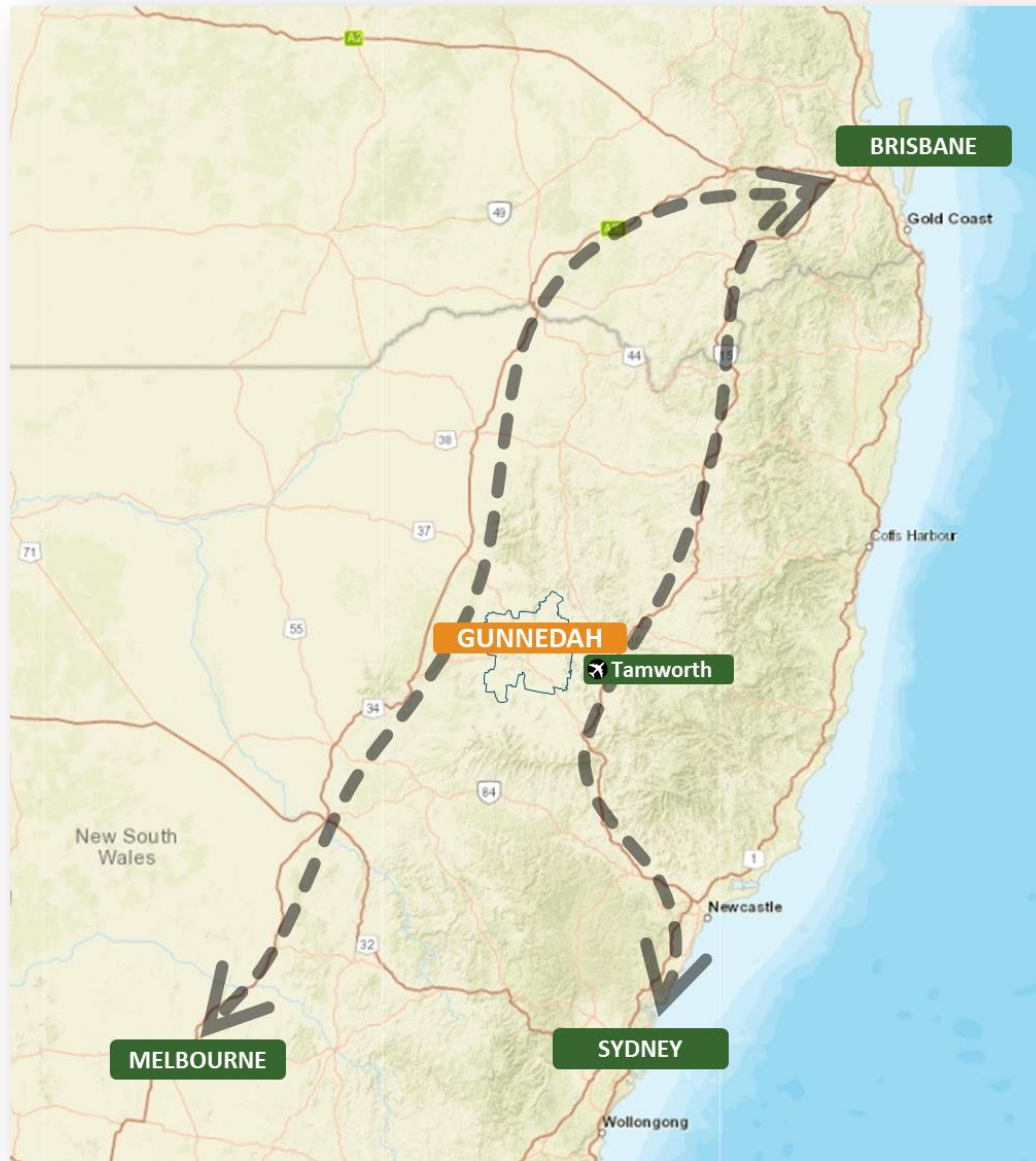
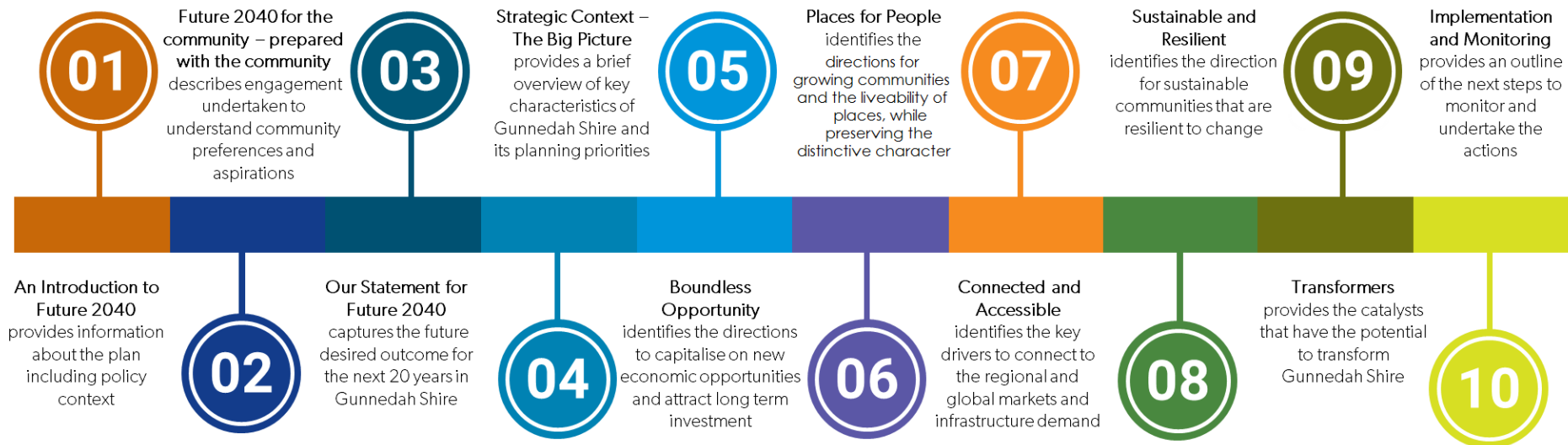


Figure 1 Our Place in the Region and NSW

About this Plan

The Gunnedah Shire LSPS is structured into 10 areas that build a direction for the future.



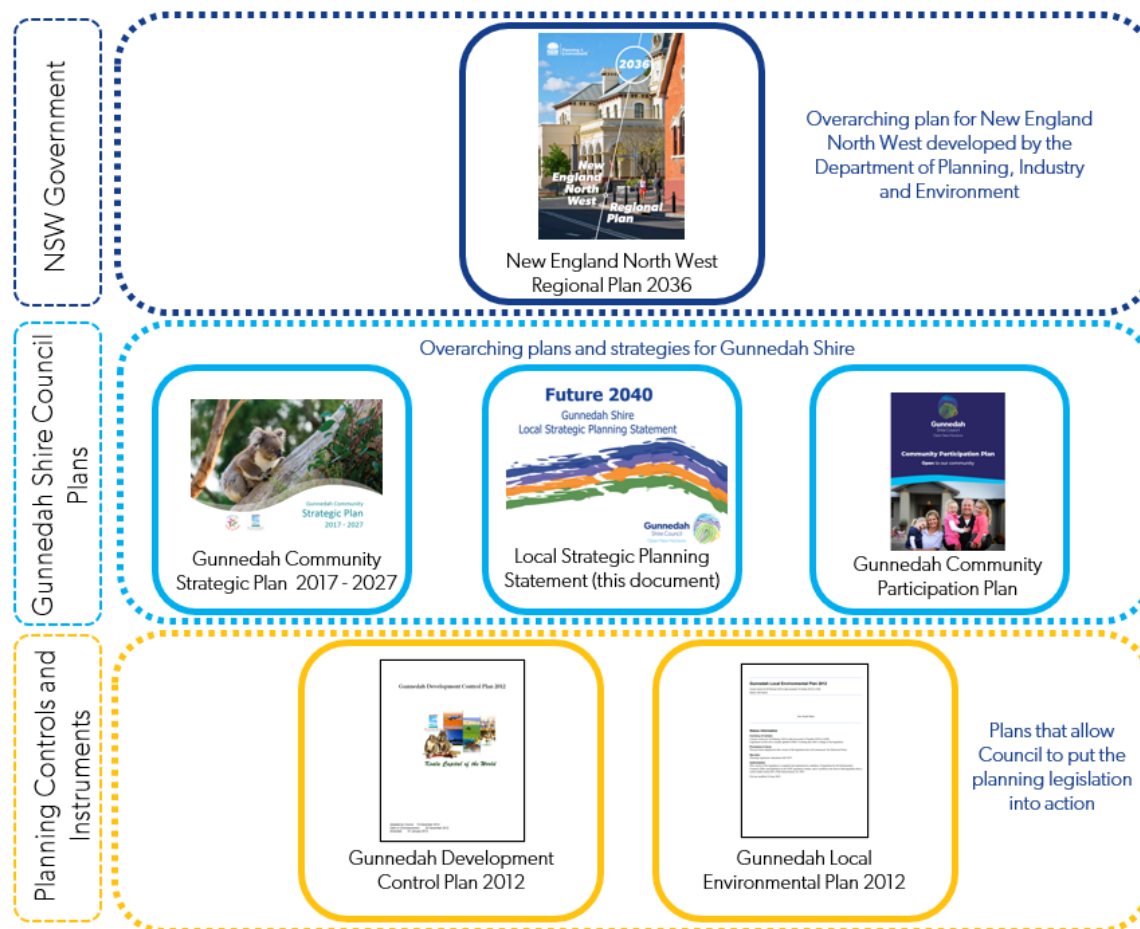
Planning Framework - relationship to other key local and regional plans

Future 2040 – Gunnedah Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement is informed by the Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2017 -2027 and is designed to be read alongside it. The Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2017 -2027 was prepared in accordance with NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation under the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*.

Future 2040 also gives effect to the New England North West Regional Plan 2036 (NENWRP) by implementing the goals, directions, and actions at a local level. It is informed by other local, regional and State-wide plans and policies.

The document articulates how Gunnedah Shire Council intends to use land use planning to help make the community's vision a reality through its priorities.

These priorities are expressed throughout the document and ultimately implemented through the Local Environmental Plan and other mechanisms.



The Story So Far

At the heart of the story of Gunnedah Shire are **its people**. The traditional custodians of Gunnedah Shire are **the Kamilaroi (Gamilaraay) Aboriginal Nation**. The name Gunnedah is derived from an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of many white stones', which refers to the quartz pebbles and outcrops in the area that are visible from the top of Porcupine Lookout. Since time immemorial, traditional custodians of Gunnedah Shire have cared for Country, and Country has cared for them.

Located on the **Namoi River**, only 80 kilometres from Tamworth, 300 kilometres from Newcastle and 440 kilometres from Sydney, Gunnedah Shire's role as one of Australia's **richest pockets of agricultural land** started in the 1820's. With parts of the Shire containing some of the **best soil** in the country, commonly known as black soils, people were quickly attracted to the area's rich rural landscapes. With an area of over 5000 square kilometre the iconic Liverpool Plains, as framed by the Nandewar Ranges, continues to embody the essence of **rural Australian charm**.

As one of its many roles as a **commodity hub**, Gunnedah Shire is the home of AgQuip, Australia's premier agricultural field days with over 3,000 companies represented and attracting over 100,000 visitors over three days from across the nation and overseas. The area also hosts one of the top four saleyards in NSW, handling over 120,000 prime beef cattle each year.

The Shire contains the rich deposits of the **Gunnedah Coal Basin**, the State's third largest coal reserves and 12% of NSW's resources. The area also has significant potential for coal seam gas, with deposits covering over 3.4 million hectares. Alongside its agricultural traditions, the rich resources of the area continue to provide the Shire with a strong and growing economy that is well connected to local, national and international markets by the **Oxley and Kamilaroi Highway** and the North West (Mungindi) rail line.

As a place to live and enjoy, the communities of Gunnedah Shire have a distinctive character built from its prosperous heritage. The main heart of the Shire is the town of Gunnedah, with a supporting set of **rural villages** including Breeza, Carroll, Curlewis, Emerald Hill, Kelvin, Mullaley and Tambar Springs. Today almost 13,000 people call the Gunnedah Shire, home. In addition, the area is regularly visited by **tourists** enjoying the Shire's sprawling Breeza Plains, recreational facilities at Lake Keepit, trying to spot a local Koala (as part of one of the largest Koala colonies in Australia) or even hiking at Boonalla Aboriginal Area. In fact, visitors spend more than \$38 million in the area every year, celebrating the 'Koala Capital of the World', 'Land of Opportunity', 'the New Frontier' or 'Dorothea Mackellar Country' - amongst other names for which the area is known.

Gunnedah Shire is a story of success built on many influences. Its rich rural history, a vibrant hub of activity together with its **country charm** has made the Shire the **premier inland centre for prosperity and growth**.





Figure 2 Our Shire

2. Future 2040 for the community – prepared with the community

WHAT WE DID

Future 2040 has benefitted from significant community engagement designed to provide for a wide range of input. Various techniques were used to inform the community about the plan and to receive feedback over a 3-month period from September to November 2019. The consultation included media releases, survey, online map based digital engagement (social pinpoint), visioning and planning priority workshops and Facebook posts.

FEEDBACK WE RECEIVED

A summary of this extensive community discussion is outlined throughout this plan under each planning priority. Developing a vision was a large part of engagement with the Gunnedah Shire community and the priority planning was structured around the four themes of Future 2040. Engagement demonstrated how much the community values the Shire and identified aspects that they would like to see achieved by 2040. The future directions that arose from this information are outlined below.

AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

60 community members involved in workshops

1,200 issues and opportunities raised in the workshops

80 people responded through surveys

1,308 visits to the social pinpoint site

141 comments on the social pinpoint site

507 social pinpoint interactions

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US



Local jobs and investment

People would like to see more job opportunities, particularly investment that supports existing as well as new and diverse local businesses.



Sense of community

Gunnedah has a strong sense of community. Consultation highlighted how much the strength of the community, cast within its rural setting, was highly valued.



Spaces to live and play

One of the most frequent comments was that people valued formalised parks and sporting areas, as well as the ability of open recreation spaces to improve the liveability and quality of life.



Education and skills

Many residents would like to see integrated and accessible education facilities and programs that link to local industries. This will enhance skills that can be utilised locally.



The value of Gunnedah CBD

The community values its connections in the heart of Gunnedah and would like to see improved gateway sites and further support for local businesses.



Connections for walking and riverine activities

Residents want more opportunities for walking and more connections along the river. This includes utilising the riverine areas for more tourism opportunities.



Liveability and the village life

People love the Shire's feel and would like to see the quality of life improved. Many felt it important to support the growth of villages with better job opportunities for young people and increased transport connections.

What you said

"Create spaces for children to gather and play with the addition of soccer nets, netball/football goal posts and cricket pitches in our large open parklands throughout town."

"Collaborate with TAFE, schools and other training providers, employ more trainees and apprentices, and improve succession planning within the aging workforces across the Shire"

"Make more jobs by creating more recreational activities for youth"

"Improve the liveability of the area. Make it more attractive by providing necessities such as better access to medical facilities. Improve schools/education, environment to encourage more healthy/sustainable lifestyle"

"Protect Koalas"

"Expand the economic base of the Shire with higher emphasis on supporting the agriculture and export sectors.

"Provide greater leadership in context of climate change and ensuring that the Shire is viable in 20 years."

"Construct a dedicated walking track and access path for walkers and mums with prams, walkers with dogs, cyclists etc. It will take significant investment but if it connects to a revamped upgraded lookout it will yield valuable tourism benefits."

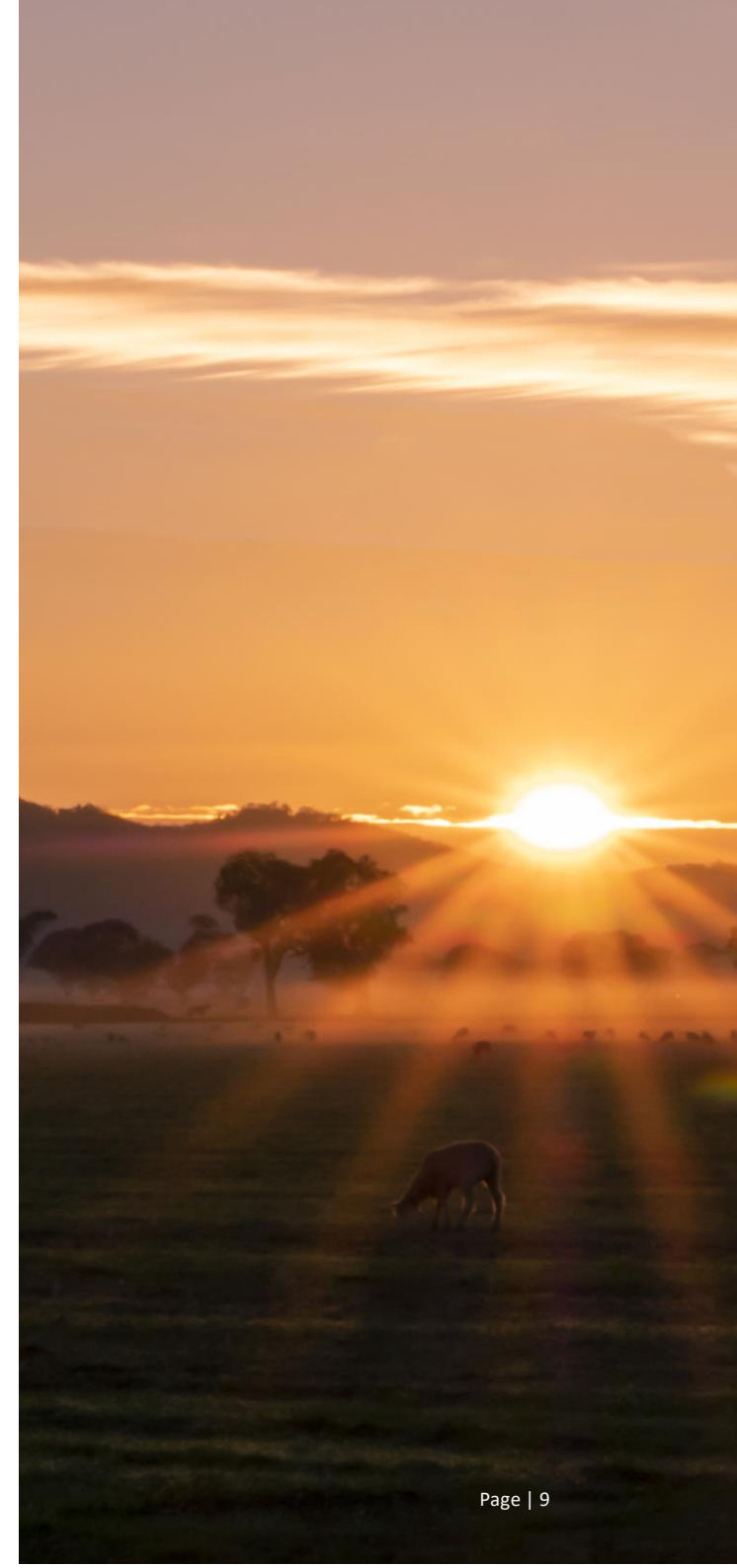
3. Vision - Our Statement for Future 2040

By 2040, Gunnedah Shire will enjoy exceptional lifestyle opportunities and a prosperous and diverse economy built upon our education, skills, natural resources, rich cultures and heritage.

The idyllic, liveable and close communities are the heart of our beautiful, healthy and unique rural character which attracts residents and visitors who seek a sense of belonging.

Our community is a leader in sustainable and innovative approaches so future generations and Traditional Custodians can continue to enjoy abundant and healthy natural environments and a desirable climate.

Together we see a future beyond 2040 where we continue to harness connections that provide pathways for goods, services, information and people to move into and around the Shire.



4. Strategic Context - The Big Picture

Future 2040 sets out a clear vision and strategic framework with themes and planning priorities to guide growth.

To compete in a global market Gunnedah Shire needs to take advantage of its distinct attributes and grow its unique identity. The **4 themes** form the basis of the community's vision of Gunnedah Shire.

1. Gunnedah Shire already has a robust economy fuelled by natural resources and strong connections to national and international markets. Pairing this **boundless opportunity** will help grow jobs and investment.
2. Gunnedah Shire has a strong community and character. Ensuring liveable **places for people** in areas such as housing, community and neighbourhood spaces will continue to be the Shire's strength.
3. Gunnedah Shire is **connected and accessible** not only to national and global markets but also at the local level to provide opportunities for movement.
4. A **sustainable and resilient** environment will ensure the shire is ready for the impact of climate change and able to preserve its biodiversity.

This section of the LSPS explores each of these attributes and provides context scale and direction for the above planning priorities. This assists in identifying the opportunities that will guide land use decisions and actions to be undertaken by Gunnedah Shire Council, in conjunction with State and Federal Governments and other stakeholders.

This LSPS also provides **transformative** actions (refer to chapter 9) that are the highest priorities with the aim of creating significant positive change in the Gunnedah Shire over the next 20 years.



1 Boundless Opportunity

Gunnedah Shire has a diverse economic base that attracts national and global business through its long-term strengths of primary production and resources sectors. Emerging industries such as health care and education now employ significant number of residents. The spirit of entrepreneurship is shown in the vibrant heart and local centres. The healthy economy is being fuelled by our commitment to nurture home-grown talent and provide opportunities for everyone to excel.



Top 5

Economic value of industries in Gunnedah Shire (by \$ in 2017/18)

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Agriculture | \$1,764 M |
| 2. Real Estate | \$1,630 M |
| 3. Mining | \$1,293 M |
| 4. Health Care | \$964 M |
| 5. Education | \$917 M |

Gunnedah CBD provides a heart for business enterprises with over

1,550

businesses registered in 2018

Over
5,400
people employed

Estimated Resident population for the Shire is
12,261
in 2019

Visitation added
\$38 Million
in 2017/18

The Shire is home to
7
rural villages

Regional Exports
\$285 Million
from mining in 2017/2018

Located on the Gunnedah – Sydney Basin Coal Seams

40%
Residents have tertiary qualifications in the Gunnedah Shire

2 Places for People

Gunnedah Shire is loved by its residents. Its strong and growing communities vary in identity, socio-economic composition and demographic, and have proved to be increasingly resilient to change. Over the next 20 years, demographic changes such as the ageing population and out migration of younger population will continue to provide challenges for the Shire. Its cohesive communities are the lifeblood of Gunnedah and will be the main factor in attracting more people. The liveability and character of places will be the Shire's strength that has – and undoubtedly will continue to – underpin its ultimate success.



Couples with Children
are the largest household type

Special Characteristics



Village feel of our townships and rural living

Over **3,250** residents will be aged over 65 by 2036

18 to 24 year olds are the largest group to move out of Gunnedah

78% of residents live and work in the Shire

Over **660** people in Gunnedah need assistance due to a **disability**


13% of the Shire's population are Aboriginal

5.5% of the NSW population are Aboriginal

There will be over **6,250** houses in the Shire by 2036

3 Connected and Accessible

Gunnedah Shire has high levels of access to growing national and global markets for goods and services that contribute to economic opportunity and future prosperity. Key transport corridors support connections to intermodal precincts and ports, connecting our industries to export opportunities, support inbound investment and underpin our competitiveness and productivity. At the local level, demand is growing for sustainable transport options including improved walking and cycling facilities. Future transport systems will also provide for increasingly connected communities that give people better choices for travelling to work and connecting to the world.



The Mungindi rail line extends north to the proposed inland rail link and south via the Main North rail line to the port of Newcastle



Value of the transport industry grew by **7%**
From 2013 to 2018



17%
of residents travel outside of Gunnedah Shire for work

1,749
heavy vehicle trips per day in 2012

Up to
130M tons p.a.
of coal can move from Gunnedah by rail

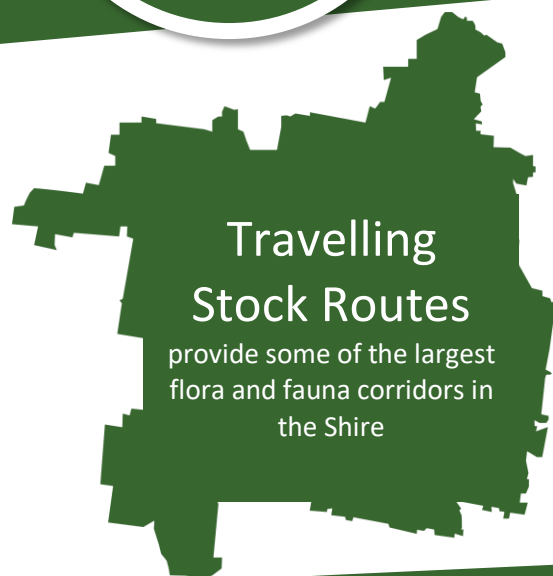
Contains
1,470 km
of roads

224
people travelled to work by walking or bicycle in 2016

Total freight costs from farm to port can be as much as
30%
of the value of the crop

4 Sustainable and Resilient

The Shire's undulating volcanic hills and alluvial floodplains have provided fertile grounds for primary production over a long period. Maintaining the integrity of the natural environment is critical to Gunnedah Shire's future. Enhancing biodiversity of the Shire will provide benefits to the community, including an emphasis on water quality and pristine environments that are resilient to change. With one of the longest droughts in the Shire's history being a dominant issue of the current time, becoming smarter in the way we use our existing water resources will also be paramount.



Travelling Stock Routes

provide some of the largest flora and fauna corridors in the Shire



Koalas

are a significant environmental asset for the Shire

Namoi River

one of the major tributaries

of the **Murray Darling River system**

Supports over
180
threatened
species in the
Shire

6
State
Forests

11,892 ha
of State
conservation
area

Mooki River
is the main
headwater of the
Namoi River

**Over 607
Recorded
Aboriginal Sites**
Including the **Boonalla
Aboriginal Area**

Themes and Local Planning Priorities



Local Planning Priority 1

Grow business, services and the digital economy through education, employment, training and innovation

Local Planning Priority 2

Develop industrial, commercial and agricultural land

Local Planning Priority 3

Grow tourism

Local Planning Priority 4

Develop infrastructure to support growth and change

Local Planning Priority 5

Support Traditional Custodians



Local Planning Priority 6

Enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability

Local Planning Priority 7

Housing types for lifestyle diversity

Local Planning Priority 8

Re-imagine and re-energize the Gunnedah CBD



Local Planning Priority 9

Develop transport and freight opportunities

Local Planning Priority 10

Support accessible, high quality, local open spaces



Local Planning Priority 11

Preserve biodiversity and prepare for climate change

5. Boundless Opportunity

Local Planning Priority 1: Grow business, services and the digital economy through education, employment, training and innovation

Building the knowledge economy and the availability of skilled labour is one of the key contributors to a successful economy. At present, Gunnedah has a workforce shortage - particularly in skilled positions. Employers are unable to fill, or have considerable difficulty in filling, vacancies for an occupation or specialised skill which can cause a significant barrier to investment.

According to Regional Australia Institute data, job vacancies in regions have grown by about 20% since 2016 – compared to just 10% in large cities. Community engagement indicated both a skills shortage and lack of tertiary education and training was a barrier in the Shire. A further concern was centred on supporting young people who are becoming increasingly vulnerable to the disappearance of entry level jobs, and on assisting them to respond to the needs of the future labour markets.

The *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018 - 2022* developed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet recognised this need. It includes several actions to address labour and skill shortages including the development of new trade training facilities (e.g. the proposed Gunnedah Training Centre) and/or a university campus.

Education and training are key to upskilling the local population. Many early school leavers, unemployed young people, Indigenous Australians, people with disability and mature aged Australians are looking for work, but lack the skills employers need. There is an obvious need for ongoing training, support and mentoring to enable these potential workers to transition to sustainable employment. This in turn will also support and build existing businesses in the Shire.

In 2016, year 12 completion rates in Gunnedah Shire were at 32%, which is comparatively low compared to the State average of 52%. It is recognised that student participation and attendance is a complex issue comprising many factors including geographical, societal, community and family influences. As such, a broad range of initiatives are required to establish the foundations for a well-educated community – including addressing underlying issues of social disadvantage and marginalisation.

It is a key priority for Gunnedah Shire to increase the participation and attendance rates of students in secondary schools through interventions that impact students during their early years of development, as well as throughout and beyond their schooling life. This in turn will help ‘up skill’ the current residents as educational attainment has been linked to higher levels of employment and increased labour force participation.

Community engagement indicated the need for vocational education and training to be made available locally. With the gradual centralisation of key TAFE courses such as electrical trades, boiler makers and metalwork to Tamworth, many employers lament the inconvenience and cost to their business of sending apprentices long distances on a regular basis for formal training.

Regional Australia Institute and Parliament of NSW research indicates locally based high quality and high-level education is vital to retain young residents in areas such as Gunnedah. There is a need to lift the Shire’s profile and significance of education, higher education and skills training.

Understanding the local employment requirements is the first step in order to match the education and training to those skills needs. Accessing information on current and future skill needs should also include the identification of emerging industries or technologies that may require a specific skill set into the foreseeable future.

Similar regions have also shown that a proactive and innovative community-led effort to influence and improve education and training practices can work. These experiences highlight that approaches that give power to communities – along with the individual – are best to build local capacity. Community led local interventions can be highly influential and assist in the alignment of school, community and government goals and priorities. This may include strategies such as facilitating partnerships between the public and private sectors to encourage innovation, clusters and links with tertiary education, advocating State Government for high demand training programs or seeking resettlement or migration program options to enhance the skills and business needs in the Shire.

No.	Action	Timing
1.	Develop a community workforce plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify skills/services that are needed in the local labour force to address current and likely future industry requirements. b) identify and implement a marketing strategy aimed at attracting new residents in order to grow future workforce. c) identify a business development strategy that provides clear guidance and incentives for the establishment, expansion or relocation of businesses. d) build on opportunities for employment in new, emerging and growth industries. e) facilitate transition to new employment and skills /training opportunities in response to changing technologies within existing industries. 	S

2.	Develop a partnership approach for an education and training led model of business growth. This may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) advocating strongly for the establishment of the proposed trade training and education precinct and/or the expansion of the range of courses offered at Gunnedah TAFE, with courses targeted to address skills shortages b) Working with the State government to identify and secure employment lands 	S
3.	Investigate public private partnerships and links with tertiary education providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) advocate for the benefits and attraction of relocating to regional NSW, including campaigns and targeted initiatives for skilled workers b) liaise with Department of Home Affairs regarding skilled regional migration schemes with the aim of supplementing skills shortages and improving the skills of the labour force to meet changes in the use of technology 	S
4.	Simplify procedures to allow creative uses of the public domain to accommodate art in public spaces and to allow the temporary use of streets and public spaces for creative practices	S - M

The Gig Economy

The gig economy refers to the growing number of workers abandoning traditional 9 to 5 employment in favour of working independently on a task-by-task basis for various employers. The arrival of information and communication technologies has further advanced this shift away from the 'standard employment' model by providing easier and better access to a continuous flow of high-quality, transportable, flexible, and non-routine work opportunities such as AirBnB or Uber.¹

While much commentary on “the future of work” focuses on challenges created by technological change, work is already changing for many people, due to insufficient regulation of the labour market. Workers are also expressing an increasing demand for flexible and autonomous work, prompting many to engage in freelancing. As the number of individuals partaking in the gig economy rises, so has the popularity of co-working spaces: environments where professional freelancers work on separate projects in a communal setting and increasingly working from home. Inhibitors in technology connection that may prevent Gunnedah from taking advantage of this trend should be identified. In 2016, in Gunnedah Shire there were 70 self-employed business owners. Broad trends suggest that this number is likely to rise rapidly in the future. Implications for this type of new economy include:

- Provision of co-working spaces or areas (or incubators) for co-location of like-minded and entrepreneurial individuals and teams. These are often located in CBD's with access to high speed internet
- Ready access to high speed internet in residential locations
- Availability of land use planning provisions for home businesses

¹ Senate Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers Submission 123 - Attachment 1 - APSCo Australia Discussion Paper - The Gig Economy: Structure, Measurements, and Opportunities



Local Planning Priority 2: Develop industrial, commercial and agricultural land

Industrial, commercial and agricultural land is an important economic contributor to the Gunnedah Shire. They provide both general service-based industry to support local population needs along with major value adding businesses to drive large-scale employment - such as businesses supporting the local mines and primary production (refer to page 22 for explanation on 'value adding'). Appendix D provides an overview of the existing supply of employment lands in the Shire, highlighting that over 265 hectares are currently vacant. These available employment lands are generally located on the western boundary of Gunnedah.

The *Gunnedah Urban Land Use Review: Industrial Development Strategy* (2016) and the *Gunnedah Economic Development Strategy* (2014) both stated that a portion of the vacant land is not developable due to site or infrastructure constraints though this is not thought to be a current inhibitor of development. These strategies and a review of recent development shows interest in Gunnedah Shire for businesses involved in heavy industrial, value adding and manufacturing associated with primary production, as well as transport, storage and distribution. Whilst uptake of employment land is often slow, over an extended period there does appear to be continuing demand within Gunnedah Shire for future development.

There is no clear or widely accepted definition of what constitutes an adequate supply of employment land as long-term planning for this type of land is often challenging. The basis for its need is derived from unpredictable economic cycles, changing drivers and the pace of innovation in technology and processes, making it difficult for planning to respond (for more information regarding changes in employment lands refer to page 23). While the existing supply of land is adequate for the short-term needs of the Shire, over the medium term there may be a need for more employment land in a variety of locations (not just

on the western boundary of Gunnedah). This timeframe recognises the lead-time required for identifying land suitable for employment land uses and the need to maintain the current stock of employment land allowing for a variety of lot sizes and industry precinct types. Export or distribution industries require more land with lot sizes generally larger than 2 hectares. These might be used for warehousing, storage and distribution of consumer-based products or transport related activities.

The characteristics of employment land that is likely to be in high demand comprise large lots; good access to the highway/ railway; level land; and access to infrastructure. It is always better to oversupply the market and provide a choice of employment land. In addition, consultation with local employment businesses indicates the view that more employment land is needed in a variety of locations. The provision of market ready, attractive employment land in a variety of locations in Gunnedah Shire would position the area more competitively for new investment in key competitive areas such as transport and freight and value adding to primary production.

Gunnedah Shire's current success largely exists through business opportunities allied to the comparative advantages of the export-based mining and agriculture sectors. A narrow base in a regional economy will expose Gunnedah Shire to boom and bust cycles specific to those industries. Hence, increasing economic opportunities should encourage a degree of employment diversity to foster community resilience. Economic diversification is a key strategy for the future of Gunnedah Shire, and this will require the development of new businesses as well as growing existing business, resulting in the creation of more employment and new occupation types. There are a variety of value-adding opportunities in Gunnedah Shire such as food and beverage manufacturing. This was specifically recognised throughout the community engagement process as a way to grow existing base industries in the Shire.

The New England North West Regional Plan highlights the protection of fertile and productive agricultural land for long-term food and fibre security and to capitalise on increasing demand for agricultural products. Gunnedah Shire has a considerable marketing advantage with its agricultural products as it can trade on its 'best soils in NSW' image. Value-added manufacturing industries need to be strategically located so they have ready and cost-effective access to the regional freight network, utility infrastructure, skilled labour and export markets, which the Shire already has. The co-location of related industries will maximise efficiency and infrastructure use, decrease supply chain costs, increase economies of scale and attract further investment. Identifying potential growth area hubs for targeted industries in specific locations can help optimise the Shire's capacity for growth. For instance, Gunnedah Shire's location close to poultry processing in Tamworth makes it an optimal location for this expanding industry, particularly in terms of the topography, climate, biosecurity, availability of suitable land, access to reliable water and power, access to grain and geographic location between the Sydney and South-East Queensland markets.

As land use conflicts rise in Tamworth, companies will continue to examine new areas for growth. To optimise the Shire's capacity to realise this growth, having 'investment ready' locations suitable for this type of industry should be considered. The agricultural sector is leading the way in pioneering the implementation of innovative farming techniques and the adoption of new technologies. A consistent approach of early adoption has seen significant improvement in productivity and land management. New and emerging farm equipment, products, services and technology have been used in the Shire, including the use of new crop types, drone mapping and new digital products. This has been particularly important in the context of the current drought. Linking the Shire with regionally based regional and development organisations such as the University of New England may help support the growth of numerous agribusiness and professional service industries, with opportunities for an expanded role for specialised equipment and digital services.

Fundamental to diversification is the continued protection of existing important agricultural land and providing certainty of future operations without encroachment from incompatible and conflicting land uses. New industrial land should be located with good connections to the freight network (road and rail) and away from sensitive land uses.

Seeking to retain, increase and protect important agricultural land to support the success of these industries will continue to be a key policy. This policy also includes the protection of plantation forestry processing facilities and related forestry industries from encroachment of incompatible land uses. Whilst many forestry operations are privately operated, the largest state forest operation is located in close proximity to Gunnedah. Processing facilities and related forestry industries have had a long relationship in Gunnedah Shire. Understanding the requirements for a greater and more secure supply in timber may facilitate long term requirements. This may include opportunities for industry hubs and transport network improvements. Recently, niche businesses specialising in local food products are becoming more common as an opportunity to value-add to traditional agriculture – these include brewing and bread making utilising local products from the agricultural sector as well as specialised products such as olives / olive oil production. Promoting the expansion of these niche products through local business and digital media will also help support agricultural industries into the future. Ultimately, the sustained growth of Gunnedah is dependent upon attracting new investment to establish new enterprises, enable business growth, provide infrastructure, financing and industry diversification. The development of an investment strategy as a key marketing and investment attraction tool is a key priority for Gunnedah Shire Council.

The strategy will promote Gunnedah Shire and local investment opportunities to regional, national and international markets. It will be a dynamic document providing important local context for attendees at industry events such as AgQuip.

No.	Action	Timing
5.	Review and maintain an employment (industrial and commercial) land use strategy with consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) protecting and enhancing productive agricultural lands b) ensuring new industrial land is located with good connections to the freight network (road and rail) and away from sensitive land uses 	S
6.	Develop an investment prospectus/strategy to highlight future industrial and commercial land growth opportunities and build business confidence more broadly	S
7.	Work with industries and peak bodies to identify the availability of land for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) farming and intensive livestock agriculture including poultry, pig farms, cattle and sheep feedlots b) value adding agricultural and other protein businesses c) the establishment of dedicated 'landing pads' for new and relocating businesses 	S
8.	Identify hubs for specific industries that have the potential for growth. This may include a specific requirement such as ready access to transport corridors	S
9.	Investigate potential relationships with research and development organisations that stimulate business start-ups and supports the growth of innovative approaches to agriculture and agribusiness	S - M

Value adding

The term 'value adding' refers to the various value-adding activities that occur along the supply chain of every industry sector—from primary production through processing and transport to marketing and sales.

Value adding may include supplying new products or different varieties, changing presentation to meet market requirements, providing expertise and/or services and promotion and marketing activities to differentiate products

Value added agriculture generally focuses on production or manufacturing processes, marketing or services that increase the value of primary agricultural commodities, perhaps by increasing appeal to the consumer and the consumer's willingness to pay a premium over similar but undifferentiated products.

In agriculture, value-adding can be achieved on-farm, post farm gate, or as a combination of the two. On-farm value adding can be achieved through harnessing science and new technologies to create greater efficiencies and cost competitiveness in farm production.¹

¹ Value Adding to Agriculture in Central West NSW Regional Development Australia, September 2016

The changing face of employment lands

Transportation and freight - increasingly there has been a move away from traditional manufacturing operations towards transportation, logistics, warehousing and distribution centres. Gunnedah Shire is no different, with a loss of 125 jobs in manufacturing from 2012 to 2017. This emerging trend towards transportation has resulted in an increased demand for larger lot sizes and the development of estates that can respond to and capably accommodate these larger scale uses.

Food and Beverage Industries - linked to the increase in transportation to primary production areas is the need for more convenient, healthier, fresher and less processed foods and beverages with minimal storage times. This trend is occurring not only on a national scale but a global one. This has several implications including industries needing to adopt new technologies, undertake more R&D, establish skill sets for advanced technologies and invest in the way foods and beverages are transported.

Flexible workspaces - Over the last 10 to 15 years there has been a strong trend to incorporate a higher proportion of office space as part of employment land developments. This is especially important for industrial activities encompassing elements of equipment design or similar creative industries which may require larger office areas than their actual shop/production floor spaces. Given the changing face of retail (refer to 36) this would need to be carefully managed to not reduce the commercial vitality in the CBD. Having specific development controls for the proportion of office space to warehouse space in new developments may remove this pressure.

Improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) - The digital revolution is enabling an increasing preference towards automation of all types of industrial processes. Advances in ICT are facilitating innovation in warehousing practices. Traditionally employing thousands of workers, digital picking, sorting and retrieval systems and GPS technologies are making thousands of traditional industry jobs obsolete.

Local

Local Planning Priority 3: Grow tourism

It is estimated that tourism contributes around \$25 million to the Gunnedah Shire each year. This is comparatively lower than other LGA's in the New England North West region, with tourism contributing \$140 million in Tamworth and over \$28 million in Narrabri. With the value of regional NSW tourism also growing rapidly, tourism is seen as a key opportunity for future growth. Tourism related industries are an important contributor to economic output, employment and economic diversification.

Encompassing a large geographic area, rich in cultural heritage and containing unique natural landscapes, including several national parks, Gunnedah Shire contains a unique and diverse range of tourism attractions and destination opportunities. The protection and celebration of heritage sites and values identify and celebrate the diversity and heritage of the many cultural groups in the community and value add to the tourism strategies. The Shire has several established tourism markets, particularly amongst self-drive, rural experiences, grey nomad and business travellers, with emerging opportunities to broaden the tourism market in event tourism, trail bike, hikers, 4WD, backpackers, and the broader international market. The competitive nature of the tourism industry and the growing global expectations of the visitor experience mean that Gunnedah Shire must have a quality tourism product to attract and retain visitors. For instance, community engagement suggested the development of an off-road bike or hiking trail to build the tourism product. Gunnedah Shire has the competitive strength as a leisure or nature-based destination that provides visitor experiences that could deliver a unique blend of nature and rural lifestyles. Passing traffic should be captured, at minimum, as short-stay overnight visitors by leveraging the environmental, cultural and historical assets of the Shire. Low cost improvements can be investigated to enhance a variety of offerings around cultural, heritage, pastoral, mining, adventure and environmental themes by the construction of ancillary infrastructure such as multilingual signage, rest areas for grey nomads, maps, information boards and digital resources (such as audio tours).

Community engagement saw the value of the River in boosting the tourism offering in Gunnedah. The Namoi River has been the life blood of the town for generations and as a key asset the River holds great potential to support tourism, increase visitation and bring together the Shire's community. Preparing a plan to reimagine the River as a tourism asset is essential to facilitate increased community connections to river life and enjoyment of the area's natural surrounds. As the centre of Gunnedah will continue to be the focal point for community and economic activity, underutilised areas along the River should link back to the town centre wherever possible. In this way, investment into the Riverine area will attract individuals and families to support a vibrant city centre, enhance local amenity and provide economic and social opportunities. The design of the improvements will raise local awareness of the River through achieving view lines, access and recreation opportunities effectively balancing social uses with environmental protection. Local food production can also be better leveraged through rural tourism. Boutique commercial, tourist and recreation activities that do not conflict with primary production in rural areas, but which are able to support a village atmosphere and offer opportunities for greater economic diversity should be encouraged. This can also be linked with growing markets such as destination weddings and rural accommodation.



No.	Action	Timing
10.	Review and maintain an updated Gunnedah Shire Destination Management Plan	S
11.	Review and maintain an updated Riverine Precinct Strategy	S
12.	Deliver the Gunnedah Koala Park	S - M
13.	Leverage local personalities or 'hero experiences' to drive storytelling as part of a broader process of brand identification to build awareness of why Gunnedah is such as great place to live and work.	S

Local Planning Priority 4: Develop infrastructure to support growth and change

Aligning both existing and planned future infrastructure to support the continued growth of the Shire will be important to support a more sustainable region, better connecting people with the places they live, work and play, while also preserving the regions natural areas, landscapes and waterways.

Increased investment in infrastructure was the second most important priority for the community in the survey developed for this LSPS. Within the land use planning context, areas in Gunnedah Shire that are zoned but not yet developed may have to be reviewed to accommodate new levels of demand through local contribution plans. The delivery of new areas over the next 20 years will need to be planned for in a timely and economical manner that minimises infrastructure costs and the overall costs of development.

A number of key infrastructure projects have been implemented, or commitments made that show the level of intent for the development of Gunnedah's continued future as a key rural Shire that provides significant contribution to the regional economy. It is essential to identify key priorities for improved utilities, energy and telecommunications infrastructure. Infrastructure planning must be both considered and coordinated with development needs in identified key locations for growth. The establishment of a Processing Precinct presents significant opportunities to grow the agricultural, processing and manufacturing sectors of the Shire's economy and to attract investment and trade opportunities.

No.	Action	Timing
14.	Identify key priorities for improved utilities, energy and telecommunications infrastructure and seek funding to implement these projects with consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) diversifying the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network b) facilitating appropriate smaller-scale renewable energy projects using bio-waste, solar, wind, geothermal or other innovative storage technologies 	M - L
15.	Ensure infrastructure planning is coordinated with development needs in identified key locations for growth	L
16.	Facilitate the establishment of a Processing Precinct to grow the agricultural/processing/manufacturing sectors of the Shire's economy and attract investment and trade opportunities.	M

Local Planning Priority 5: Support Traditional Custodians

A critical process of acknowledging the importance of Traditional Custodian is the promotion of an inclusive future where the Kamilaroi Aboriginal Nation, as the traditional custodians of the land, have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit equally from future economic growth. This can be in terms of jobs, involvement in business, wealth creation and associated community development opportunities.

As with many areas across Australia, the rate of participation in the labour force amongst Aboriginal people in Gunnedah Shire is less than for the non-Aboriginal population. In addition, the medium age of Aboriginal People is less than half of non-Aboriginal persons in the area.

By recognising and addressing barriers associated with Aboriginal participation, there are many areas of opportunity to further expand employment options across the Shire - including for example, in business enterprise, tourism, cultural and creative industry sectors. Participation in the economy through employment and business development can lead to improved prosperity for individuals, families and communities, as well as enhanced self-esteem, increased opportunities for self-development and reduced social isolation

Native Title can also be a strong driver of Aboriginal economic participation. Successful claims and determinations can provide a foundation for Aboriginal economic development and independence, and in many areas have stimulated a number of substantial agreements with private companies that provide financial benefits and strong commitments to Aboriginal employment, training and business development. Traditional Custodians have a variety of land holdings across Gunnedah.

There may be an opportunity to see how these landholdings can best be planned, managed and developed for the benefit of the local Aboriginal

community. Meaningful engagement to assist in the economic self-determination of Indigenous communities should be ongoing to support and address current constraints to economic participation and to facilitate improved employment and business development opportunities. This may also assist in the development of cultural facilities as well as Indigenous tourism opportunities. Cultural immersion in local Aboriginal lore, food and medicines, dreamtime stories, as well as arts and crafts galleries for viewing and purchasing Aboriginal art are ever popular and can be a truly unique experience.

With strong leadership, this growing industry could provide new economic opportunities.

No.	Action	Timing
17.	Actively promote Aboriginal business development such as creative industries, tourism and natural resource management through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) meaningful and ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal community b) the identification of important values and potential issues regarding cultural heritage and connection to land c) the identification and development of strategies and programs to tell the story of a local area, and the diversity of its history and culture. 	S – M
18.	Encourage mining companies to develop strategies to improve Aboriginal employment and business opportunities in mining and related industries	S - M

6. Places for People



Local Planning Priority 6: Enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability

Centres with a strong sense of place, healthy communities and a prosperous quality of life, are ones that can attract and retain businesses, investment and people. Increasing perceptions of 'liveability' values in areas such as Bathurst, Goulburn and Wagga Wagga have triggered people to locate to these rural centres, and the population growth in these centres are on the rise.

With job opportunities and quality education being available, an increase in the liveability and relative attractiveness of Gunnedah Shire as place to live, work and invest is therefore a vital consideration in seeking to promote future growth. Enhancing liveability can assist in ensuring that there is a growing and diverse local population and corresponding workforce.

Gunnedah Shire already has a strong sense of place. Projecting this focus to areas outside of the Shire about its healthy, happy, unique and educated community will best showcase living in rural communities. Promoting the Shire as a place to live underpinned by access to high quality services and facilities through digital media could form the basis of future marketing and promotional campaigns. Leveraging local personalities or 'hero experiences' to drive storytelling as part of this is an ideal strategy to build awareness of the Shire's liveability.

Villages in Gunnedah Shire are valued by residents for their character, community and lifestyle. They represent a different style of living and contribute to the diversity of lifestyle and choice in the Shire. They also provide more affordable housing than within the Gunnedah urban area. Character, services and infrastructure are unique to each village, and its residents like it that way.

In recognition of the unique nature of each village, Council will work with local communities to develop local area plans to guide their long-term future direction. These plans help communities define a shared vision for their village, and guide decision-making over the long-term to achieve this vision and to promote these areas for their country charm. Sections throughout this plan provide various platforms to improve liveability in Gunnedah Shire including the following:

- The Gunnedah town centre is the Shire's heart. It needs to continue to be enhanced to improve liveability and to promote the Shire as a vibrant, stimulating and welcoming rural centre.
- Walkable communities tend to be more liveable and help support better quality of life for its residents and visitors.
- The natural environment and access to open space and outdoor recreation opportunities are widely recognised as contributors to liveability.

To enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability, the community needs to feel engaged in order to encourage shared ownership and drive local initiatives. This engagement can be best achieved through a place-based approach, recognising that every issue and location is different, and that the needs and expectations of different communities also change. A place-based planning approach breaks down traditional boundaries, is collaborative and proactive, whilst encouraging innovative responses to community needs.

Rural centres that showcase their unique attributes or develop unique experiences are more likely to attract people and investment. To establish an authentic sense of place, the core direction must come from its people. Engaging with the community can assist in creating an environment that is conducive to collaboration, learning and creativity.

This engagement should be by a variety of methods, both physical and virtual, where community stakeholders can come together to exchange information and to be central to the decision-making process. Over and above the liveability aspects of urban areas, there is also a need to ensure our residents, communities and places are the best they can be. This is not just about ‘bricks and mortar’; it is a focus on people. Planning for vibrant and inclusive communities in a complete and holistic manner will ensure healthy, happy communities that showcase the best of rural living underpinned by high quality and accessible social services and facilities.

This means investing in social and community infrastructure thereby creating vibrant neighbourhoods and inclusive communities. This is particularly important in the Shire’s villages such as Breeza, Carroll, Curlewis, Emerald Hill, Kelvin, Mullaley and Tambar Springs. Communities must enjoy a high standard of safety and experience a strong sense of social cohesion through the ability to engage in a range of interests and activities.

In new growth areas, community infrastructure should be planned to ensure proper and appropriate long-term provision and appropriate integration into the urban fabric. Development contribution plans should be updated regularly to ensure arrangements for new areas contribute funding towards community infrastructure.

Where possible, community facilities should be encouraged in accessible multi-use hubs, where the community and Council can gain maximum benefit from its investment. Neighbourhood hubs create places at the heart of local communities, are diverse in size and close to where people live. Connections to and encouraging the use of these hubs is important to create a sense of place and belonging in a community. The Shire has experienced a ‘dual wage economy’ that leads to significant differences between incomes and standards of living between areas.

Fostering community wellbeing and social inclusion will be one of Gunnedah’s strengths. Building social capital enhances liveability, enhances access, fosters diversity and strengthens resilience.

Council’s role is to act as an advocate and a champion for those groups that are marginalised, isolated and disadvantaged, and to build on the Shire’s reputation as a welcoming and open community. As the population grows, it is inevitable that the Shire will become increasingly diverse and include people of many religions, languages, economic groups, and cultural backgrounds.

Liveability

A concept that relates to a community’s quality of life.

Importantly, it is a measure of how residents think about the place in which they live. It reflects the quality and amenity of the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

Community engagement undertaken for this LSPS highlighted that the community views Gunnedah as a highly liveable place, with great attributes and a strong community. There is an aspiration to maintain this liveability, show case it to the world and improve it as the community grows and changes over time to provide new opportunities into the future.

A focus on infrastructure delivery to support inclusive growth will lead to a more equitable community and improved wellbeing outcomes. Whilst the local provision of services will be the main priority, Gunnedah Shire can also take advantage of innovative service delivery models using advanced digital technology such as tele-health. This will require the development of training and services to assist the community to take up new technologies and implement alternative service delivery models.

No.	Action	Timing
19.	Develop a Liveability Report, utilising the Liveability Assessment Tool (NSW Health) in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) measure progress towards achieving a more liveable Shire and as an evidence base to inform future decision making b) identify gaps in service delivery and advocate to State and Federal Governments to ensure that key services that contribute to health and wellbeing, target the needs of a culturally diverse and ageing population 	S
20.	Identify opportunities to enhance the level of infrastructure and services for marginalised and disadvantaged sectors of the community including the aged, people with disability and families	M
21.	Develop local area plans for each of the gateway village communities	S - M

22	Consider the role of the Government Architect NSW and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework in contributing to healthy communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensuring that the movement and place needs of all users are met; b) balancing the movement of people and goods with the amenity and quality of places, contributing to the attractiveness, sustainability and success of our Shire and villages 	S - M
23.	Enhance the Shire's heritage and cultural assets to maintain our authentic identity and deliver infrastructure to meet community needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) managing development outcomes having appropriate regard to environmental and heritage considerations b) developing a Cultural Precinct Plan to facilitate broad and robust cultural development and the provision of high-quality cultural infrastructure and facilities within the CBD c) working with the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council, Indigenous community and relevant State government agencies to identify, protect and preserve Aboriginal heritage and culture 	S

Local Planning Priority 7: Housing types for lifestyle diversity

As our lives inevitably change, and Gunnedah Shire continues to grow, the shape of growth could lead to improved infrastructure, better services, and more liveable and vibrant centres in a more sustainable urban form. The types of houses we live in and their location are fundamentally important to all residents in the Shire. Housing also helps to build sustainable communities and provides the basis for an active, healthy lifestyle.

Gunnedah Shire has over 2,000 hectares of zoned residential and rural residential land (refer to Attachment C Page 63). However, it is unknown how much of this land is vacant. It is important to have a rolling supply of residential land over the next 20 years. Regular monitoring of development, land demand and supply will enable Council to respond quickly and efficiently to growth pressures. Having a goal of maintaining a 'rolling supply' of approximately 25 years of land to ensure there is no restriction on supply should be considered over the short term. The first step in this process will be to understand the amount of vacant land supply. New residential and rural residential areas should be considered over the medium term or if there is a change in drivers for demand in housing. It is recommended that greenfield sites be in more than one location as well as having a variety of lot sizes which may stimulate development.

Community engagement emphasised that large lot housing or rural residential housing is still a preference in the Shire. Many people stated that they moved to the area for the 'country style' living, with rural residential providing for this intermediate form of housing in a rural setting. These areas commonly have larger sized properties and are not associated with agriculture.

Because of its primarily residential function, rural residential development still requires reasonable access to most of the normal services and infrastructure provided in urban settlements such as schools, healthcare, employment and shops. However, the market often prefers locations for this type of development that are remote from settlements and difficult to service. Developing a set of criteria or clear direction and certainty as to where rural residential land should be located may reduce the pressure for adhoc development of this type.

More generally, the majority of new houses built in the Gunnedah Shire have traditionally been large, detached homes. However, this preference is rapidly changing – today significant demand exists for smaller-lot housing products, in response to changing demographics, housing preferences and affordability. Small lot housing is generally single housing on lots less than 450 m². There have been a number of innovative new small lot housing types developed as they provide an alternative option for infill development (refer to 'What is small lot housing?' on page 30). This type of housing may also assist seniors to 'age in place'.

An ageing population is a general trend in Gunnedah Shire and Australia more broadly. However, it is more overt in Gunnedah Shire and correlates with an increase in one person and couple only households. Consequently, there is a need to provide housing choice, which suits changing needs and allows residents to age in place, remaining within and connected to their community such as small lot housing described above. Council will investigate incentives for seniors housing and retirement care facilities to cater for the future needs of an ageing population. There is also a need to ensure that the future planning of Gunnedah town centres and renewal areas should be designed for all ages and abilities. Key design considerations include safe, even graded and well-maintained walking paths.

New residential development or infill development should avoid being located close to the freight network or freight and logistics facilities. Any developments near the freight network needs to take into consideration the existing and future freight movements on the network and allow the corridors to operate at maximum efficiency. New and infill developments will need to mitigate against noise and air emissions, as well as vibrations from the freight network.

Workers' accommodation also plays a role in meeting the housing needs of the community. For employer flexibility around accommodating rapid workforce changes, and often due to the remote location of mining operations in Gunnedah, a number of mines have a high proportion of their 'residents' in mining villages located adjacent to large mining projects such as Boggabri Village.

Anecdotal evidence (from environmental assessments) suggests that each fly in / fly out (FIFO) worker represents an annual expense of around \$25,000 per annum to the employer, though this can vary between operations. It is considered that this amount could be better invested as a salary incentive or assistance to live in the nearest community in the Shire. There are many benefits to housing workers and their families within existing communities in Gunnedah including:

- Reduced operation costs and staff turnover for employers.
- Ability of Council to provide additional services where supported by a larger population.
- Local business viability improved through access to more customers.
- Social cohesion and interaction supported by a broader cross-section of residents.

Temporary housing villages should contribute positively to the entire community and not unnecessarily duplicate existing services and facilities.

This also has important implications for the retention of families and elderly residents in these communities. Advocating to the State Government and mining companies for new mines to better integrate housing within existing communities will assist in attracting new residents to the Shire. No matter the form of housing, the Shire's boundary between the cool Northern Tablelands and the hot, dry Western Plains of NSW means that its temperatures regularly rise above 40°C in summer and drop below freezing in winter. Using innovative materials and designs to create more liveable conditions within housing will not only respond to climate change but also allow its occupants to remain thermally comfortable with minimal auxiliary heating or cooling. Innovations may include elements such as garden walls, shaded outdoor living areas or high thermal mass living areas.

What is small lot housing?

The New England North West Regional Plan 2036 defines small lot housing is single dwellings built on a lot less than 450m². They also generally (due to the lot size) have an average width of less than 15 metres. Small lot housing provides an alternative to medium density alternatives such as townhouses. They can also be more affordable and provide more diversity in the housing market. As Gunnedah Shire's population ages, smaller housing with less maintenance closer to services and preferably within walking distance of a town centre will be required.

This type of housing integrates well with the existing streetscape and neighbourhoods consisting mostly of single dwellings. They also have a lower environmental footprint as they perform better than larger dwellings.

No.	Action	Timing
24.	Develop a housing strategy (land use and type of housing) that identifies and prioritises the areas for growth, having regard to housing demand, growth trends, affordability and existing and likely future housing needs, ensuring the strategy avoids important agricultural land	S
25.	Investigate the need for an affordable housing contribution scheme as per Section 7.32(3)b of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 considering need, current supply, and other shortfalls in various housing types and tenures	S
26.	Collaborate with external providers of community housing and disability and aged accommodation to increase the supply of affordable housing	S - M
27.	Investigate incentives for seniors housing and retirement care facilities to cater for the future needs of an ageing population and work with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on additional opportunities under relevant state environmental planning policies	S
28	Prepare planning guidelines for seasonal and itinerant workers accommodation to inform the location and design of future facilities	M

29.	Advocate for mining companies to better integrate worker housing options within towns and villages to benefit local economies with consideration to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) inclusion of walking and cycling infrastructure b) encouraging workers to use sustainable transport options to their place of work or when accessing goods and services within the Gunnedah township and villages 	S
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Local Planning Priority 8: Re-imagine and re-energise the Gunnedah CBD

The Gunnedah Central Business District (CBD) is more than just a place to shop. It is the heart of the Shire – the central point where people meet and is an essential part of a vibrant liveable community. Traditionally, CBD's have been the location for retail services. However, with the rapid advance of technology and the growing influence of the millennial generation (among other trends), new challenges and opportunities are now faced in retail centres. The Gunnedah CBD is in transition between its previous role as primarily retail services, to a centre providing a more diversified space for the community - retail, service provision, events and social activity.

Over the next 20 years, the changing face of retail will continue (refer to Page 36). Reimagining the Gunnedah CBD to build on its existing liveable fabric and fantastic attributes will help to ensure that it remains relevant to the community over the longer term. During this time, the CBD will continue to develop as a retail heart with a mix of business, education, cultural and social activity.

Over time, and with a strategically planned and well thought out place-making approach, it also has the opportunity to build on its role as a place for affordable and free activities and events where everyone feels welcome.

Development proposed outside the CBD will be managed to ensure the heart of Gunnedah continues to thrive and to enhance the liveability of the Shire.

Efforts will be made to consistently seek to unlock and ignite the full potential of the CBD through non-traditional uses - such as experiential retailers, restaurants and concepts that appeal to millennials such as microbreweries. Other simple mechanisms can also be used - such as high use activities including gymnasiums being encouraged on the borders of the CBD rather than in large format out of the town centre areas.

Encouraging knowledge-based industries and educational institutions to locate new and expanded facilities in the CBD is an important strategic direction. Knowledge based industries generally prefer inner centres due to access to digital connections. This will contribute to a more youthful presence in Gunnedah centre and encourage more activity.

Thoughtfully designed public spaces for recreation and entertainment are also critical to the CBD moving forward.

Reimagining the CBD to secure the attention of time-starved, tech-savvy consumers will mean that the heart of Gunnedah will need to feel and function differently than more traditional retail-based centres. Alongside necessary infrastructure improvements, place-based strategies that are focused around activation and enlivening the centre will also assist in this process.

A network of arrival gateways that provide a memorial first impression is always an important aspect of any centre. Present entrances to the heart of Gunnedah lack a unique and consistent approach. Gateways also need to contribute positively to Gunnedah's image and clearly articulate a sense of community pride and vibrancy. A welcoming arrival that is 'Instagram' worthy will capitalise on visitors and tourists passing by to show case what is unique about Gunnedah.

Community engagement for this LSPS further confirms that the CBD could be improved through simple but effective improvements such as shade and seating. Given the Shire's climate there is an emphasis on the need to consider planting more trees within the town centre. Tree and other plantings have multiple benefits of providing protection from the sun and to some extent rain and wind, whilst providing a more visually appealing streetscape, reinforcing environmentally sustainable practices, providing focal points for resting or pedestrian spaces and creating microclimate improvements.

With consideration to shopfront parking and the availability of access bays for people with disability, developing a planting scheme in the CBD will assist in unifying the core, complement the heritage buildings, and help create an image of a green 'boulevard'.

Combining the planting with consistent street furniture palette will assist in the improving the centre's liveability.

In conjunction with physical improvements, a program of events to engage residents and visitors with the CBD would be beneficial. For example, community markets that showcase local produce or 'Eat Street' events allowing cafes and restaurant to showcase food would be complementary to the broader agricultural base of the area.

An events program could be developed with interested community members to keep them involved, informed and engaged. Identifying a civic heart or civic space where people can meet, or where public events can be held that could offer new opportunities for arts, culture and entertainment ventures.



These types of events may also assist in the development of local artisan products, leveraging local food production and agricultural links. Revising planning controls to allow for local food and beverage makers in strategic sites (such as underutilised areas as rear lanes) would have the potential to support a village atmosphere and offer opportunities for greater economic diversity.

Nurturing a successful future for food and beverage makers and the many people and professions who are engaged directly through these industries can assist in both enlivening town centres for residents, but also in providing fresh and desirable tourism products.

No.	Action	Timing
30.	Develop a central business district (CBD) master plan inclusive of the principles of urban design and strategic place making and the NSW Government Architect and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework	S
31.	Develop a central business district (CBD) activation strategy to support local economy and increase tourism with consideration to local freight access	S
32.	Develop local environmental plan and development control plan controls that respond to a growing need for social infrastructure to support local economy and creative enterprises and to build a sense of place within the CBD	S - M

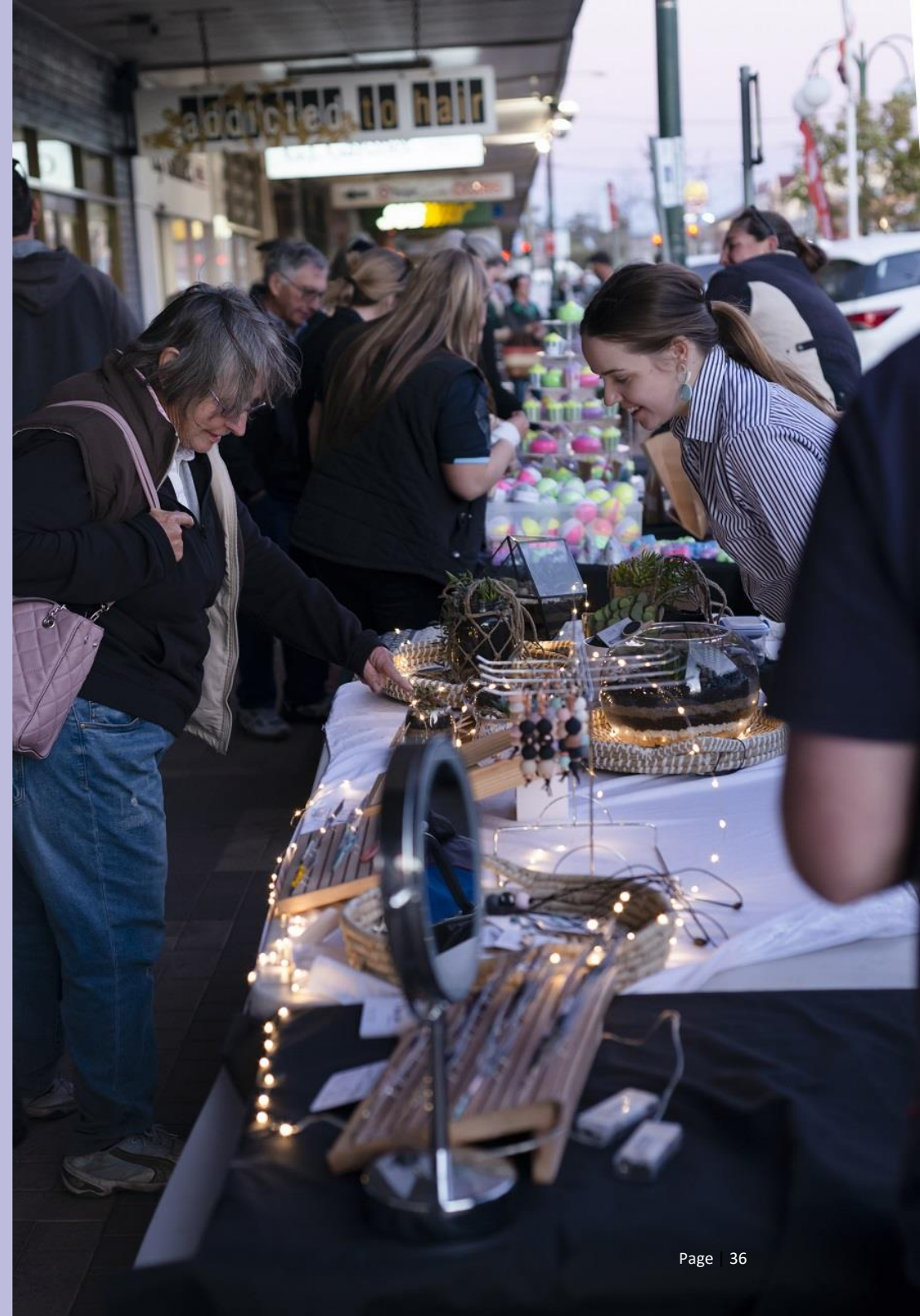
The changing face of retail

The retail industry has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade, and it continues to evolve quickly. Department of Planning, Industry and Environment recognised these changes in the *Planning for the Future of Retail – Discussion Paper* (April 2018). The discussion paper states that ‘globalisation and technology have significantly heightened competitive pressures on local retail and driven dramatic changes to customer behaviour and expectations.

The ultimate impact of online purchasing on ‘bricks and mortar’ retailers is as yet unknown. Although online was initially seen as a direct competitor to store based trading, many traditional shops have adopted online technologies to enhance an evolving business model that is still oriented around store-based retailing. By way of example, for many clothing and personal items, a physical store might still be necessary to demonstrate the brand or unique points of difference whilst having a strong presence online.

Retail formats are continuing to evolve beyond a simple ‘shop-front’ model to those that promote an ‘experience’. Retail is now not strictly focused on products being sold, but instead seeking a more engaging experience for consumers.

For rural centres where retail shop fronts have traditionally struggled, the change in the nature of retail is more prominent. Reimagining the Gunnedah business district from just being a retail centre to a cultural and economic heart of the Shire will provide opportunities for growth and innovation and long-term sustainability.



7. Connected and Accessible



Local Planning Priority 9: Develop transport and freight opportunities

The ability of businesses and industry to access national and global markets is recognised as critical to driving prosperity. Having access to markets will allow Gunnedah to focus economic investment and activity on those sectors where it has a comparative advantage, allowing local businesses and industry to compete in an increasingly competitive global market. Gunnedah Shire enjoys well established, strong access to national and global markets via road and rail to Newcastle and Sydney, an internationally recognised export hub for natural resources and primary production. The Shire is located at the cross-roads of the Oxley and Kamilaroi Highways, providing access to the Newell and New England Highways, with these north-south highways being major interstate routes.

More than 3.8 Million tonnes of freight move through the Gunnedah/Tamworth subregion every year. The Shire benefits significantly from the existing rail and road logistics infrastructure, with the NSW freight task set to increase by 28 per cent by 2036. The Performance Based Standards for Heavy Vehicles (Transport NSW) show Gunnedah Shire has access to High Performance Vehicles, with some restrictions for certain vehicles through the Gunnedah town centre.

As demand increases, areas with identified high risk of run-off-road and fatigue related crashes on the high speed local road and regional road network should consider key treatments such as centre and road side flexible safety barriers, audio-tactile line marking (rumble strips), wide centre line and curve improvements as per the Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative of NSW Road Safety Plan 2021.

Into the future, the *New England North West Regional Plan 2036* states that the proposed Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail has the potential to reshape freight movements. An intermodal terminal is proposed for Narrabri which will provide significant opportunities for Gunnedah Shire to access global markets via containerised freight movements.

As more freight moves through the Shire, more freight transport facilities, warehousing and distribution centres will be needed. These types of centres have specific locational needs that depend on efficient supply chains, access to customers, land availability and access to main roads. Gunnedah Shire's location and land availability is ripe for growing this type of industry. New freight hubs could be identified to support the expansion of freight and logistics operations with consideration to the need and location of additional heavy vehicle rest areas along major freight corridors. Supporting this industry will need a coordinated approach with operations managers and industry leaders required to best understand the needs for new employment areas. For instance, the hubs will need good access to and from the highways and have interchange capability for heavy vehicles.

Regional connections are important as they can be leveraged as an opportunity for both economic and social means. Connectivity is particularly relevant to local tourism operators which are reliant on the relative ease of access that supporting infrastructure can provide. The Shire's strategic location presents unique and significant opportunities for local tourism operators to encourage more visitors and increase their stay in Gunnedah and surrounding areas.

Economic links to areas such as Tamworth can also leverage opportunities such as the growing poultry industry.

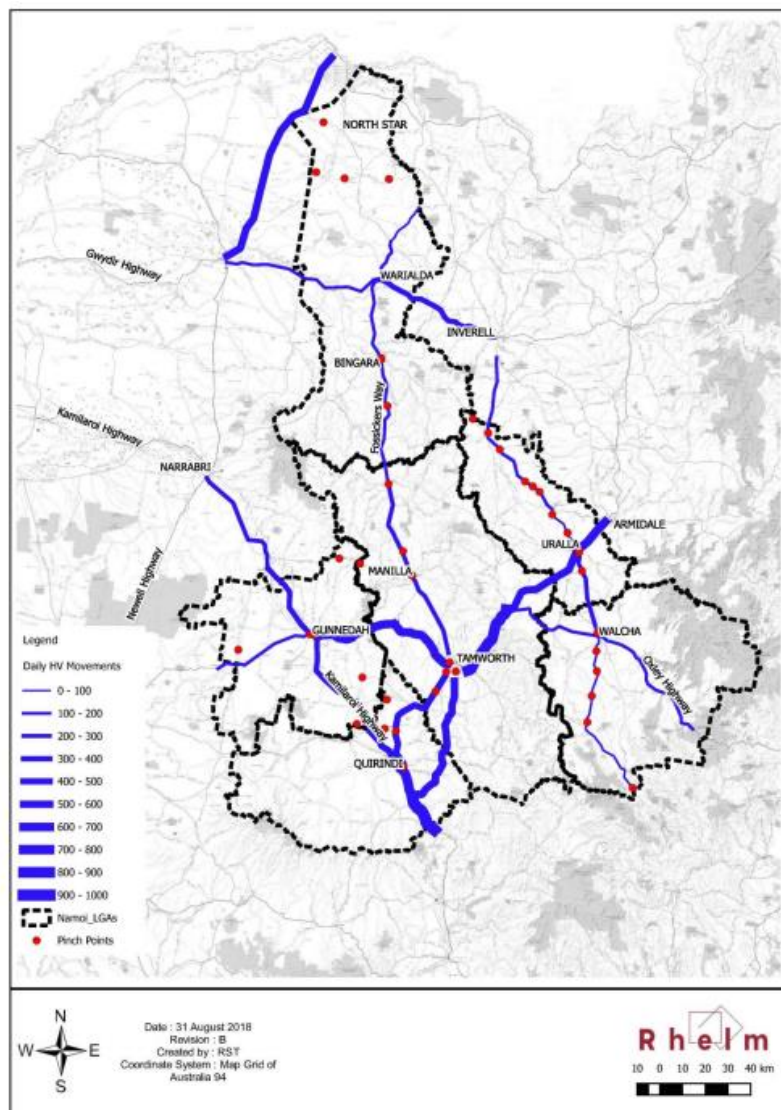


Figure 3 Regional Freight Movements

Where land use constraints may restrict growth in Tamworth, Gunnedah Shire can benefit from its location adjacent to supply chains and processing facilities and leverage opportunities presented. Promoting this industry through the efficient use of land and infrastructure will assist in the growth of Gunnedah Shire and promote a partnership for cross border opportunities. These collaborative processes can ultimately support the effective delivery of investment whilst contributing to jobs growth and industry security across the broader region.

With key road and rail links running through the heart of the Gunnedah Shire, the construction of the \$62 million second rail overpass in Gunnedah, and the development of the intermodal facility associated with the Inland Rail at Narrabri, presents significant opportunity to leverage existing and future infrastructure development and logistics.

The extensive rail networks and connections to the Port of Newcastle, Sydney and ports and airports in South East Queensland was recognised in the *Northern Inland NSW Investment Profile 2016 (Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW)*. As many of the rail networks may be close to other infrastructure these assets should also be protected from urban encroachment and incompatible land uses to protect freight and cargo handling capacity. In addition, Gunnedah Shire is serviced by the Tamworth Regional Airport including passenger and air freight. The airport has recently undergone a \$4 million upgrade allowing more passenger airlines into the region.

Gunnedah Shire's proximity to the Tamworth airport and the existing freight and passenger infrastructure will also be a basis to improve cross border opportunities especially for workers, tourists and business travellers. Capitalising on this growth, especially in terms of tourism, represents a significant opportunity.



As traffic in to the Tamworth Regional Airport increases, there may be some opportunities for Gunnedah Airport to accommodate lower yielding activities displaced by Tamworth, and/or to work in conjunction with the air freight companies.

Gunnedah Shire Council also operates the Gunnedah Airport. The airport has two runways, the main runway being 1,645 metres in length, with a small cross runway (592m).

The airport is used by the Gunnedah Aero Club, the Flying Doctor / Air Ambulance Services as well as for recreational flying and the occasional charter flight (primarily mining and gas related).

Reimagining the airport for alternative uses may be a possibility for growth and leveraging of this asset. This may include the following.

Drone launching / practice area – the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) through the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 101, regulates flying of drones and other Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) in Australia. While CASA regulates the flying of drones and other RPA when they are in the air, Council can regulate the launching and landing of these aircraft from Gunnedah Airport as a designated area for launching drones and other RPA recreationally.

- *Residential airport hangar* - demand for hangar accommodation combined with residence is becoming increasingly popular in Australia and may be an important aeronautical growth sector in the future. A number of factors contribute to the success of this form of “airpark development”, including facilities and safety standards, as well as appropriate development controls.

No.	Action	Timing
33.	Investigate the feasibility of developing a Gunnedah Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT) to increase efficiencies and access to inland rail and road networks and to enhance freight movements and exports with consideration of existing or proposed terminals nearby at Werris Creek, Tamworth or Narrabri	S

34.	Prioritise projects that address impediments to the regional freight network and work with stakeholders to upgrade transport network capacity as demand changes	M
35.	Develop local policies and review existing planning controls to protect road and rail network opportunities from incompatible land uses or land fragmentation including identifying buffer and mitigation measures and pinch points in the road network	M
36.	Investigate opportunities to upgrade and better utilise the Gunnedah Airport	S
37.	Strengthen regional and cross border relationships by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) fostering high levels of economic activity and employment in export-oriented and high-value sectors b) investigating and planning for future economic relationships with Tamworth and Narrabri LGAs including investment opportunities to maximise productivity c) continuing to collaborate with the Namoi Joint Organisations to work towards a comprehensive upgrade of significant freight routes within the region 	M

Local Planning Priority 10: Support accessible, high quality, local open spaces

The Gunnedah Shire walking and cycling networks are addressed through the *Gunnedah Shire Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan* (2016) and the *Gunnedah Shire Bike Plan* (2016). These plans work towards prioritising pedestrians and cyclists as key users of the road space. It is essential that the network encourages social connectivity, promotes active travel modes and is safe to use. Walkable communities tend to be more liveable and help support better quality of life for their residents. If neighbourhoods are more accessible to pedestrians, it helps improve health, reduces the need for short car trips, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves on the costs associated with operating a car, parking and constructing new roads. Walkable communities are people focused places where their design supports more social interaction, physical fitness and diminished crime and other social problems. This will be particularly important with an older population, who may have different mobility needs. Community engagement for this LSPS indicated that making Gunnedah more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly should be a top priority. As part of encouraging greater use of active transport, Council will work towards expanding and linking walking and cycling pathways, ensuring they are accessible, connected and focussed in and around Gunnedah. The program of works to develop pedestrian and cycleways as identified in the *Gunnedah Shire Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan* (2016) and the *Gunnedah Shire Bike Plan* (2016) will provide detailed directions for provision. For smaller villages, the challenge is to ensure that transport to vital services, jobs, shops and entertainment is accessible and attractive. Wherever possible, open space provision must be fair and equitable. Its primary aim is to ensure access and design considers the needs of all members of the community, regardless of age, gender, ability or a person's location. Providing facilities to attract families and changing demographics is important to the community.

The recent construction of Livvi's Place, Gunnedah Shire's first inclusive playground, is testament to Council's proactive approach to provide a variety of such spaces. According to the *Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy* developed in 2010, Gunnedah Shire has approximately 45 areas of publicly accessible open space and these areas total 386 hectares. Open space includes parks, sportsgrounds, civic spaces, natural areas and play spaces, as well as the recreational facilities and infrastructure that support these. Open space is a key component of green infrastructure, along with streetscapes and private gardens. The *Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy* (2010) also outlines how Gunnedah is generally well serviced with open space. However, it also highlights that there are significant opportunities to better service, connect and manage the open space network.

Some spaces are large and underutilised, while others are ill-equipped to meet current high usage levels. Many facilities are duplicated, old, or only suitable for a narrow range of users. Developing multipurpose / multiuse facilities will help to cater to a broader range of groups and be able to adapt to changing community needs. Sport and recreation, as a central part of the Gunnedah community and lifestyle, requires easy access to open space that supports leisure for fun, relaxation or fitness.

Technological advancements, such as the rollout of the National Broadband Network, could mean that in the future people in the Gunnedah Shire will travel less and make more use of technology for "tele-commuting". This is currently the case in the health and education sectors with services increasingly being provided online to rural users. This increase in the use and prevalence of technology also has the potential to create behaviour change through increased use of mobile electronic devices, alternative fuelled vehicles and increasing use of walking and cycling paths.

Redeveloping open space in Gunnedah to more useable spaces for a variety of ages and uses was one of the highest comments during community engagement for this LSPS, including for example improved skate parks, more formalised sporting facilities and off-leash dog areas

No.	Action	Timing
38.	Review and maintain an updated pedestrian access and mobility plan	S - M
39.	Review and maintain an updated bike (cycleways) plan with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provision of high-quality cycle paths, tracks and trails b) highly walkable routes between key node areas c) ensuring connections are prioritised and supported by safe facilities aligned with the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021 'Safe System' principles 	S - M
40.	Review and maintain an updated recreation and open space strategy to ensure future residents continue to have access to accessible and high-quality open space areas including investigating the development of multipurpose facilities	S
41.	Update local contribution plans to include amenity improvements for public open space and to fund infrastructure identified as necessary to support population growth	S

Seeking grants and attracting investment

Many infrastructure projects described in this LSPS have the potential to stimulate economic activity - that is to have tangible benefits, not just a cost. However, Council does not have the short-term financial capacity to undertake all identified infrastructure investments without assistance. This is where other sources such as State and Federal funding should be identified and targeted.

An important role of Council and the place making process, in conjunction with the community, will be to identify what the key priorities are and how these can be developed via funding through grants and other assistance. Preferably a range of type and scale of project can be identified and matched to research on available grants and other funding opportunities. For example, infrastructure works could be prioritised under small (under \$1 million), medium (\$1 to \$5 million) and large (\$5 million+) projects.

Staging the development of the cycleways and pedestrian facilities from the Gunnedah Shire Cycleways Plan may be one example at the smaller end. Transport NSW walking and cycling programs are regularly revised and may provide an opportunity to finance the identified works or to bring forward later priorities.

Many of the grant funds established by State and Federal Governments are highly competitive and require a clear purpose / link to a community need. The development of a list of “shovel ready” projects for the Gunnedah Shire would be an advantage given the competitive nature of funding applications.



A group of five koalas are shown sitting on a tree branch. They are looking towards the camera. The koalas have grey fur and large black noses. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a forest setting. A semi-transparent grey banner is overlaid across the top of the image, containing the section header.

8. Sustainable and Resilient

Local Planning Priority 11: Preserving biodiversity and preparing for climate change

Biodiversity – including native plants, animals and ecosystems – create appealing places and landscapes and contribute to health and wellbeing. They support lifestyle and community, encouraging people to be active and to get involved in more outdoor social opportunities. Healthy ecosystems also provide habitat for threatened species such as the Koala – an iconic species for the Gunnedah Shire. Other benefits include revenue from ecotourism, provision of recreational opportunities and development of related industries.

While Natural Parks and Nature Reserves account for 8.4% of the land area in Gunnedah Shire, the majority of natural habitat remains on private land. The protection of the Shire's environmental assets and associated biodiversity is essential. A healthy ecology and rich biodiversity are valuable in their own right and help create more liveable towns that can strengthen Gunnedah Shire's competitive advantage.

The retention of wildlife connectivity and biodiversity will protect and regenerate existing natural assets. Working with relevant stakeholders will further enhance the overall capacity of the Shire to respond to and be resilient to the effects of climate change. Recognition that freshwater rivers, creeks and streams are just as much wildlife corridors as are linear strips of terrestrial vegetation, and when considered in conjunction with riparian buffer zones, will further sustain high biodiversity outcomes.

Council in 2013 prepared a Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) in accordance with the aims of *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection* (SEPP 44).

Within the study area, more than 42,000 hectares of Preferred Koala Habitat was identified. The preparation of the CKPoM ensures that any development application triggered by Koala Habitat will need to address the potential impacts. As we move towards 2040, retaining and enhancing treasured bushland and biodiversity, including on privately owned land, will be challenged by agricultural and development pressures as well as climate change. Biodiversity loss is already evident from the growing list of threatened plants and animals, including the reduced numbers of the Koala. Further work is needed to investigate ways to protect and enhance bushland and biodiversity, including the management of bushfire risk. This work will then need to be reflected in LEP and DCP controls and support the establishment of habitat corridors.

Similar to our approach to waterways, bushland will be reconceptualised as an asset for its intrinsic values and for the services it provides, including carbon and stormwater capture and pollution management. We will also increase the availability of biodiversity offset areas within the LGA with a view to ensuring that future development offset needs can be met locally. Reducing reliance and the extent of use of fossil fuel-based energy sources has positive impacts on the environment, the community and the economy. Measures that save energy will decrease operational costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase air quality over the longer-term. The New England North West Regional Plan 2036 identifies the region as a potential leader in renewable energy thanks to potential sources of solar, bio-waste, wind and geothermal. It receives 19 to 20 megajoules daily of solar exposure, making it the second highest solar penetration region in NSW. The Plan focuses on a strategic and integrated approach to renewable energy projects which will leverage new opportunities and help meet the NSW Government's goal of a carbon-neutral NSW by 2050.

Gunnedah Shire has excellent access to diverse renewable and sustainable energy assets, with solar energy generation potential of over 20 megajoules per square metre average daily solar exposure (some of the highest in NSW). This opportunity has already been recognised by the renewables industry, with two large solar farms already having received approval in the Gunnedah Shire. This includes a 205-hectare solar farm from Photon Energy and a 33-hectare solar farm from Ironbark.

However, renewable energy is not just about protecting the environment but also has the potential for significant economic benefits. With abundant natural resources in sun, as well as potential geothermal resources, renewable energy is viewed as a cost-efficient, reliable energy source, critical for economic development and quality lifestyles. Across the broader economy, potential exists for rapid expansion of the alternative energy market and the Gunnedah Shire is already well placed to tap into various forms of this market.

Diversifying the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network, will attract investment for renewable energy projects within the Shire, and further help to position it as a 'region of excellence' for alternative energy technologies.

It should also be recognised that the energy efficiency of existing building stock can be improved. A number of older buildings, particularly those of masonry, were built to keep cool in summer and warm in winter. Others, however, need some help. There are many things that can be done – putting up heavy drapes, making sure double-hung windows are working as intended and fixing old rainwater tanks.

Passive solutions, such as these, also need to be recognised by governments as approaches to energy efficiency for existing building stock. By 2040, Gunnedah could be a best practice example of an energy efficient Shire.

Green industries are another area of growing potential for locations such as the Gunnedah Shire. Materials taken from the waste streams are provided downstream to local, interstate and overseas remanufacturing industries that make new products, contribute further to economic activity and provide significant environmental benefits. Green industries such as plastic recycling are a growth industry as waste avoidance grows and the need for facilities and technologies becomes greater. As metropolitan and coastal areas continue to be constrained there will be a higher demand for sufficient space and access for green industries.

Initiatives such as the draft *Gunnedah Shire Investment Prospectus* confirms the Shire is ready and open for business and has the available infrastructure and technology for these types of industries. Investigating opportunities for green industries such as bottle recycling plants and reuse of waste strategies will not only reduce energy use across the manufacturing system and encourage a reduction in waste generation, but also has the potential for significant economic returns and associated employment generation.

Climate change is already impacting the Gunnedah Shire with the current drought. The CSIRO have predicted that the future climate of the Namoi catchment is likely to be warmer and drier - by 2030 temperatures will rise by 1.5°C and rainfall will decrease by 8%.

As the climate changes, there is also expected to be changes in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events as well as natural disasters, changes to the water cycle affecting agriculture and other key industries. In terms of a growing population, the impact of such changes can be increasingly significant.

These changes affect how we plan for local communities and industry into the future, with plans made now needing to ensure that people, property, and infrastructure are able to effectively respond.

Adaptation strategies will also be needed for existing urban areas that are at risk or will increasingly be at risk in the future. Australia has the highest rate of melanoma in the world. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Australia, with 2 in 3 people diagnosed in their lifetime. UV causes 95% of melanomas and 99% of non-melanoma skin cancers, making it a highly preventable cancer. It is likely that Gunnedah LGA will experience more frequent, longer and more extreme periods of uncomfortable summertime heat and heat wave events in the future.

The provision of quality shade throughout the LGA will be one of the most cost-effective ways to address this situation in the long term, and has the co-benefit of protecting us from UV exposure. Natural and built shade can be easily included in planning processes for developments, particularly in urban areas. Well-designed shade, effectively planned and correctly positioned, both natural and built, can reduce UV exposure by up to 75%. Shade offers a number of benefits for people and the environment and has an increasingly important role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing heat in urban areas.



Currently, water is available in Gunnedah due to the presence of substantial bore assets, albeit the impact of the current drought on the supply of water for farming, industry, agriculture, residents and the environment are a significant challenge for the LGA into the near future. As well as water quantity, climate change impacts will also affect water quality. For the natural environment this means a continuing high degree of stress. Over the longer-term, much can be done to transition water supplies to more efficient and sustainable, long-term sources including rainwater harvesting, upgrading irrigation infrastructure, recycling or desalination as technologies improve and costs reduce.

The Namoi River and its tributaries are vital for Gunnedah Shire's position as a major food producing area and food security in Australia. These water resources not only providing habitat for diverse flora and fauna, but it also provides amenity and recreation opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses including from tourism. On a more personal level, water use measures should aim to reduce per capita water use, particularly potable water use when alternative water sources for non-potable purposes can be made available in new development.

No	Action	Timing
42.	Continue to protect important agricultural lands and forestry operations from incompatible uses	L
43.	Review and maintain an updated waste management strategy to increase efficiencies around waste management through the provision of well-planned waste infrastructure that is responsive to future needs	S
44.	Review and maintain updated flood risk management plans and planning controls to reduce flood risk	M
45.	<p>Encourage the use of renewable energy and green industries to reduce carbon emissions and manage energy, water, and waste efficiently with consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) diversifying the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network b) facilitating appropriate smaller-scale renewable energy projects using bio-waste, solar, wind or other innovative storage technologies c) developing and implementing a plan to reduce carbon emissions in consultation with the community 	M
46.	<p>Use disaster risk management planning and adaptation strategies in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid exposure to high-risk areas b) assess and to minimise Gunnedah Shire's vulnerability to climate change impacts (such as heat, floods, storms, drought and bushfires) c) build resilience 	S - M

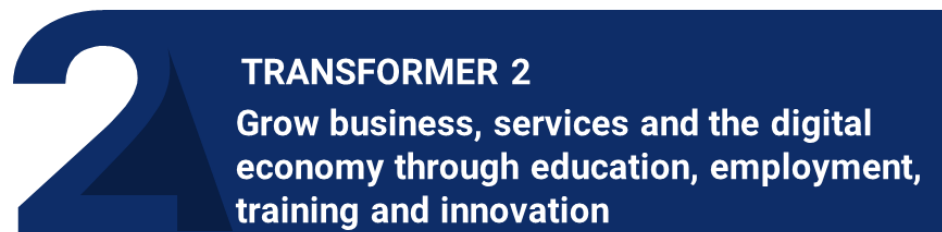
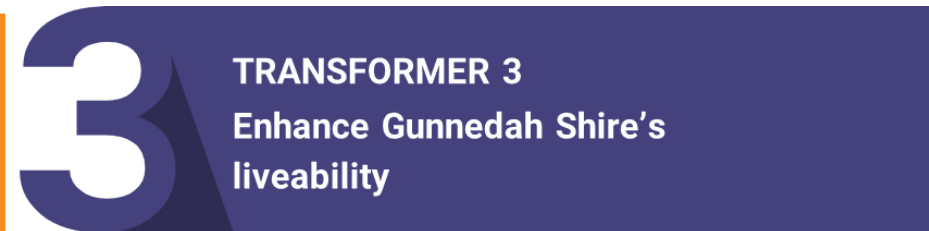
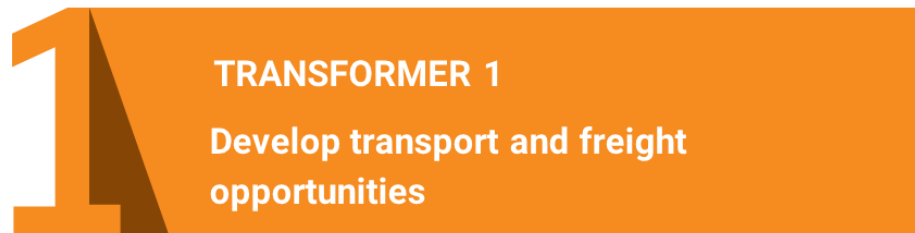
47.	Investigate options for water management through innovation including encouraging water efficiency and whole-of-cycle-water-management to be integral parts of future developments and public realm improvements	S - M
48.	<p>Design and provide sustainable places and spaces that are healthy to live in, to work in and to visit with consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provision of well-designed shade, both natural and built, in all public infrastructure, from large developments such as major recreation facilities, public buildings and town centre upgrades, to the smallest public domain improvements such as bus shelters b) the Government Architect NSW and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework 	S
49.	Work in partnership with various stakeholders to deliver green projects that strengthen biodiversity outcomes including urban heat mitigation strategies such as tree planting in the riparian zones and urban areas and the retention of wildlife corridor connectivity	S
50.	Guide development and encourage the conservation and management of koala habitat through land use planning and other appropriate measures	M

9. Transformers

Whilst this LSPS identifies a large number and wide range of important priorities and actions, the following four initiatives are specifically highlighted as those that have the potential to “transform” Gunnedah Shire.

These initiatives are likely to have long term strategic importance and influence on how Gunnedah Shire will grow and develop. Having clear and direct policies and planning mechanisms in place to facilitate these in ways that is most beneficial to the area is therefore paramount.

Selection of these initiatives considered the frequency and importance that the community placed on these during engagement activities for this LSPS. They have also been considered with a view of the economic and jobs benefits that they will bring, and that as a consequence, these areas are also likely to be attractive for State and Federal partnership funding. These initiatives provide the foundations for subsequent actions and are a stepping stone to the broader vision for the Gunnedah Shire.



Transformer 1

Develop transport and freight opportunities

The movement of mining, agriculture and manufacturing inputs and outputs has generated significant transport and logistical opportunities in Gunnedah, building on the Shire's strategic location at the junction of freight flows. The freight and logistics industry are an essential component of the regional economy and significant investment is being made in projects such as Inland Rail. This is expected to lead to opportunities for freight transport facilities, warehousing and distribution centres.

Industries could use the Gunnedah Shire as a distribution point to warehouse goods and then send them through the state, nationally and internationally. Opportunities could be identified to support expansion of freight and logistics operations. Effective planning could help logistics in the region with Gunnedah providing connector services through the identification of opportunities / projects to attract investment.

Transformer 2

Grow business, services and the digital economy through education, employment, training and innovation

Gunnedah has the capacity to grow, compete and thrive in the regional, national and global economy. One of the recurring main catalysts for growth is expanding existing business through being able to access and use a labour force with the necessary skills. Education and training are key to upskilling the local population and filling skilled jobs that are available.

Flexible and applied ways of learning are needed so that residents can lay strong foundations for their careers and then build further skills and knowledge to participate in new and changing industries. Understanding local employment requirements is the first step in order to match the education and training to those needed skills, both now and in the foreseeable future.

Transformer 3

Enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability

When real estate agents and journalist discuss growth of regional areas, they normally talk about the quality of life these areas provide. There is increasing recognition that employment is not the only key driver for people to relocate to regional areas. Increasingly, people think about what a place is like to live in and the quality of life that a town can offer them.

This means that people assess a place's liveability when deciding to move. Enhancing liveability in Gunnedah will ensure that there is a growing and diverse local population and workforce to drive and support a growing economy. Liveability means different things to different people and understanding this through community engagement will be the first step to transform a liveable Gunnedah. More specifically, reimagining the heart of Gunnedah could be a key initiative to improve liveability and to promote the Shire as a vibrant, stimulating and welcoming town

Transformer 4

Preserving biodiversity and preparing for climate change

A healthy ecology and rich biodiversity are valuable in their own right and help create more liveable towns that can strengthen Gunnedah Shire's competitive advantage. Protecting the remaining assets and regenerating more also enhances the overall capacity of the Shire to respond to and be resilient to the effects of climate change. Encouraging and enabling the establishment and expansion of renewable and green industries, technologies and building innovation will provide Gunnedah with a competitive advantage and improve its capacity for ongoing resilience to climate change.

These industries are new and emerging in the region and there is significant opportunity to organise land use in a way that supports new technologies, such as renewables. Green industries are another growth industry as waste avoidance grows and the need for facilities and technologies to meet this demand becomes greater. The Gunnedah Shire is ready and open for business and has the available infrastructure and technology available to support these types of industries.

10. Implementation and Monitoring

Implementing the Gunnedah Shire LSPS will require sustained, coordinated action by all levels of government, the private sector and the community. Planning at a local scale will help achieve a better balance between jobs and population changes across the LGA and provide a basis for cross-boundary collaboration.

10.1 Monitoring and reporting

The Gunnedah Shire LSPS is a living document that will be updated at regular intervals.

Legislation requires a review at least every seven years. Council will use the existing Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework under the *Local Government Act 1993* for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the LSPS, as well as aligning this work by:

- Reviewing actions contained in this LSPS at least every four years, as Council's Community Strategic Plan is also reviewed, so that these key documents reflect a shared view on the future for Gunnedah Shire.
- Linking actions with Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Reporting on the planning priorities and actions in Council's Annual Report.

As such, Council intends to commence its first full review of the LSPS in 2023 and again every four years.

Regular reviews will ensure that the LSPS reflects the vision the community has for the future of Gunnedah Shire and is aligned to the latest trends and information available about the environment and the community's social and economic needs.

10.2 Timeframes

As identified throughout this document, the Gunnedah Shire LSPS has an active, foreseeable planning horizon of 20 years. The planning priorities and actions in this plan accommodate, at least, this 20-year horizon.

The time horizon of long-term actions means their delivery is subject to some unknown factors, they are complex, or their delivery is subject to other dependencies. More certainty will occur over time, which will inform future revisions and nomination of actions for inclusion in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The implementation of the Gunnedah Shire LSPS will therefore be an ongoing program of work over nominated short (1 - 5 years), medium (5 - 10 years) and long term (10+ years) periods. The delivery of the actions presented will also be dependent on Council resources and funding availability.

Appendix A - Summary of Local Planning Priorities and Actions

Theme 1: Boundless Opportunity

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 1 - Grow business, services and the digital economy through education, employment, training and innovation		
1.	<p>Develop a community workforce plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify skills/services that are needed in the local labour force to address current and likely future industry requirements b) identify and implement a marketing strategy aimed at attracting new residents in order to grow future workforce. c) Identify a business development strategy that provides clear guidance and incentives for the establishment, expansion or relocation of businesses d) build on opportunities for employment in new, emerging and growth industries e) facilitate transition to new employment and skills /training opportunities in response to changing technologies within existing industries 	S
2.	<p>Develop a partnership approach for an education and training led model of business growth. This may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) advocating strongly for the establishment of the proposed trade training and education precinct and/or the expansion of the range of courses offered at Gunnedah TAFE, with courses targeted to address skills shortages b) working with the State government to identify and secure employment lands 	S
3.	<p>Investigate public private partnerships and links with tertiary education providers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) advocate for the benefits and attraction of relocating to regional NSW, including campaigns and targeted initiatives for skilled workers b) liaise with Department of Home Affairs regarding skilled regional migration schemes with the aim of supplementing skills shortages and improving the skills of the labour force to meet changes in the use of technology 	S
4.	Simplify procedures to allow creative uses of the public domain, to accommodate art in public spaces and allow the temporary use of streets and public spaces for creative practices that support and grow the arts economy	S- M

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 2 - Develop industrial, commercial and agricultural land		
5.	Review and maintain an employment (industrial and commercial) land use strategy with consideration to: a) protecting and enhancing productive agricultural lands b) ensuring new industrial land are located with good connections to the freight network (road and rail) and away from sensitive land uses	S
6.	Develop an investment prospectus/strategy to highlight future industrial and commercial land growth opportunities and build business confidence more broadly	S
7.	Work with industries and peak bodies to identify the availability of land for: a) farming and intensive livestock agriculture including poultry, pig farms, cattle and sheep feedlots b) value adding to agricultural and other protein businesses; and c) the establishment of dedicated 'landing pads' for new and relocating businesses	S
8.	Identify hubs for specific industries that have the potential for growth. This may include a specific requirement such as ready access to transport corridors	S
9.	Investigate potential relationships with research and development organisations that stimulate business start-ups and supports the growth of innovative approaches to agriculture and agribusiness	S- M
LPP 3 - Grow tourism		
10.	Review and maintain an updated Gunnedah Shire Destination Management Plan	S
11.	Review and maintain an updated Riverine Precinct Strategy	S
12.	Deliver the Gunnedah Koala Park	S- M

No.	Action	Timing
13.	Leverage local personalities or 'hero experiences' to drive storytelling as part of a broader process of brand identification to build awareness of why Gunnedah is such a great place to live and work.	S
LPP 4 – Develop infrastructure to support growth and change		
14.	Identify key priorities for improved utilities, energy and telecommunications infrastructure and seek funding to implement these projects with consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) diversifying the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network b) facilitating appropriate smaller-scale renewable energy projects using bio-waste, solar, wind, geothermal or other innovative storage technologies 	M - L
15.	Ensure infrastructure planning is coordinated with development needs in identified key locations for growth	L
16.	Facilitate the establishment of a Processing Precinct to grow the agricultural/processing/manufacturing sectors of the Shire's economy and attract investment and trade opportunities.	M
LPP 5 - Support Traditional Custodians		
17.	Actively promote Aboriginal business development in areas such as creative industries, tourism and natural resource management through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) meaningful and ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal community b) the identification of important values and potential issues regarding cultural heritage and connection to land c) the identification and development of strategies and programs to tell the story of a local area, and the diversity of its history and culture 	S- M
18.	Encourage mining companies to develop strategies to improve Aboriginal employment and business opportunities in mining and related industries	S- M

Theme 2: Places for People

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 6 - Enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability		
19.	Develop a Liveability Report, utilising the Liveability Assessment Tool (NSW Health) in order to: a) measure progress towards achieving a more liveable Shire and as an evidence base to inform future decision making b) identify gaps in service delivery and advocate to State and Federal governments to ensure that key services contribute to health and wellbeing and target the needs of a culturally diverse and ageing population	S
20.	Identify opportunities to enhance the level of infrastructure and services for marginalised and disadvantaged sectors of the community including the aged, people with disability and families	M
21.	Develop local area plans for each of the gateway village communities	S- M
22	Consider the role of the Government Architect NSW and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework in contributing to healthy communities by: a) ensuring that the movement and place needs of all users are met; b) balancing the movement of people and goods with the amenity and quality of places, contributing to the attractiveness, sustainability and success of our Shire and villages	S - M
23.	Enhance the Shire's heritage and cultural assets to maintain our authentic identity and deliver infrastructure to meet community needs by: a) managing development outcomes having appropriate regard to environmental and heritage considerations b) developing a Cultural Precinct Plan to facilitate broad and robust cultural development and the provision of high-quality cultural infrastructure and facilities within the CBD c) working with the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council, Indigenous community and relevant State and Federal government agencies to identify, protect and preserve Aboriginal heritage and culture	S

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 7 - Housing types for lifestyle diversity		
24.	Develop a housing strategy (land use and type of housing) that identifies and prioritises the areas for growth, having regard to housing demand, growth trends, affordability and existing and likely future housing needs ensuring the strategy avoids important agricultural land	S
25.	Investigate the need for an affordable housing contribution scheme as per Section 7.32(3)b of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 considering need, current supply, and other shortfalls in various housing types and tenures	S
26.	Collaborate with external providers of community housing and disability and aged accommodation to increase the supply of affordable housing	S
27.	Investigate incentives for seniors housing and retirement care facilities to cater for the future needs of an ageing population and work with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on additional opportunities under relevant state environmental planning policies	S
28.	Prepare planning guidelines for seasonal and itinerant workers accommodation to inform the location and design of future facilities	M
29.	Advocate for mining companies to better integrate worker housing options within towns and villages to benefit local economies with consideration to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) inclusion of walking and cycling infrastructure; and b) encouraging workers to use sustainable transport options to their place of work or when accessing goods and services within the Gunnedah township and villages 	S

LPP 8 - Re-imagine and re-energise the Gunnedah CBD		
30.	Develop a central business district (CBD) master plan inclusive of the principles of urban design and strategic place making and the NSW Government Architect and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework	S
31.	Develop a CBD activation strategy to support local economy and increase tourism with consideration to local freight access	S
32.	Develop local environmental plan and development control plan controls that respond to a growing need for social infrastructure to support local economy and creative enterprises and to build a sense of place within the CBD	S- M

Theme 3: Connected and Accessible

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 9 - Develop transport and freight opportunities		
33.	Investigate the feasibility of developing a Gunnedah Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT) to increase efficiencies and access to inland rail and road networks and to enhance freight movements and exports with consideration of existing or proposed terminals nearby at Werris Creek, Tamworth and Narrabri.	S
34.	Prioritise projects that address impediments to the regional freight network and work with stakeholders to upgrade transport network capacity as demand changes	M
35.	Develop local policies and review existing planning controls to protect road and rail network corridors from incompatible land uses or land fragmentation including identifying buffer and mitigation measures	M
36.	Investigate opportunities to better utilise the Gunnedah Airport	S

No.	Action	Timing
37.	<p>Strengthen regional and cross border relationships by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) fostering high levels of economic activity and employment in export-oriented and high-value sectors b) investigating and planning for future economic relationships with Tamworth and Narrabri LGAs including investment opportunities to maximise productivity c) continuing to collaborate with the Namoi Joint Organisations to work towards a comprehensive upgrade of significant freight routes within the region 	M
LPP10 - Support accessible, high quality, local open spaces		
38.	Review and maintain an updated pedestrian access and mobility plan	S- M
39.	<p>Review and maintain an updated bike (cycleways) plan with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provision of high-quality cycle paths, tracks and trails b) highly walkable routes between key node areas c) ensuring that walking and cycling connections are prioritised and supported by safe facilities aligned with the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021 'Safe System' principles 	S- M
40.	Review and maintain an updated recreation and open space strategy to ensure future residents continue to have access to accessible and high-quality open space areas including investigating the development of a multipurpose facility	S
41.	Update local contribution plans to include amenity improvements for public open space and to fund infrastructure identified as necessary to support population growth	S

Theme 4: Sustainable and Resilient

No.	Action	Timing
LPP 11 - Preserving biodiversity and preparing for climate change		
42.	Continue to protect important agricultural lands and forestry operations from incompatible uses	L
43.	Review and maintain an updated waste management strategy to increase efficiencies around waste management through the provision of well-planned waste infrastructure that is responsive to future needs	S
44.	Review and maintain updated flood risk management plans and planning controls, to reduce flood risk	M
45.	Encourage the use of renewable energy and green industries to reduce carbon emissions and manage energy, water, and waste efficiently with consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) diversifying the energy sector by identifying renewable energy resource precincts and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network b) facilitating appropriate smaller-scale renewable energy projects using bio-waste, solar, wind or other innovative storage technologies c) developing and implementing a plan to reduce carbon emissions in consultation with the community 	M
46.	Use disaster risk management planning and adaptation strategies in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid exposure to high-risk areas b) assess and minimise Gunnedah Shire's vulnerability to climate change impacts, such as heat, floods, storms, drought and bushfires c) build resilience 	S- M
47.	Investigate options for water management through innovation including encouraging water efficiency and whole-of-cycle-water-management to be integral parts of future developments and public realm improvements	S- M

No.	Action	
48.	Design and provide sustainable places and spaces that are healthy to live in, to work in and to visit with consideration to: a) provision of well-designed shade, both natural and built, in all public infrastructure, from large developments such as major recreation facilities, public buildings and town centre upgrades, to the smallest public domain improvements such as bus shelters b) the Government Architect NSW and Transport for NSW Movement and Place Framework	S
49.	Work in partnership with various stakeholders to deliver green project that strengthen biodiversity outcomes including urban heat mitigation strategies such as tree planting in the riparian zones and urban areas, and the retention of wildlife corridor connectivity	S
50.	Guide development and encourage the conservation and management of koala habitat through land use planning and other appropriate measures	M

Appendix B – Glossary and Acronyms

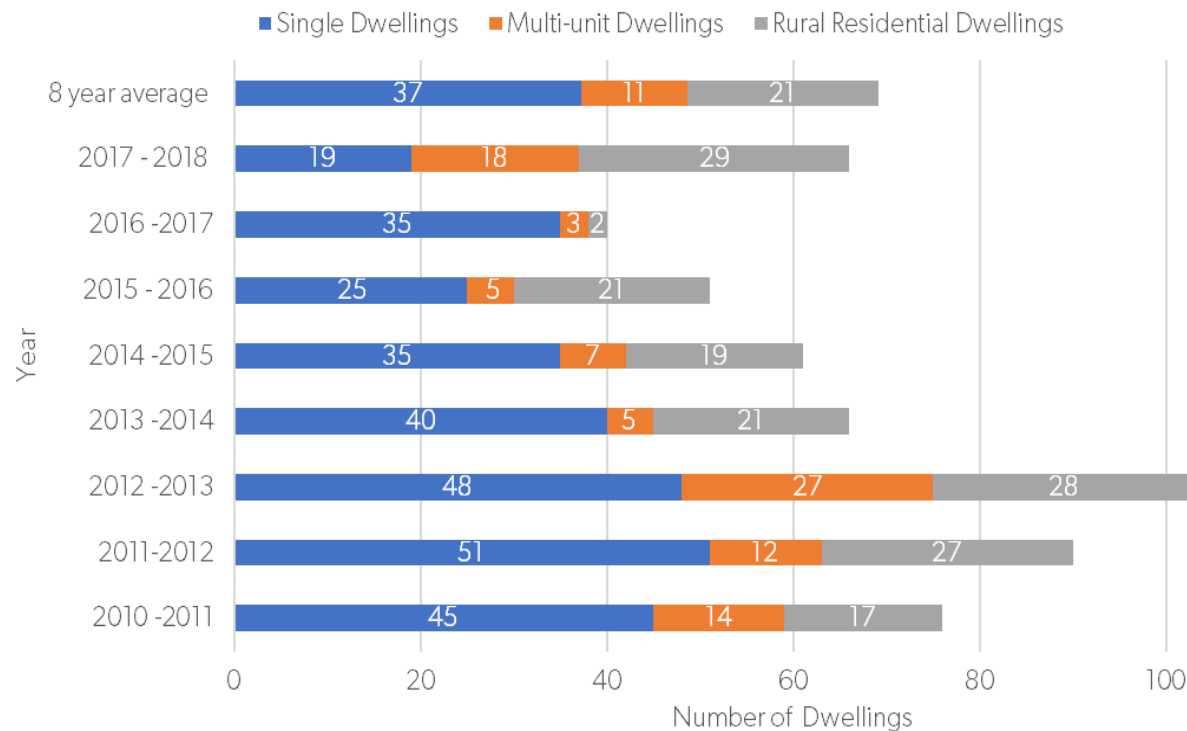
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Biodiversity	The variety of all life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems of which they form a part
Climate change	A change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/ or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer (Garnaut Review, 2008)
CBD	Central Business District
CSP	Community Strategic Plan - A plan that articulates the long-term vision for the Gunnedah Shire
DCP	Development Control Plan- Provides detailed planning and design guidelines for development in the Gunnedah Shire
Development contribution	A contribution made by a developer towards the infrastructure needed to support the development
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DPI&E	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
EP&A	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
Employment lands	Employment lands has the same definition as the New England North West Regional Plan, 2036 and includes land zoned IN1 General Industrial, IN3 Heavy Industry and B5 Business Development under the Gunnedah Local Environmental Plan 2012
Greenfield	Undeveloped land identified for residential or industrial/commercial development
Infill	Development of unused or under-utilised land in existing urban areas. Most infill development sites are in centres such as Gunnedah, offering the possibility of better utilising existing infrastructure to accommodate population growth
IP&R	Integrated Planning and Reporting
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area - Refers to the land that encompasses the Shire of Gunnedah
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement - 20-year plan setting out Council's land use and infrastructure planning vision and priorities for the Shire.
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
Renewable energy	Energy that comes from resources which are naturally replenished on a human timescale such as sunlight, wind, rain and geothermal heat.
Resilience	Resilience is the capacity of the Gunnedah Shire to adapt and thrive in the face of challenges. This includes environmental challenges (such as heatwaves or floods) and non-environmental challenges (such as pandemics or economic crises).

Appendix C – Residential Land in the Gunnedah Shire

Residential Land

The following information has been provided through the New England North West Housing and Land Monitor. Single dwellings and rural residential dwellings in the Shire are the most population form of housing. Gunnedah Shire has over 2,000 hectares of zoned residential and rural residential land. However, it is unknown how much of this land is vacant.

Figure 4 Approved Housing from 2010 to 2018



Appendix D – Employment Land in the Gunnedah Shire

Employment Land

Existing Employment Land Supply

Gunnedah Shire currently has over 265 hectares of available industrial land (refer to Figure 5) *Gunnedah Urban Land Use Review: Industrial Development Strategy* was developed in 2016. This strategy stated that the current vacant employment land is being used for a variety of purposes including rural activities (e.g. grazing), rural residential and storage purposes. There are six main locations where employment land is available being the following:

- Warranuna Industrial Estate, zoned IN1 General Industrial located on the south-west edge of Gunnedah
- Black Jack Road Industrial Precinct, located west of Warranuna Industrial Estate, zoned IN1 General Industrial approximately 2km west of Gunnedah
- North Gunnedah Industrial Estate, zoned IN1 General Industrial located on the north-west of Gunnedah, north of Ross Road
- Quia Road Industrial Precinct, zoned IN3 Heavy Industry, located approximately 2km west of Gunnedah
- Railway Ave Industrial area, zoned IN1 General Industrial located next to the town centre
- North of Railway Ave – zoned B5 Business Development

Figure 5 Employment Land Availability from 2010 to 2017

