



Warrumbungle Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement

Acknowledgement of Country

In preparation of this statement, Council acknowledges the traditional lands of the Gamilararray, Wiradjuri and Weilwan people, and pay our respect to elders both past, present and emerging.



Sandstone formation near Uarbry – Courtesy of Warrumbungle Shire Council

Foreword

Mayoral Message

The Warrumbungle Shire has released their Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). This plan has been developed after extensive research and community consultation throughout the Shire area.

The plan identifies the main priorities and aspirations for future land use within the Local Government Area (LGA) and establishes objectives and strategies to achieve those objectives. These objectives address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues as identified by the Warrumbungle Shire Community Strategic Plan (CPS).

Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the CSP on behalf of the local government area. The LSPS is a document that fully administers its ability to identify land use initiatives which one day will formulate policies in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Other partners, such as state agencies and community groups may also be engaged in the long-term objectives of the LSPS.

From this high level document, objectives, strategies and actions will flow through for the delivery in the next LEP review which will streamline the process. The Warrumbungle Shire community now has the opportunity to see how Council is planning well ahead of time enabling the future needs of the Shire.

Community consultation is an important part of any process and especially the LSPS document, will give a greater insight into the future growth and development of Warrumbungle Shire Council area.

Achieving our vision for the future is dependant on working together. The work that will go into achieving the strategies and goals in the LSPS will be extensive and require the cooperation and commitment of many sectors including government, business and the local community. This plan belongs to the people of the Warrumbungle Shire. We encourage you to help us achieve your vision.

Denis Todd

Mayor Warrumbungle Shire Council



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Local Strategic Planning Statement - Policy Context

This Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets the framework for Warrumbungle Shire's economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years. It outlines clear planning priorities describing what will be needed, where these are located and when they will be delivered. The LSPS sets short, medium and long-term actions to deliver the priorities for the community's vision.

This LSPS has been prepared in accordance with clause 3.9 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). The LSPS brings together and builds on the planning work found in Council's other plans, studies and strategies, such as the Local Environmental Plan (LEP), Development Control Plan (DCP) and Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The LSPS will be used to update key components of these plans to present a consistent strategic direction for Warrumbungle.

The LSPS gives effect to the *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036*, implementing the directions and actions at a local level. As an integrative local plan, it is also informed by a number of the NSW Premiers Priorities, the Regional Development Framework and the *Destination Country and Outback NSW Management Plan 2018-2020*, amongst others.

The LSPS has also taken account of land use planning in adjacent Orana Councils, including Bogan, Coonamble, Narromine, Warren and Warrumbungle. It also works with Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), which has a similar but broader purpose as to how Council will work to meet the community's needs. The LSPS planning priorities, directions and actions provide the rationale for decisions about how we will use our land to achieve the community's broader goals.



Warrumbungle Shire Connecting Regional Priorities and Plans

The *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* sets a 20-year vision for the Central West and Orana Region, which is to be the most diverse regional economy in NSW with a vibrant network of centres leveraging the opportunities of being at the heart of NSW.

The Central West and Orana Regional Plan outlines a number of Directions to achieve this vision and Warrumbungle has a major role to play in successfully achieving this vision.

Warrumbungle Shire Council has collaborated with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to agree which directions and actions of the Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036 are relevant to each planning priority in this LSPS. Each strategic priority gives effect to one or more directions in the Central West and Orana Regional Plan.

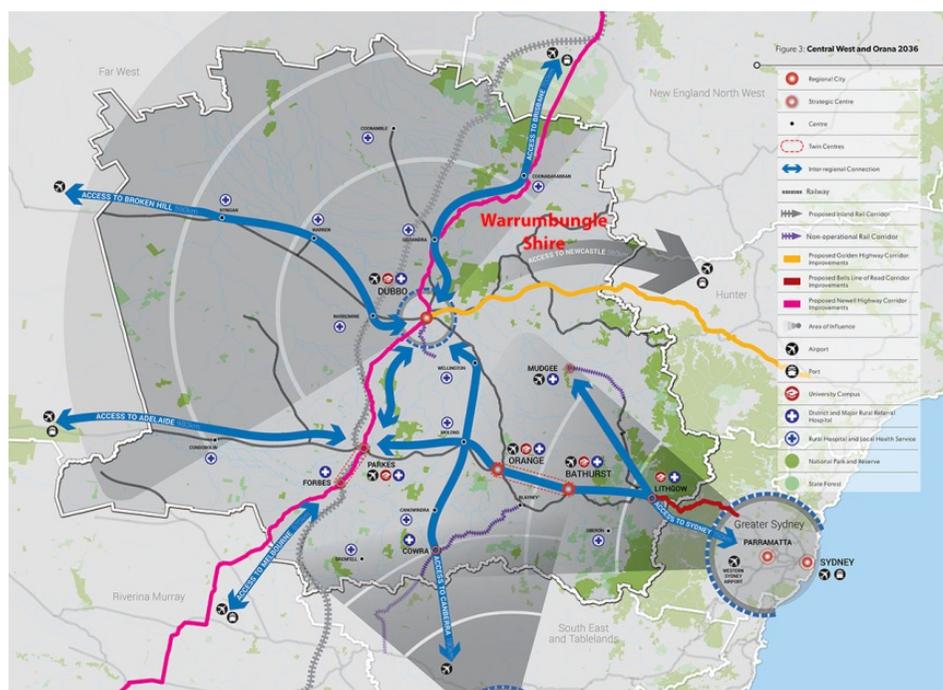


Figure 1: Central West and Orana Region 2036, courtesy of NSW Planning & Environment Central West and Orana Regional Plan

Our Unique Shire

A Snapshot

The Warrumbungle Shire is strategically positioned on the Newell Highway mid-way between Brisbane and Melbourne. A number of highways and main roads traverse the shire providing links with surrounding regional centres.

The landscape ranges from extensive plains to undulating hills, from the high basaltic plateau of the Coolah Tops in the east to the rugged mountainous peaks of extinct volcanoes in the Warrumbungle National Park, west of Coonabarabran.

The Warrumbungle Shire's mountainous terrain of the Great Divide gives way to rolling hills then the inland plains. The wide open plains and mountainous terrains are home to a large variety of animal and plant species. A striking example of this is on the eastern boundary of the Shire we have the eastern grey kangaroo and on the western boundary of the Shire the red kangaroo.

The Shire is also a meeting place for the nations of our traditional owners and custodian of the land. The northern part of the Shire is home to the Gamilaraay people while the southern part of the Shire is home to the Wiradjuri people. Also the nations of the Weilwan come into the Shire on the western border. The history, traditions and culture are being recognised as an important part of the Shire's history.

The stunning night skies, formed by a combination of low pollution, very low humidity and limited cloud cover have drawn astronomers and researchers to Coonabarabran in their search for what lies beyond the confines of the visual night sky.

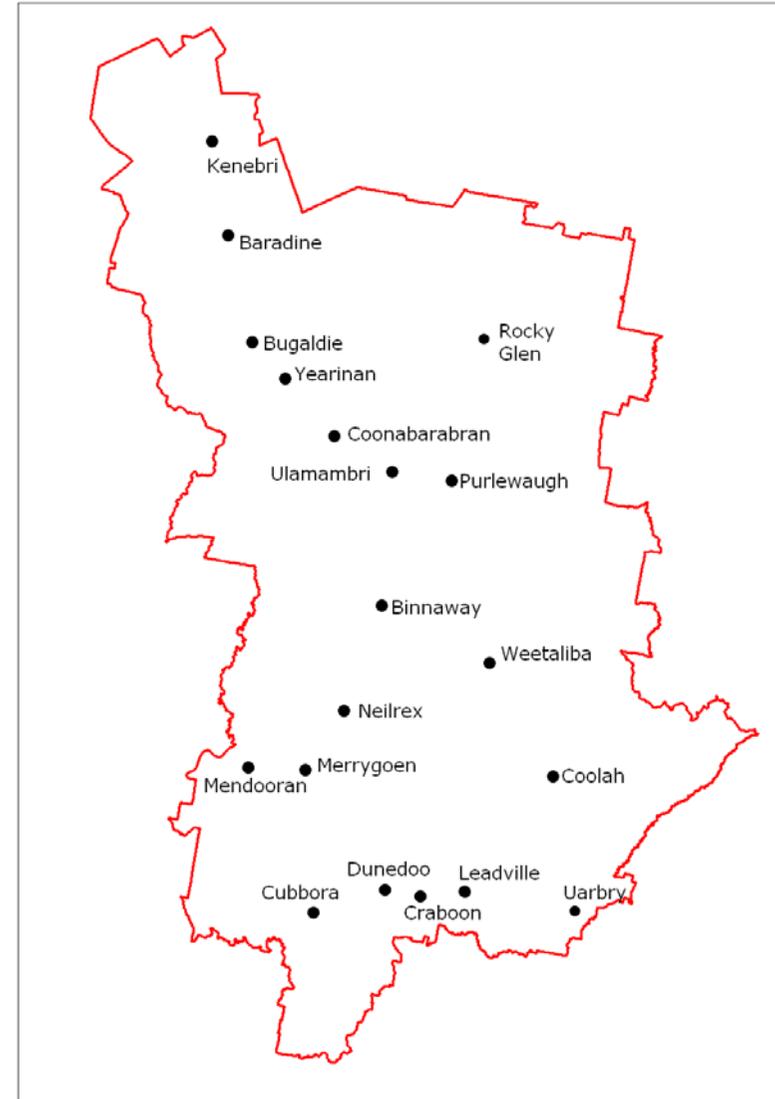


Figure 2 – Warrumbungle Shire area map

Siding Spring Observatory, located 25kms from Coonabarabran is the site of a number of internationally owned and operated optical telescopes where major research has recorded amazing truths of the universe, supporting Coonabarabran's claim to the name "Astronomy Capital of Australia".

The major towns of the Shire comprise of Coonabarabran, Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Dunedoo and Mendooran with many villages in between; all provide wonderful opportunities to experience real country Australian lifestyles.

The Shire was traditionally built on agricultural pursuits with the early establishment of wool growing and beef cattle production followed by cereal cropping and horticulture.

The communities enjoy the services of quality schools and health services. The Shire boasts a broad range of cultural, sporting and recreational activities.

Retailing, engineering works and rural supplies in each centre provide services to those communities and the regional centres of Tamworth and Dubbo, located within 2 hours of the centre of the Shire complement local level services.

Community, Place and People

The Shire covers an area of 12,380 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 9,500 (2016) people.

The towns and villages of the Shire comprise Coolah, Baradine, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo, Binnaway and Mendooran; all provide wonderful opportunities to experience real country Australian lifestyles. Each of the communities has their own special claim to fame. The Black Stump, a Steam Rail Village, The Oldest Town on the Castlereagh, The Gateway to the Mighty Pilliga and the Astronomy Capital of Australia – each of our towns and villages reflects the personalities of its residents and the lifestyles. The communities enjoy the services of quality schools and health services. The shire boasts a broad range of cultural, sporting and recreational activities.

Coolah



Coolah, home of the original 'Black Stump', is located just three and a half hours (278km) away from Newcastle and is the gateway to Coolah Tops National Park. Coolah is situated on the picturesque Coolaburragundy River and nestled in a valley of the Liverpool Range. The town is surrounded by undulating hills and fertile river flats and is an attractive service town for the surrounding agricultural district.

Baradine



Baradine, gateway to the vast and intriguing forest of the Pilliga, is located 45 kilometres north west of Coonabarabran. Local inhabitants of The Pilliga include koalas, kangaroos, possums, emus, echidnas, goannas and a species of mouse unique to The Pilliga, the Pilliga Mouse. While in Baradine the Pilliga Forest Discovery Centre is a must see, along with the weather-worn caves, and scenic forest drives.

Coonabarabran



Coonabarabran, known as the 'Astronomy Capital of Australia', is located midway between Melbourne and Brisbane, within two hours drive of the regional centres of Dubbo and Tamworth. Coonabarabran is the gateway to Warrumbungle National Park being one of Australia's only Dark Sky Park. Coonabarabran has one of the darkest skies in Australia and is the home of Australia's largest optical astronomy research facility, Siding Spring Observatory.

Dunedoo



Dunedoo is located 91 kilometres east of Dubbo. The town is located at the junction of the Golden Highway and Castlereagh Highway, and is the southern gateway to the Warrumbungle Region. The town is known for its love of art, poetry and attractive rural lifestyle.

Binnaway



Binnaway is located on the banks of the Castlereagh River and is within half an hour's drive from Coonabarabran and Coolah along the Warrumbungles Way. The town offers a pleasant countryside detour, a quaint pub and nature trails.

Mendooran



Mendooran resembles an open-air art gallery with over 10 colourful murals reflecting scenes from local history and rural life. Mendooran is known as the Oldest Town on the Castlereagh River.

Above Photos: courtesy of Warrumbungle Shire Council

Our History and Settlement

The Warrumbungle Shire Council was formed in 2004 by the amalgamation of the former Coolah and Coonabarabran Shire Councils. Warrumbungle is a Kamilaroi (also written Gamilaraay) word meaning crooked mountain, and for many thousands of years it has been a spiritual place for the custodians of this land. The land known as the Warrumbungle Shire converges three Indigenous language groups, the Gamilaraay to the northeast, the Wiradjuri to the south, and the Wayilwab to the west. Indigenous tribes are said to have occupied the lands of the Warrumbungles Ranges for up 17,000 years and lands east of Coonabarabran for up to 25,000 years. The Shire is rich in Aboriginal history and the backdrop of ridgelines, ranges and plains is interwoven with dreamtime legends.

The Coolah Tops and Warrumbungle National Park are known for their distinctive scenic beauty, rich biodiversity and geological value.



Split Rock near Dunedoo, courtesy of Warrumbungle Shire Council

The Shire's Economy

Warrumbungle Shire is primarily dependent on agriculture. The Shire's Gross Regional Product (GRP) is estimated at \$452.349 Million, equating to 5.59% of the Orana Region GRP and 0.08% of the NSW Gross State Product. GRP per capita is \$48,118 which is lower than the Regional average of \$68,095 with GRP per worker being \$145,222M which is also lower than the Regional average of \$161,926. From 2012 to 2016 the Shire achieved year-on-year growth in the GRP, with GRP decreasing in 2017, primarily due to the drought.

The total output (gross revenue) generated by the Shire economy is estimated at \$810.638M (5.04% of the Orana Region). The sectors with the highest output are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (\$260.235M); Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (\$92.938M); Construction (\$64.477M) and Public Administration and Safety (\$50.328M). The total value-add by the Shire's economy is estimated at \$405.496M (5.43% of value-added in the Orana Region), with the value of goods and services exported from the Shire being \$329.968M (5.6% of the value of exports from the Orana Region).

The Agricultural sector is the major employer (900 jobs), followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (412 jobs) and Education and Training (412 jobs). From 2011 to 2016, employment increased in the Construction (57 additional jobs), Agriculture (56), Education and Training (49), Public Administration and Safety (39), Health Care and Social Assistance (38), Administration and Support (31) and Transport, Postal and Warehousing (22) sectors, with employment in other sectors declining. In March 2018, the unemployment rate in the Shire was 3.7%, which was lower than the Orana Region at 4.3%. There were 160 people in the Shire seeking work.

At June 2017, there were 1003 businesses in the Shire. Small businesses dominate with 63.6% of businesses being non-employed, 27.5% employed 1 to 4 people, with 8.1% employing 5 to 19 people and 0.8% employing 20 to 199 staff.

Industries within the Shire can be broadly divided into:

- Engines – industries that bring money into the Shire and drive the local economy
- Enabling – industries that support the engines (e.g. transport)
- Population serving – industries that support the local population (e.g. retail)

To foster economic development, it is important to focus on the engine sectors that drive growth, and the enabling industries that support these. The fortunes of the population serving industries depend primarily on the success of the engine industries.

The primary engine industries in Warrumbungle Shire are agriculture and tourism. Other activities that bring money into the Shire include the Education and Training and Public Administration and Safety sectors. The Education and Training sector includes Siding Spring Observatory which is owned and operated by the Canberra-based, Australian National University.

Output
\$810.638M

GRP
\$451.349M

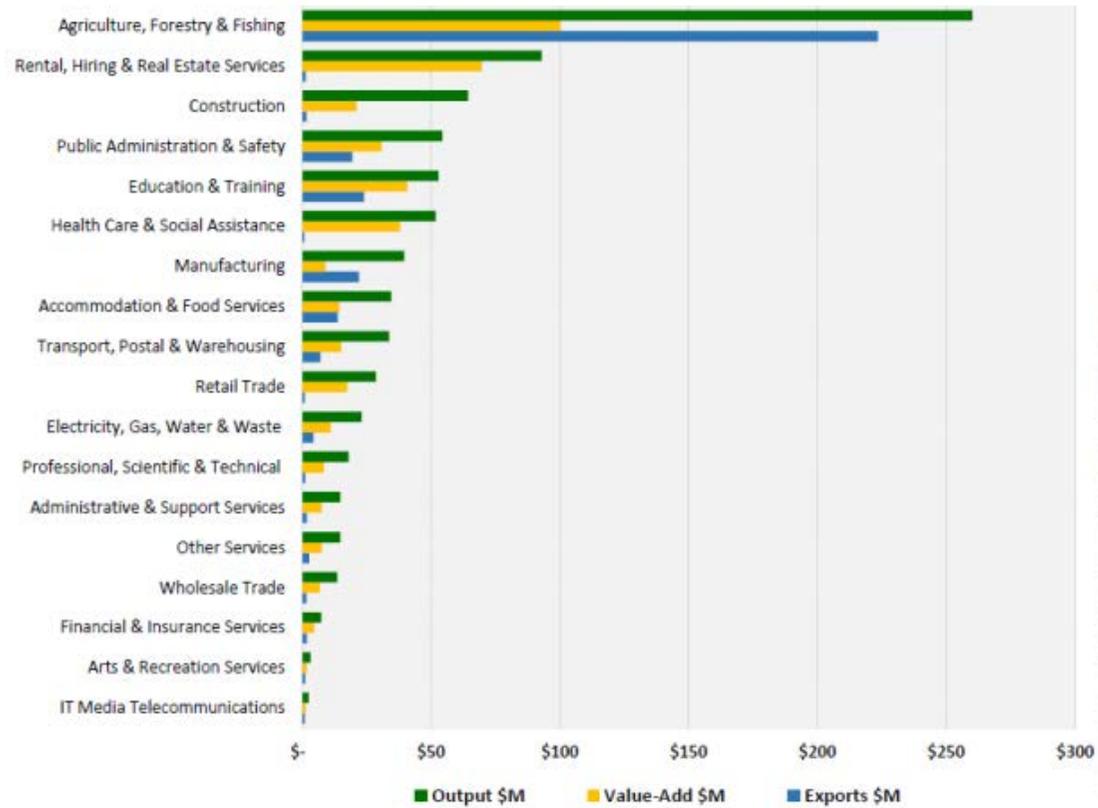
Value Added
\$405.496M

Value Exports
\$329.968M

Businesses
1,003

Jobs
3,108 people

Unemployment
3.7%
160 people
seeking work



MAJOR EMPLOYERS
Warrumbungle Shire Council
Woolworths Supermarket
Cooinda Coonabarabran
Siding Spring Observatory
Western NSW Health
NSW Department of Education



Figure 3 - Performance (Output, Value Add, Export) by Industry Section – Warrumbungle Shire,
courtesy of Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

Dark Sky

The Dark Sky Region in NSW is centred upon the site of Australia's most important visible-light Observatory at Siding Spring, located on the edge of the Warrumbungle National Park. The Observatory has over twenty telescopes and is one of few in the world that can observe the whole southern-hemisphere sky. It is critical to our understanding of the universe and the scientific endeavours of Australian and International astronomers. Its continued operation is dependent on the dark night sky being free from light pollution. Light associated with development in the Dark Sky Region has the potential to reduce the ability of the optical telescopes to engage in scientific investigation and, therefore, impact on the future of the Observatory. On 4 July 2016, the park was the first within Australia to be certified as a Dark Sky Park by the [International Dark Sky Association](#).



Siding Spring Observatory, courtesy of Siding Spring Observatory

Agriculture

Agriculture (including Forestry) is the main economic activity and primary driver of the Shire's economy. Agriculture accounts for 32.1% (\$260.235M) of the output from the Shire, 24.7% (\$100.191M) of the value add and 67.7% (\$223.55M) of the Shire's exports. 53.7% (539) of registered businesses and 29.0% of jobs (900) are in the agricultural sector. In June 2017, 67% of agricultural businesses were non-employing, with 24.5% employing 1-4 people, 7.8% employing 5-19 people and 1.5% employing 20-199 staff.

The agricultural sector impacts directly on the performance of the transport, rental-hire-real estate, retail, wholesale, construction, financial, manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical services sectors.

In 2016, around 45.7% of the land area of the Shire was in agricultural production, with 86.8% of this land used for livestock production (primarily grazing) and 13.2% for cropping. The gross value of production was \$153.761M, with livestock production accounting for 68.1% (\$104.724M) of the value of production and cropping 31.9% of the value (\$49.037M).

Cattle production (\$78.36M) dominates, accounting for 51% of the total value of production and 74.8% of the value of livestock production. There is increasing specialisation in cattle production. Sheep generated \$23.99M (15.6% of the total value of production) with \$10.08M coming from meat and \$13.91M from wool. The Shire also has piggeries (\$2.0M) as well as small scale goat, dairy and poultry production, abattoirs, horse studs and honey producers.

Cereal crops (wheat, oats, barley, triticale and sorghum) are the primary income earner (61.6% of gross value of crop production), followed by pulses (20.0%), hay and pasture seed (8.9%), oilseeds (6.7%), dryland cotton (1.7%) and horticulture / viticulture (1.1%).

Most of the grain produced in the Shire is exported, going primarily by road to receival sites in the surrounding regions or direct to the Port of Newcastle. Some of the grain also goes to feedlots in Liverpool Plains Shire and the Dubbo area and to mills and feed-mills in the surrounding regions. Baradine is the only active grain receival site still operating in the Shire, but is limited in the grain that it can receive. Some pulses are transported to Narrabri and Narromine for containerisation for export, with oilseeds going to Newcastle, Narrabri and Manildra for crushing and processing. Bilby Blooms is the main horticultural producer, producing native plants (wholesale nursery) and cut flowers. There are also several native seed collectors and a native seed distributor. Other niche activities include Mannin Grove Olives and poppy production for medicinal purposes.



Value-adding to agricultural produce is limited and includes the Bypass stock feedmill in Baradine and the Black Gate Distillery at Mendooran. The Abattoir on Warrumbungle Way midway between Coonabarabran and Binnaway, which closed in 2016, has now been reopened and provides meat to Local and Regional suppliers.

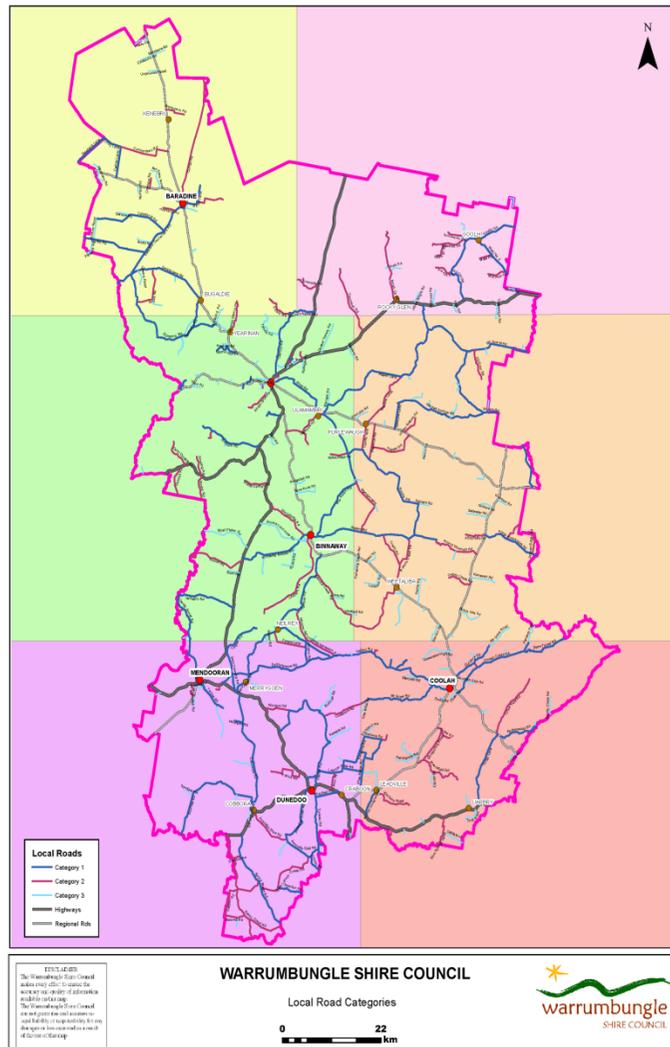
Several of the Shire's producers are participating in the Regional Platters program, which is a paddock to plate initiative that is helping to raise the profile of the Region's produce.

Warrumbungle Shire has a range of services to support the agricultural sector including agronomists, rural suppliers, stock and station agents, transport / freight operators, farm contractors, earth-moving contractors, fencers, feral animal control, shearers, harvesters, wool classers and brokers, seed cleaners, and vets, as well as engineers / fabricators and financial and legal services. Many of the agricultural service providers are in the rental, hiring and real estate services sector, which in terms of output, is the second largest economic sector in the Shire.



Castlereagh River, courtesy of Warrumbungle Shire Council

Transport Infrastructure



Roads – With the closure of the Gwabegar rail line to the north west of Binnaway, and most of the grain receival sites, there has been a significant increase in the use of road transport. This has increased costs for producers and impacted on the Shire maintained and funded road network. Grains and pulses are being transported to bulk receival sites in Gilgandra, Liverpool Plains, Narrabri and Gunnedah Shires; direct to the Port of Newcastle; to intermodal terminals in Narrabri and Narromine; to mills and feedmills in Dubbo, Gunnedah and Tamworth; and to feedlots in Liverpool Plains Shire and the Dubbo area. Livestock is primarily going to saleyards in Gunnedah, Tamworth, Mudgee, Dunedoo and Dubbo; to feedlots in the Liverpool Plains and Upper Hunter; and to processing plants in Dubbo, Tamworth and the Hunter Valley.

Freight Transport within Warrumbungle Local Government Area Council has worked with other Councils in the Orana JO to identify roads that make up a Regional Freight Network. Roads within Warrumbungle LGA that are included in this RFN include; Purlewaugh Road, Black Stump Way, Baradine Road, Gwabegar Road, Forest Road and Tooraweenah Road. The State Roads within Warrumbungle that is, Newell Highway, Golden Highway, Castlereagh Highway & Mendooran Road are also included in the RFN.

Access to all of these roads by General Mass Limits (GML) B Double trucks is permitted. Access by GML AB Triple trucks and Road Trains to the Newell Highway is permitted. B Double trucks with Higher Mass Limits (HML) are permitted on the Newell Highway, Purlewaugh Road and Black Stump Way. Some local roads that connect to Baradine Silo are accessible by GML Road Train trucks.

The freight task will continue to grow, which means that the number of trucks on the RFN will continue to grow. So the configuration of trucks will continue to evolve and the demand for access to the RFN by larger more productive trucks will also increase.

There is particular demand to upgrade Baradine Road, Black Stump Way, Tooraweenah Road to allow access by higher productivity vehicles.

Figure 4 – Local Road Categories for the Warrumbungle Shire

Also, there is demand to upgrade the Newell Highway particularly around Coonabarabran to improve freight travel times and to improve road safety. To this end TfNSW are currently in the planning and design stage of highway bypass of Coonabarabran.

The Golden Highway passes through Dunedoo and provides an east west connection between Newcastle and Dubbo. Currently accessible by B Double trucks, TfNSW recognises the strategic importance of the Golden Highway in providing freight access to ports in Newcastle and to markets in Sydney. Road upgrade projects are currently taking place on the Golden Highway to enable higher productivity trucks access to the Golden Highway

Black Stump Way and the Baradine and Purlewaugh Roads need to be improved to cater for the increasing volume of freight and touring traffic.

Drive touring (which includes the touring caravan and RV markets) is increasing, with both Destination NSW and the Country and Outback Destination Network looking to significantly grow this market within the Country and Outback Region. From a tourism perspective, the key roads are the highways and regional roads that feed into the Shire, the regional roads (Warrumbungles Way, Mendooran Road and Baradine-Gwabegar Road) that connect the towns (providing off-highway touring routes), and the access roads to key attractions – Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks, Siding Spring Observatory, Pilliga Forest and Pilliga Pottery.

Aerodromes – Warrumbungle Shire Council maintains aerodromes at Coonabarabran, Coolah and Baradine. The Coonabarabran Aerodrome has a sealed runway and is licenced for general aviation. It is used for charter flights, recreational flying, Air Ambulance, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and agricultural support services. The Coolah and Baradine strips are primarily used by the RFS and other emergency services. There is opportunity to use the Coonabarabran Aerodrome for charter flights for high-yield tour groups visiting Siding Spring Observatory.

Cycle – Warrumbungle Shire Council is progressively developing cycleway networks in the each of the towns. These networks will facilitate use of bicycles and enhance the lifestyle and liveability of the towns. Both cycle tourism (visiting a location specifically to ride or to participate in a cycle event) and the number of caravanners and RV's travelling with cycles is increasing, with visitors looking for attractive, safe places for people to ride. Rail trails adapted for riders, would be ideal for these markets. A safe cycleway linking Coonabarabran with the Warrumbungle National Park would also prove popular. They may be opportunities for mountain bike trails in parts of the Pilliga Forest and the Warrumbungle and/or Coolah Tops National Parks.

Rail - The operating rail infrastructure in Warrumbungle Shire is part of the National Rail Freight Network, with this infrastructure being progressively upgraded. The Gwabegar line between Binnaway and Gwabegar and the Coolah Branch line (Coolah to Craboon) are closed and it has been suggested that sections of these corridors could be suitable for rail trails. The proposed Inland Rail connecting Melbourne to Brisbane will traverse across 42kms of the LGA in close proximity to Baradine. With the grain receival site at Baradine still operational, and the potential to export logs and timber from the Pilliga Forest, there may be potential to utilise the Inland Rail to gain better access to markets. (see figure 5).

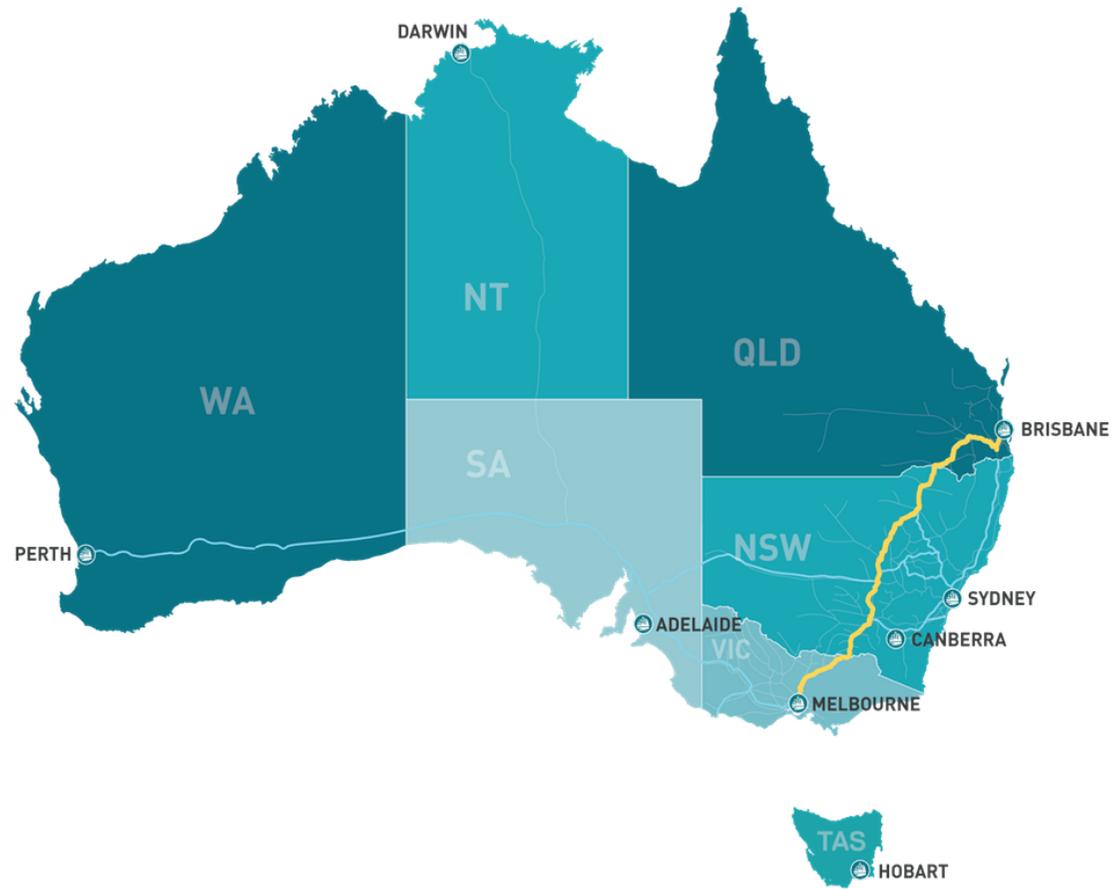


Figure 5. Inland Rail Melbourne to Brisbane,
Courtesy of ARTC

Other Facilities and Services

Facilities and services to support the Shire community and facilitate economic growth include:

- **Education and Training** – Coonabarabran has a public High School and Primary School, with the smaller towns each having a Central School (K-12). Catholic Primary Schools are located in Coonabarabran, Coolah, Baradine and Dunedoo.. The Coonabarabran and Dunedoo TAFE are connected learning centres providing access to a range of TAFE courses.
- **Child Care** – Long day, pre-school, out-of-school-hours care and family day care are available in Coonabarabran, with pre-schools in each of the smaller towns, and family day care in Coolah and Dunedoo.
- **Health Services** – There is a district hospital in Coonabarabran and Multi-Purpose Health Centres in Baradine Coolah and Dunedoo. Coonabarabran also has two medical centres, two dental services and several allied health practitioners. Coolah, Dunedoo and Baradine each have medical services with resident doctors, with Mendooran having a visiting doctor. Binnaway is seeking to attract a doctor. Like most rural LGAs, Warrumbungle Shire struggles to attract and retain doctors, registered nurses and other health professionals.
- **Aged Care** – Coonabarabran has a large aged-care complex with self-care units, hostel and nursing home facilities. Nursing home beds are available as part of the Multi-purpose Health Centres in Baradine, Coolah and Dunedoo. There are facilities and services available to support aging-in-place. Baradine and Coolah have identified a need for self-care units, with Dunedoo needing additional nursing home beds.
- **Library Services** – Warrumbungle Shire is a member of the Macquarie Regional Library and operates libraries in each of the towns.
- **Business Services** – including post offices, accountants, banks and financial services, IT support and legal services. Baradine has a Rural Transaction Centre.
- **Supermarkets** – Coonabarabran has a Woolworths Supermarket and a IGA Supermarket. Coolah has an IGA supermarket; smaller supermarkets are located in Binnaway (Friendly Grocer), Dunedoo (Spar) and Baradine (IGA).
- **Construction, engineering and automotive** services are located in each of the towns.

- **Recreation and sporting facilities and Sporting Clubs** – playing fields/ovals, netball courts, swimming pools, golf courses, showgrounds and horse sport facilities, lawn bowls, tennis, are located in each of the towns with fitness gyms in Coonabarabran and Coolah, an indoor sports centre in Coonabarabran and skate parks in most communities.
- **Creative and performing arts** – the Shire has a range of creative and performing arts groups.
- **Clubs, hotels restaurants and eateries** – registered clubs and/or hotels in each of the towns and cafes in the larger towns and at Tibuc Gardens, Siding Spring Observatory and Pilliga Pottery.
- **Visitor Centres** – a Visitor Information Centre at Coonabarabran (Level 1 accredited), and information outlet in Coolah (Pandora's Gallery) and National Park Visitor Centres at Baradine and in the Warrumbungle National Park.
- **Accommodation** – Coonabarabran is well supplied with motel, hotel and caravan park accommodation with facilities to accommodate large groups including coach tour groups. Motel, cabin and speciality accommodation is available along Timor Road, to service the Warrumbungle National Park. Coolah and Dunedoo both have motel, caravan park, pub hotel accommodation and B&B accommodation. Baradine, Binnaway and Mendooran have pub accommodation; Camp Cypress in Baradine provides powered sites, cabins and group accommodation. Primitive camping is available on the river at Mendooran, Binnaway (where visitors can also access power), near Coolah and in the Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks and Pilliga Forest. Siding Spring Observatory has quality lodge accommodation for astronomers and pre-booked tour groups, with Barkala Farm Stay (Pilliga Pottery) providing unique farm-stay accommodation and camping sites.



Our Demography

The 2016 Census of Population and Housing provides details of the population and housing characteristics (refer to the 2016 census tables in Appendix 1).

Population Change

The Shire had a population at the 2016 Census of 9,384 people. The population of the Shire has been decreasing with a loss of population of 1,830 people from 1991 to 2016.

The population change between each of the census years shows that the population change was a loss of 450 from 1991 to 1996 then the decline decreased between 1996 and 2001, but between 2001 and 2006 the decline was 720 people. From 2006 to 2011 the decline again decreased to 267 people and from 2011 to 2016 it was less again only losing 205 people.

The following are some characteristics of the population:

- The population is made up of 50.0% females and 50.0% males.
- Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders comprise 9.8% of the population
- The median age of the population is 49
- The median family income is \$1,103 per week
- There are 2.3 people per house hold (occupancy rate)

The population pyramid shows distinct drop off of young adults. Comparisons can be made to NSW for a range of age cohorts. The census data shows that there are less babies and preschool age children, but slightly more primary and secondary school aged people. There are considerably less in the 18 – 24 year olds who move away for tertiary education or for a job elsewhere. The young workforce is also considerably less than for NSW. The parents and homebuilders are also less than the NSW average but there are more people in the 50 years and over categories.

The educational establishment attended by the resident's shows that there are slightly fewer people attending all levels of school and TAFE, however there are considerably less Shire residents attending University.

The family composition shows that nearly half of the families are comprised of couples with no children living at home, and when this is compared with the age structure they are mostly older than 50 years of age. There are fewer families with children under 15 years old as well as fewer families with children over 15.

The weekly family income shows that the Shire has more families with incomes of up to \$1,499 than NSW. Families with incomes between \$1,500 to \$4,000 or more per week are less common in the Warrumbungle Shire in comparison to the NSW average.

The dwelling structure of the Shire compared to the NSW average dwelling structure composition illustrates that there are more separate houses than medium density dwellings in the Warrumbungle Shire. There are less occupied private dwellings and more unoccupied private dwellings. In addition to this, there are more houses owned outright and less with a mortgage in the Shire in comparison to the overall NSW statistics. There are also less rented dwellings.

The residents of the Shire do not tend to move residences as frequently as the NSW average with a large number of people living at the same address as they did five years ago.

The labour force status of the residents of the Shire compared to the overall statistics for NSW in the 2016 census shows that there are less people employed full time, slightly more people employed part-full time and more people employed that work away and slightly more unemployed people although this data on unemployment is now dated.

In relation to non school education there are less people with tertiary education and more with certificate level education in the Shire compared to the NSW average.

Our Environment

Water Quality

The Warrumbungle Shire has three major catchments represented within its boundaries, the Namoi, Castlereagh and Talbragar River catchments. These catchments are controlled by the NSW Local Land Services (LLS) and the Department of Primary Industries Water. The LLS have prepared separate management plans for the area within their authority.

Water quality objectives, setting agreed environmental values and long-term goals for surface water are found in the catchment management plans.

The LLS have identified a number of issues common to the catchments that are impacted by land and water management. With respect to water these issues are:

- Declining surface water quality
- Degradation of river and wetland ecosystems
- Improving water use efficiency

Zoning of land and fragmentation of agricultural land uses may impact on these issues.

Given that the headwaters of the Castlereagh River are in Warrumbungle Shire, any impacts on the river at this point will be felt downstream. Implementation of Catchment Action Plan (CAP) Water Targets will impact on surface and groundwater system health through a reduction in suspended solids, faecal coliforms, hazardous chemicals, Blue Green Algae and maintenance of median temperatures. Catchment management targets identify the need to stabilise and manage watercourses to control sediment migration and reduce nutrient input and the impact of point source pollution.

The sustainable supply of clean water is essential for growth and development within the Shire, and it is equally important for a healthy aquatic environment. Increased extraction due to population growth and the use of basic landholder rights have the potential to severely affect downstream aquatic habitats. Proliferation of 'farm dams' within rural residential areas also has the potential to intercept a large proportion of runoff and reduce stream flows.

Climate change is recognised as an issue likely to have a detrimental effect on the quality and availability of water and should be considered when planning the location of rural residential development. Water use efficiency can be improved through the planning process by encouraging reuse of both stormwater and grey water.

Flooding

Both the former Councils provided flood maps for settlements where flooding has been recorded. Flood maps indicate that significant areas of residential land at Baradine, Coolah, Mendooran and Ulamambri are vulnerable in flood events. In these settlements, erection of buildings may not occur on flood prone or flood liable land without the consent of Council.

In NSW, the Floodplain Development Manual 2005 regulates the development of flood liable land for the purposes of section 733 of the Local Government Act 1993. The Manual indicates that responsibility for management of flood risk remains with local government. The Manual assists councils to balance the conflicting objectives of the floodplain through a risk management process.

With regards to preparation of a Local Environmental Plan, directions from state government departments (e.g. Department of Planning, Industry and Environment) have encouraged Councils to ensure their LEPs are consistent with the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual. Councils are encouraged to incorporate appropriate planning provisions of floodplain risk management plans into LEPs, DCPs and development control policies.

Both of the former councils, being Coolah and Coonabarabran controlled development in flood prone areas, identifying the areas via maps and requiring development consent for buildings within those areas.

To comply with the Floodplain Development Manual, Councils should have a procedure for assessment of applications for development within the mapped flood liable areas. This procedure is required as a component of Council's overall flood management strategy to limit Council's liability and loss in flood events.

Ecology and Threatened Species

Vegetation mapping has been a goal of NSW's State Government and now is a prime operational objective of the local land service. The available mapping and vegetation management plans should underpin guidelines for land use and development and assist with identifying opportunities and constraints of development.

Within the Warrumbungle LGA there are areas of national parks, state forests and reserves that require protection by LEP zoning. Apart from small areas of urban development the remainder of the LGA is zoned for agricultural purposes. The impacts of the clearing and ongoing management of that land have been identified by the LLS as issues within the LGA.

The issues relating to Ecology and Threatened Species are:

- Retention and completion of migration corridors for vulnerable fauna,
- Decreasing biodiversity,
- Loss of native vegetation,
- Soil and land degradation, and
- Increasing dryland salinity.

The Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage lists weed invasion, inappropriate fire regimes and predation by feral animals as posing threats to native flora and fauna.

Climate

The Warrumbungle Shire has a warm temperate climate with hot summers (average temperature range 15-32°C) and cool to cold winters (0-17°C). The average annual rainfall is 746.1mm in Coonabarabran and 613.9mm in Dunedoo, with rain occurring year-round with a summer peak. Frosts are prevalent in winter and snow falls have been recorded at Coolah Tops and in the Warrumbungle Ranges. The climate is conducive to cropping and grazing year-round.

In the past the Shire has been significantly impacted by natural hazards which include bushfires, flooding, drought and heatwaves. In 2013 the Wambelong Fire swept through the Warrumbungle National Park to the west of Coonabarabran, threatening the observatory and destroying neighboring farm land and properties. At the time it was the States most destructive bushfire in a decade with more than 55,000ha burnt. Following this in 2017 another catastrophic fire known as the Sir Ivan Fire swept through the shire and burnt approximately 55,000ha.

As a result of the impact of natural hazards in the shire, all new development in areas of bushfire and flooding are either avoided or mitigated against to ensure that people, property and the environment are not at risk. Making sure future development is built to adapt and be resilient to natural hazards and climate change is one of Council's focuses.

A Vision for Our Future – 2040

Desired Future Character

Over the next 20 years the Warrumbungle Shire will be an interconnected string of settlements, each with a unique lifestyle and good connections to Dubbo and other locations.

The population decline will be arrested and there will be higher educational opportunities for young people in the Shire.

There will be more economic diversity in each of the large towns with agriculture and tourism playing key roles in the economy.

There will also be improved infrastructure, health and community services.

We will have improved biodiversity and natural ecosystems and we will be more responsive to natural hazards such as bushfire and floods.



Statement Structure

To deliver the vision for 2040, Warrumbungle will prioritise rising up to take advantage of the regions opportunities and meet the challenges of the future to ensure that the Local Government Area (LGA) becomes the vibrant, connected, diversified and sustainable community and region it envisages to be.

Warrumbungle Shire's vision for 2040 and the opportunities and challenges it will meet along the way have been condensed into three strong themes:

- a spirited and connected community;
- a supportive future with growth and resilience; and
- a healthy environment and community

These three themes capture the way Warrumbungle Shire Council will succeed and remain dynamic into the future. The themes will be implemented through each respective planning priorities and their supporting policy positions and actions.

Planning Priorities

Each planning priority represents an outcome of the vision and identifies the planning mechanism through which these priorities will be achieved.

Many of these delivery mechanisms already exist, such as the Warrumbungle LEP and DCP.

These include:

<i>Planning Strategies/mechanisms</i>
Warrumbungle Shire LEP
Warrumbungle Shire DCP
Cobbora Land Use Planning Strategy
Warrumbungle Shire Community Strategic Plan

The actions under each planning priority provide the direction required to realise the spirited, connected, resilient and environmentally healthy place Warrumbungle Shire will be.

<i>‘Warrumbungle is supportive of community connectivity, growth and resilience, and encourages a healthy environment and community’</i>			VISION
A Spirited and Connected Community	A Supportive Future with Growth and Resilience	A Healthy Environment and Community	THEMES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build trust between Council and community to encourage a working partnership and ensure Council is community minded 2. Deliver infrastructure and transport networks 3. Increase connectivity for all residents to telecommunication technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Interconnected settlements 5. Agricultural Lands 6. Economic development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Visitor experience 8. Identify and protect heritage, cultural and environmental values 9. Bushfires, drought and flooding in a changing climate 	Strategic Priorities
How we will achieve our strategic priorities			ACTIONS/POLICY POSITIONS
<i>Planning Strategies/Mechanisms</i>			ENABLERS

Figure 6 - Delivery platform for delivering Warrumbungle’s 2040 vision.

Structure Plan Map

Warrumbungle Shire is situated in the Orana Region, covering an area of 12,380 square kilometres, has a population of 9,384 (2016) people and a road network of over 2,200 kilometres. Its vastness adds to the uniqueness and attractiveness of this part of NSW.

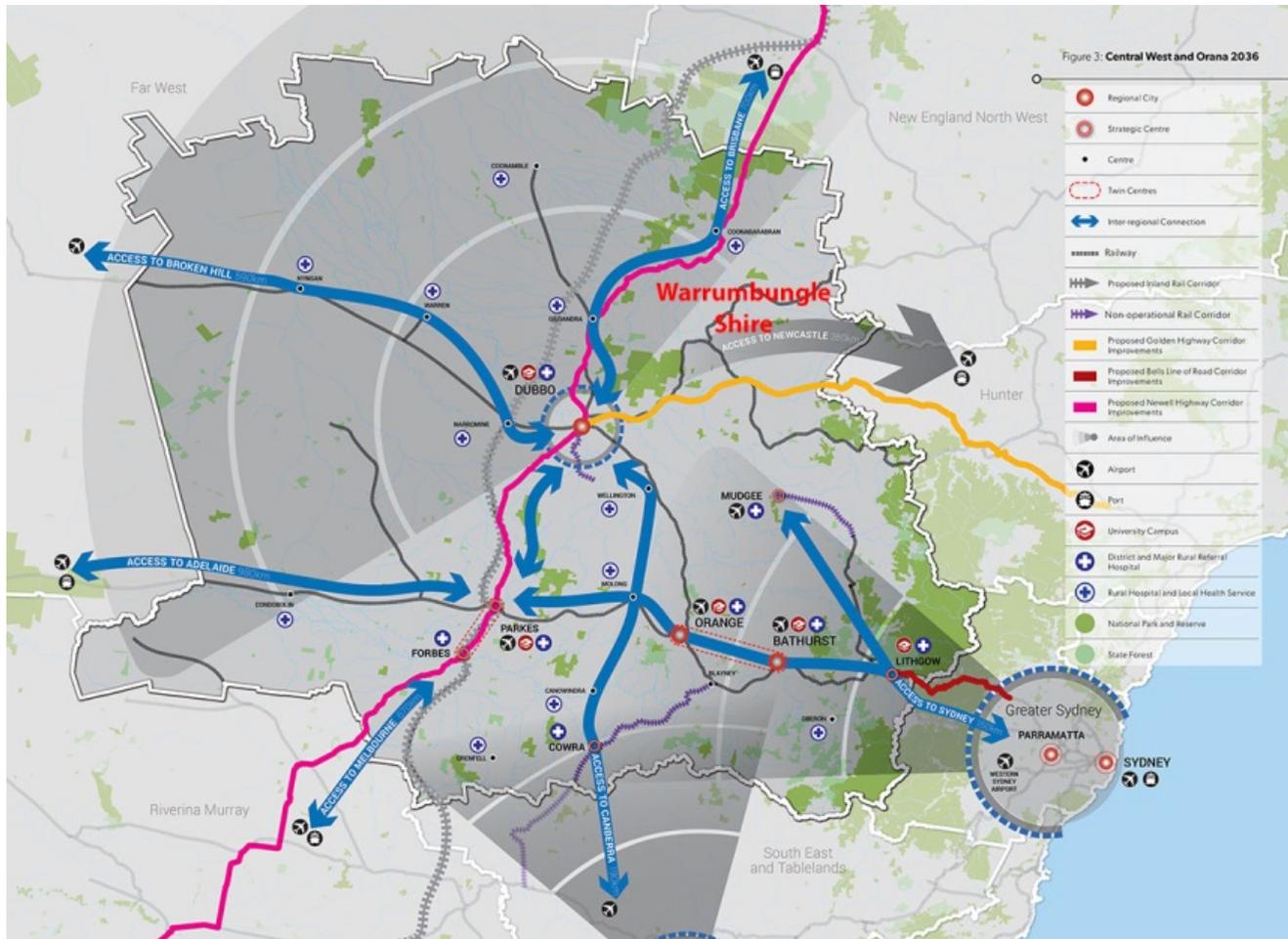


Figure 7: Central West and Orana Region 2036, courtesy of NSW Planning & Environment Central West and Orana Regional Plan

A Spirited and Connected Community

Priority 1 – Build trust between Council and community to encourage a working partnership and ensure Council is community minded

Rationale

Strengthening social cohesion and local identity between the community and Council will build a more resilient community. Catering for the needs of the local community through inclusiveness in strategic planning within the Warrumbungle shire is fundamental to ensure that our community is strong, vibrant, engaged and active.

It is essential for Council to consult, form partnerships and work together with the local Aboriginal communities on Council's future land use planning. During the preparation of the Warrumbungle's draft Local Environmental Plans Council staff will hold discussions with the local Aboriginal communities, as inclusive strategic planning builds trust and allows the indigenous community to identify cultural issues and strategic directions for the future.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Work with Aboriginal communities during the preparation of local housing strategies and Local Environmental Plans (LEP).
2. Liaise with residents and business owners of each town and village to understand their needs and priorities.
3. Actively seek opportunities and funding to upgrade and provide community facilities throughout the shire.
4. Consider the linkages between actions and priorities, for example the ways in which heritage and culture contribute to attractive and liveable places, as well as local employment and community wellbeing.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Hold discussions with the local Aboriginal community about Local Environmental Plan	Manager Planning and Regulation and Town Planner	September 2020
2. To hold facilitated workshops in each town with local development	Manager Economic Development and Tourism 6 monthly meetings	September 2020

<p>groups or progress associations to identify priorities and needs of each of those communities.</p>		
<p>3. Review and update Councils Section 7.12 development contributions plan to provide for opportunity to fund the upgrade of community facilities.</p>	<p>Manager Planning and Regulation</p>	<p>October 2020</p>

Priority 2 – Deliver infrastructure and transport networks

Rationale

Infrastructure and transport networks are critical for the current and future operation and wellbeing of the community. Although the towns and villages within the shire are not increasing significantly, it is important to ensure that quality infrastructure is provided within the shire to allow for future population increase.

It is essential to understand the capacity of the current infrastructure and transport networks and planned investments in the townships and villages within the shire. Council will conduct more detailed analysis for required critical infrastructure investments so that upgrades to water, wastewater, roads, waste and recreation facilities can be identified and be included in Council Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

In order to meet the future needs of our community Council has identified the need for the installation of reticulated sewerage supply to the villages of Binnaway and Mendooran as a priority action.

Reticulated water supply for the towns and villages in the Warrumbungle Shire will be investigated to ensure supplementary water supply is adequate and available for future expansion and times of prolonged dry periods. It is essential for Council to ensure that the infrastructure that supports water supply is sufficient and that Council's treatment plants are operating to meet the demands of the community.

In 2010 the *Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study* was prepared and released by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). This study identifies the preferred inland rail corridor that would pass near the township of Baradine; however the fine-scale alignment of the corridor has not been decided. Due to this, Council will work with the ARTC to ensure the best outcome for the Shires affected communities and hold continued discussions regarding Development Agreement for the benefit of our residents.



Coonabarabran Netball and Basketball Courts under construction

The Coonabarabran Bypass route has been decided by Transport for NSW in 2019. The fine-scale alignment of the bypass corridor has not been confirmed. Council will hold continued discussions with Transport for NSW concerning the entry and exit points from the bypass and how to prevent and/or minimise rural land fragmentation, the impacts and opportunities for the Coonabarabran CBD and affected land owners during the planning and delivery of the bypass.

The Warrumbungle Shire has a large variety of public recreational facilities within the towns and villages. Council will develop a plan to ensure that the parks, sporting facilities, pools and cycle ways in each settlement are maintained and optimised and can support the needs of potential population growth.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Provide an appropriate level of service to enable residents to access each community in the shire.
2. Council will work with the Transport for NSW to ensure transport decisions promote the best outcome for the Warrumbungle Shire communities.
3. Council will work with ARTC in relation to the Inland Rail to ensure the best outcome for the Warrumbungle Shires affected communities.
4. Require all new development to align with planned infrastructure delivery.
5. Provide an adequate delivery of water supply to the settlements currently serviced by water.
6. Investigate the provision of reticulated sewerage to Binnaway and Mendooran.
7. Ensure that each of the settlements has healthy and active communities.
8. Investigate the provision of public transport.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
4. Assess and upgrade where necessary current road network through asset management.	Director Technical Services	December 2020
5. Hold continued discussions with Transport for NSW concerning the entry and exit points from the bypass, how to prevent and/or minimise rural land fragmentation, the impacts and opportunities for the Coonabarabran CBD and affected land owners and the planning and delivery of the Coonabarabran Bypass.	Manager Planning and Regulation, Town Planner, Manager Economic Development and Tourism Director of Environment and Development Services and Director Technical Service	March 2021
6. Continue to represent Council and the Community the impact of the proposed route for the Inland Rail.	Director of Environment and Development Services	December 2022
7. Hold discussions with ARTC regarding formulation of Development Agreement for Inland Rail	Director of Environment and Development Services and Director Technical Services	December 2023
8. Assess the current water supply to each settlement that is currently serviced to meet future needs.	Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water	June 2021

<p>9. Investigate uses or needs for supplementary water supply for each settlement.</p>	<p>Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water</p>	<p>June 2021</p>
<p>10. Investigate the connection of reticulated sewer to Mendooran and Binnaway. All other settlements need to have Asset plans developed and implemented</p>	<p>Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water</p>	<p>December 2025</p>

Priority 3 – Increase connectivity for all residents to telecommunication technology

Rationale

Telecommunications infrastructure in the Shire is limited and the internet is expensive to access. There are significant ‘black spots’ in the mobile phone coverage. Coonabarabran (town only) and the Dunedoo and Coolah areas have fibre to the node access to the NBN, with the remainder of the Shire having access to the NBN via satellite. The decision not to provide the NBN to the Coonabarabran industrial area is detrimental to economic growth, rendering both the industrial estate and the businesses within the estate, less competitive to those in the surrounding region which have fixed line NBN access. The existing businesses within the estate and future businesses have to rely on slow ADSL connections or unreliable and expensive satellite services to access the internet.

For the Shire to be competitive there is a need to increase the reliability, speed and affordability of the internet and extend mobile phone coverage. This is essential to enabling the application of technology to improve farming and business productivity, accessing national and global markets and increasing access to online service and training opportunities.

Council will therefore work with the NBN and telecommunication providers to identify options for improving existing shared telecommunication services and to ensure that the areas within the shire that currently do not have access to these services are connected.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Work with the telecommunications providers to ensure that all residents have an adequate level of mobile connectivity throughout the shire.
2. Work with NBN to ensure that there is an adequate level of internet connectivity throughout the shire.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
11. Identify options to improve access to shared telecommunication and internet services.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	June 2021

A Supportive Future with Growth and Resilience

Priority 4 – Interconnected Settlements

Rationale:

The Warrumbungle Shires unique characteristic is how the population is dispersed throughout the vast rural agricultural land and in our several towns and villages. Each township in the shire accommodates for a variety of different experiences. Council will work to promote the uniqueness of each township by providing infrastructure that is different to the other towns and villages in the shire. This will encourage the local community to visit other towns within the shire to utilise different infrastructure that each town has to offer such as swimming pools, parks and cycle ways.

It is critical to understand how the towns and villages operate in order to make sure that our townships remain attractive locations for commercial, industrial and agricultural businesses. Council will support the primacy of the main street and central business district in all the towns and villages within the Shire. This will be achieved by encouraging settlement in areas where appropriate services can be provided and to ensure that the surrounding land uses will not impact on these services.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Adopt a settlement hierarchy to ensure that settlement with appropriate levels of service can grow.
2. Residential development growth will only occur in the district centre and towns shown on the settlement hierarchy map.
3. Support the primacy of the main street and central business district in all the towns within the Shire.

Actions:

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
12. Formulate and Develop a settlement hierarchy map.	Manager Planning and Regulation and Town Planner	December 2021

Priority 5 – Agricultural Lands

Rationale

Warrumbungle Shire benefits from its connections to the Newell, Golden and Oxley Highways, ideal climate conditions and soils which makes this shire the ultimate location for primary production. In order to ensure the ongoing success of this industry Council will protect important agricultural land within the shire.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are developing a regional development strategy which will identify and map the region's important agricultural land. It will identify emerging opportunities for agriculture, and guide and direct local planning for the region and NSW.

The mapping will incorporate biophysical, infrastructure and socio-economic factors. Managing potential land use conflicts surrounding the mapped important agricultural land will need to be addressed when the regional development strategy is released.

The Warrumbungle Shire Council has already taken proactive steps in managing land use conflicts and impacts on primary producers, such as including land use separation buffers from proposed dwelling houses and other residential accommodation to agricultural or rural enterprises on an adjoining property in the Warrumbungle Development Control Plan 2015 and developing the Cobbora Land Use Planning Strategy which identifies the agricultural industries that would be most suited to the land that was previously purchased for the Cobbora Coal Mine which did not eventuate.



This planning priority reflects the Warrumbungle Shires vision to support its agricultural industry and ensure that the continuation and protection of agricultural industries is secure for the future of the shire.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Protect important agricultural land in local planning controls.
2. Support the agricultural sector and associated businesses in each locality.
3. Manage land use conflicts on agricultural land by:
4. In the case of nuisance complaints, Council will support pre-existing, lawfully operating agricultural land uses.
5. Restrict the separation of incompatible land uses surrounding agricultural land.
6. Avoid the location of incompatible land uses adjacent to agricultural production areas.

Action

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
13. On review of the Warrumbungle LEP investigate the appropriateness of the minimum lots sizes in rural zones through undertaking a strategic analysis of agricultural land and practices.	Town Planner	December 2023

Priority 6 – Economic development

Rationale

The five larger towns have general industrial areas which provide serviced industrial land. Coonabarabran has a purpose-built general industrial estate on the northern edge of town. The estate has vacant and under-utilised sites, however these sites are privately held. There are virtually no vacant sites and no factory units available for businesses looking to establish in Coonabarabran, and the absence of the NBN to the industrial area works against development. There are no factory units or sheds available for sale or lease in the smaller towns. The Warrumbungle Shire LEP permits (with consent) rural industries (including agricultural processing facilities) in rural areas.

Building the Shire's economy requires a 'whole of community' approach. Stakeholders extend well beyond Council and include businesses, industry groups, infrastructure providers, State and Federal Government Agencies, Siding Spring Observatory and regional organisations. Business development and investment will come primarily from the private sector. Warrumbungle Shire Council's will focus on providing a positive economic environment by reviewing the Warrumbungle Local Environmental Plan 2013 for opportunities to encourage business across rural and residential zones where it can blend with existing character and investigate the practicalities of providing additional industrial zoning where appropriate. Council will also investigate the potential impact of the Coonabarabran Bypass on the CBD to ensure that the development does not impact on Coonabarabran's local economy.

In addition to this, Council has recently adopted and is implementing an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy that focuses on innovative and knowledge jobs, and leveraging the agricultural and tourism sector throughout the shire.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Encourage economic growth by supporting agriculture and other emerging industries such as value-add manufacturing and freight-related opportunities.
2. Investigate opportunities for the expansion of existing and new industrial precincts in our townships that do not impact on residents.
3. Protect and recognise existing industrial precincts and uses to avoid land use conflicts from future residential development.
4. Encourage the co-location of complementary industry alongside agricultural enterprises that enhance the efficiency of the agricultural land use.
5. Seek to better understand local business needs and identify challenges and opportunities.
6. Review policies that impact on local businesses.
7. Investigate opportunities for employment land.
8. Investigate management strategies for declining populations.
9. Consider the linkages between cultural, heritage and tourism, and the opportunities culture and heritage bring for economic growth.
10. Investigate the potential impact of the Coonabarabran Bypass on the CBD.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>14. On review of the Warrumbungle LEP 2013 Council will investigate the practicalities of providing additional industrial zoning where appropriate. This measure will minimise the risk of land use conflict posed by non-compatible land uses.</p>	<p>Town Planner</p>	<p>December 2023</p>
<p>15. Review the LEP for opportunities to encourage business across rural and residential zones where it can blend with existing character.</p>	<p>Town Planner</p>	<p>December 2025</p>
<p>16. Implement actions from Council's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy with focus on innovative and knowledge jobs, and leveraging the agriculture and tourism sector.</p>	<p>Manager Economic Development and Tourism</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

A Healthy Environment and Community

Priority 7 – Visitor Experience

Rationale

Although small in comparison to agriculture, the tourism sector is a significant contributor to the Shire's economy. Visitors bring 'new' dollars into the Shire, with this income being independent of the agricultural sector, generating cash flow year-round and reducing the impacts of seasonal and cyclical activities. Through marketing and promotion, and visitation, tourism helps to raise the profile of the Region and can play a part in relocation decisions.

High profile tourist attractions in the Warrumbungle Shire, include:

- Warrumbungle National Park – currently attracts over 30,000+ visitors per year, however visitation was higher (45,000+/year) prior to the media coverage of the destruction caused by the 2013 Wambelong bushfire. The Park is popular for camping, bushwalking, bird-watching and rock sports.
- Siding Spring Observatory – attracts 30,000+ visitors per year (35,500 in 2017/18).
- The internationally accredited Warrumbungle Dark Sky Park – the only Dark Sky Park in Australia.
- Pilliga Forest – with attractions including the Pilliga Forest Discovery Centre, Dandry Gorge and the Sculptures in the Scrub, Sandstone Caves, Salt Caves and the Fire Tower Lookout – the only one in NSW.
- Coolah Tops National Park.
- Pilliga Pottery – attracts 10,000+ visitors per year



Coolah Tops National Park

These attractions are supported by a range of local attractions (eg Virtual Solar System Drive, Dunedoo Woodland Learning Centre, the Warrumbungle and Milroy Observatories, Black Gate Distillery, Crystal Kingdom, Tibuc Gardens), quality events, contemporary shopping and dining and a diversity of accommodation options.

In recent years, tourism in parts of the Shire has become stagnant; however the recent declaration of the Dark Sky Park, the opening of the new Warrumbungle National Park Visitors Centre, the proposed Royal Hotel redevelopment and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in the Pilliga Forest provides opportunity to reinvigorate the industry.

In order to optimise the visitor experience to the Warrumbungle Shire, Council has prepared an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and will also prepare a CBD strategy to ensure that tourists continue to access the main CBD's within our towns and villages.

To delivery this planning priority council will:

1. Continue to promote the speculator natural resources of the Warrumbungle Shire.
2. Continue to support the Siding Spring Observatory and Dark Sky initiatives through education and implementing lighting controls on future developments.
3. Support tourism opportunities, specifically for nature-based tourism, in the Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks.

Actions:

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
17. Continue to implement Council's the Economic Tourism and Development Strategy.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	December 2023
18. Prepare a CBD strategy to ensure that tourists continue to access the CBD's in the Warrumbungle Shire.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism and Town Planner	June 2022

Priority 8 – Unique heritage, cultural and environmental values

Rationale

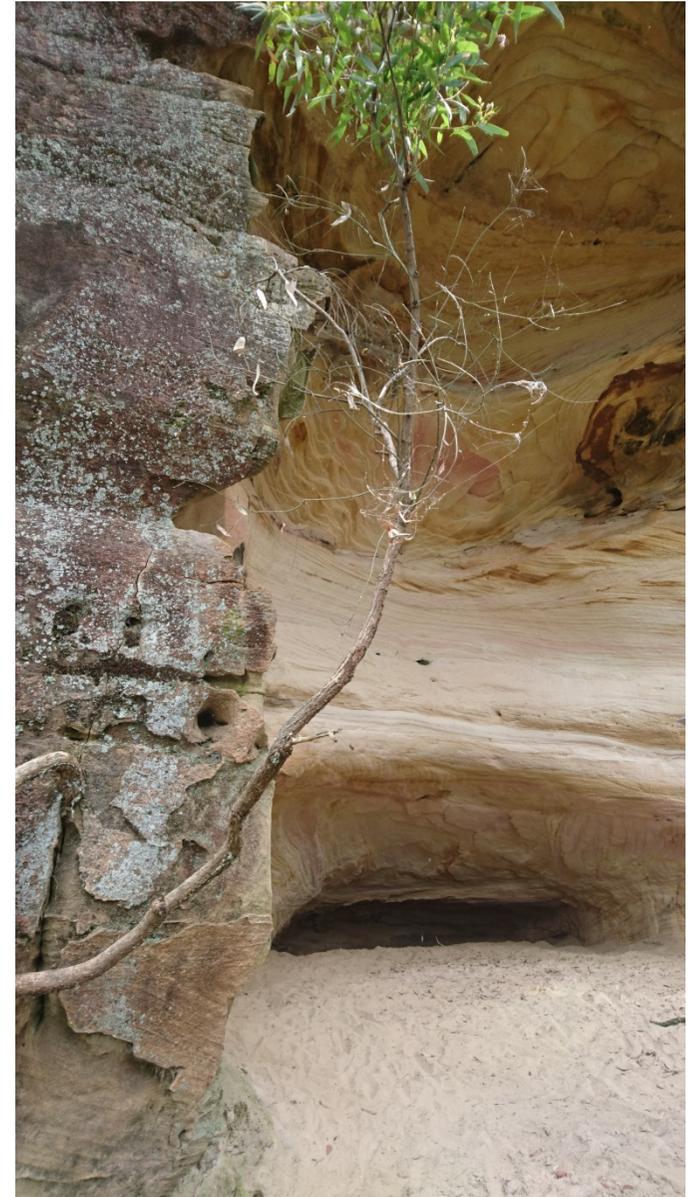
The Warrumbungle Shire has a diverse natural environment that is valued by the locals and visitors to the shire. Environmental assets in the shire include the Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks and the Pilliga Forest which provide critical ecosystems for wildlife habitat and support native flora and fauna species. The numerous national parks in the shire are a large tourist attraction and provide a great place for camping and hiking with close proximity to our local towns and villages.

Preserving the shires native flora ad fauna outside of the protected national park areas at a Council level is essential to ensure that native wildlife habitat and areas of cultural and/or European heritage are not destroyed. Reviewing Councils Development Control Plan to place controls to protect biodiversity and to prepare an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study as a priority to inform amendments to the LSPS and LEP is an important step to ensure the protection of the shires cultural and environmental values.

Warrumbungle Shire Community Based Heritage Study was adopted in 2019 which outlines the existing heritage items which are included in the Warrumbungle Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013 and proposed nominated heritage items to be included in the LEP. This study will be used to review Schedule 5 of the LEP to support the appropriate labelling and protection of heritage sites and buildings in the shire.

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Protect, manage and respect Aboriginal objects and places in accordance with legislative requirements.
2. Consider how Aboriginal cultural heritage and cultural landscapes can be protected in LEP's.
3. Identify Aboriginal cultural heritage and Historic heritage values and opportunities to protect and celebrate those values.



Sandstone Cave near Uarbry

4. Recognise the contribution which Aboriginal cultural heritage and Historic heritage make to the sense of place and belonging of a local area.
5. Support the protection and celebration of heritage sites and values.
6. Identify and celebrate the diversity and heritage of and heritage of the many cultural groups in the community.
7. Recognise that aboriginal and Historic heritage and diversity are a cultural asset and potential driver of tourism and economic growth and the opportunities that this can provide.
8. Further articulate heritage as it relates to local character, including potentially identifying clusters of places and items which contribute to the significant character of a place.
9. Identify and protect areas of high environmental value through biodiversity offsets.
10. Manage development near heritage items to ensure it is respectful and sympathetic of surrounding items and conservations areas.
11. Capture the identification, appropriate protection and promotion of Aboriginal cultural heritage and Historic heritage.
12. Undertake meaningful and ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal community to identify important values and potential issues regarding cultural heritage and connection to land.
13. Consult with State Government agencies in relation to both Aboriginal cultural heritage and Historic heritage.
14. Require meaningful and ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal community to identify important values and potential issues regarding cultural heritage and connection to land.
15. Support ongoing identification and documentation of heritage places and context early, to assist more detailed planning actions to avoid or mitigate impact on heritage items and places.
16. Where possible, strategically identify key heritage places and clusters.
17. Support heritage assets revitalisation and adaptive reuse.
18. Provide guidance for sensitive heritage areas subject to major infrastructure or development.
19. Identify funding and resourcing for Aboriginal and Historic priorities.
20. Allow for the development of plans and strategies which interpret, celebrate and promote Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal identity, culture and heritage.
21. Develop strategies and programs to tell the story of a local area, and the diversity of its history and culture.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
19. Preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study as a priority to inform amendments to the LSPS and LEP.	Manager Planning and Regulation and Town Planner	December 2022

<p>20. Review Schedule 5 of the LEP to support the appropriate labelling and protection of heritage site and buildings.</p>	<p>Town Planner</p>	<p>December 2022</p>
<p>21. Review Council owned land to identify offset requirements for future development and any opportunities to use council land for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements.</p>	<p>Director Technical Services</p>	<p>December 2023</p>
<p>22. Review DCP controls to protect biodiversity.</p>	<p>Town Planner</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

Priority 9 – Bushfires, drought and flooding in a changing climate

Rationale

Understanding climate change and natural weather patterns is important so that Council can build resilient and sustainable communities within the shire. It is foreseen that in the future our communities will experience an increased occurrence of dry, hot days with increased severe fire danger weather days throughout spring and summer. These seasonal weather events will be extreme where there will be times of heavy rainfall resulting in floods and prolonged dry periods leaving the shire drought stricken.

Council have already undertaken extensive flood studies over the years for our townships that are affected by floodwaters. These flood studies identify land that has been flooded in the past 1 in 100 year average recurrence interval. Ensuring that these flood studies are reviewed and updated is essential to be able to identify and manage existing and proposed development on land that is at risk of high or low flood inundation.



All of the land outside of the Warrumbungle Shires towns and villages is identified as bushfire prone under the Warrumbungle Local Environmental Plan 2013. This identification has been essential due to the two most recent catastrophic bushfires which swept through the shire being the Wambelong Fire in 2013 and the Sir Ivan Fire in 2017. Both these fires have and continue to leave a huge impact on the local communities within the shire with a vast number of affected people still unable to rebuild their homes and associated infrastructure.

House destroyed from Sir Ivan Bushfire

To deliver this planning priority Council will:

1. Ensure that development is not permitted to be built in areas that are significantly impacted by flood waters.
2. Ensure that development is not permitted to be built in areas that are highly bushfire prone.
3. Ensure Council encourages private water supply through the installation of rainwater tanks.
4. Engage State and Federal Government to provide support to drought affected residents.

Actions

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
23. Ensure that the community is aware of Planning, Preparation, Response, and Recovery (PPRR) frame work set out by the State Government at Local level.	Director Technical Services	2021
24. Continue to lobby for State Government rainwater tank subsidies.	Director Environment and Development Services	December 2020
25. Seek funding for detailed flood studies in Councils flood prone communities to enable flood information to be inputted into the LEP	Manager Planning and Regulation and Town Planner	December 2023

Delivery Plan

Planning Priority 1

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Hold discussions with the local Aboriginal community about Local Environmental Plan	Manager Planning and Regulation and Town Planner	September 2020
2. To hold facilitated workshops in each town with local development groups or progress associations to identify priorities and needs of each of those communities.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism 6 monthly meetings	September 2020
3. Review and update Councils Section 7.12 development contributions plan to provide for opportunity to fund the upgrade of community facilities.	Manager Planning and Regulation	October 2020

Planning Priority 2

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
4. Assess and upgrade where necessary current road network through asset management.	Director Technical Services	December 2020
5. Hold continued discussions with Transport for NSW concerning the entry and exit points from the bypass, how to prevent and/or minimise rural land fragmentation, the impacts and opportunities for the Coonabarabran CBD and affected land owners and the planning and delivery of the Coonabarabran Bypass.	Manager Planning and Regulation, Town Planner, Manager Economic Development and Tourism Director of Environment and Development Services and Director Technical Service	March 2021
6. Continue to represent Council and the Community the impact of the proposed route for the Inland Rail.	Director of Environment and Development Services	December 2022
7. Hold discussions with ARTC regarding formulation of Development Agreement for Inland Rail	Director of Environment and Development Services and Director Technical Services	December 2023
8. Assess the current water supply to each settlement that is currently	Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water	June 2021

serviced to meet future needs.		
9. Investigate uses or needs for supplementary water supply for each settlement.	Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water	June 2021
10. Investigate the connection of reticulated sewer to Mendooran and Binnaway. All other settlements need to have Asset plans developed and implemented	Director Environment and Development Services and Manager Warrumbungle Water	December 2025

Planning Priority 3

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
11. Identify options to improve access to shared telecommunication and internet services.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	June 2021

Planning Priority 4

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
12. Formulate and development a settlement hierarchy map.	Manager Planning and Regulatory and Town Planner	December 2021

Planning Priority 5

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
13. On review of the Warrumbungle LEP investigate the appropriateness of the minimum lots sizes in rural zones through undertaking a strategic analysis of agricultural land and practices.	Town Planner	December 2023

Planning Priority 6

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
14. On review of the Warrumbungle LEP 2013 Council will investigate the practicalities of providing additional industrial zoning where	Town Planner	December 2023

appropriate. This measure will minimise the risk of land use conflict posed by non-compatible land uses.		
15. Review the LEP for opportunities to encourage business across rural and residential zones where it can blend with existing character.	Town Planner	December 2025
16. Implement actions from Council's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy with focus on innovative and knowledge jobs, and leveraging the agriculture and tourism sector.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	December 2023

Planning Priority 7

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
17. Continue to implement Council's Economic Tourism and Development Strategy.	Manager Economic Development and Tourism	December 2023
18. Prepare a CBD strategy to ensure that tourists continue to access the CBD's in the Warrumbungle Shire.	Manager Planning and Regulatory and Town Planner	June 2022

Planning Priority 8

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
19. Preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study as a priority to inform amendments to the LSPS and LEP.	Manager Planning and Regulatory and Town Planner	December 2022
20. Review Schedule 5 of the LEP to support the appropriate labelling and protection of heritage site and buildings.	Town Planner	December 2022
21. Review Council owned land to identify offset requirements for future development and any opportunities to use council land for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements.	Director Technical Services	December 2023
22. Review DCP controls to protect biodiversity.	Town Planner	June 2021

Planning Priority 9

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>23. Ensure that the community is aware of Planning, Preparation, Response, and Recovery (PPRR) frame work set out by the State Government at Local level.</p>	<p>Director Technical Services</p>	<p>2021</p>
<p>24. Continue to lobby for State Government rainwater tank subsidies.</p>	<p>Director Environment and Development Services</p>	<p>December 2020</p>
<p>25. Seek funding for detailed studies in Council's flood prone communities to enable flood information to be inputted into the LEP</p>	<p>Manager Planning and Regulatory and Town Planner</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

Background Documents

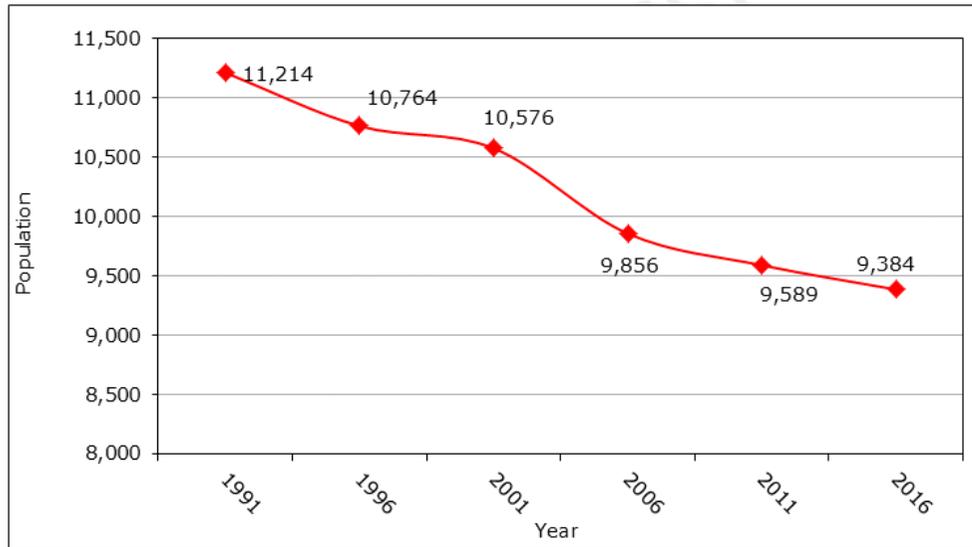
<p>Central West and Orana Regional Plan</p>	<p>The Central West and Orana <i>Regional Plan 2036</i> is a 20-year blueprint for the future of Western NSW. The vision for Western NSW is to create a diverse economy, supported by the right infrastructure, an exceptional natural environment and resilient communities. The vision will be delivered through three goals:</p> <p>A diverse economy with efficient transport and infrastructure networks;</p> <p>Exception semi-arid rangelands traversed by the Barwon-Darling river;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Strong and connected communities</p>
<p>CSP</p>	<p>The Warrumbungle Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032 articulates the vision, directions and framework for coordinating development, resource allocation and service delivery within the Shire. The Plan focuses on strengthening the Shire community and improving quality of life, protecting the environment, growing and diversifying the Shire's economy, and providing strong governance and leadership. The Plan has 7 core goals, including strengthening the Shire's economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Environment: The good health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced. • Local Economy: Our economy is strong and sustainable, providing our communities with localised employment opportunities and ease of access to markets, goods and services. • Community and Culture: The communities of our shire are safe,

	<p>harmonious and supportive and are bound by vibrant social and cultural interaction and a strong local identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural and Urban Development: Our Shire is characterised by its peaceful rural landscape, its thriving towns and villages and diverse agricultural activities. • Recreation and Open Space: The communities of our Shire have abundant opportunities to participate in sporting and recreational interests of their choice. • Public Infrastructure and Services: Our communities are provided with safe, functional, and well-maintained infrastructure and a comprehensive range of services. • Local Governance and Finance: Warrumbungle Shire Council is recognised for its strong community leadership, sound financial and asset management, and ethical, accountable and responsive local government.
REDS	<p>The Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) identifies key industries for the region as Agriculture, Tourism, and Health Care and Social Assistance. The REDS has five core strategies:</p> <p>Boost key industries' access to market and labour to reduce cost of transport, transactions, treatment and training.</p> <p>Invest in water and energy utilities infrastructure to achieve a sustainable economy and improve quality of life.</p> <p>Develop and enhance the regional lifestyle as attractive for work, leisure and business.</p> <p>Develop and promote a broad event and destination profile to increase</p>

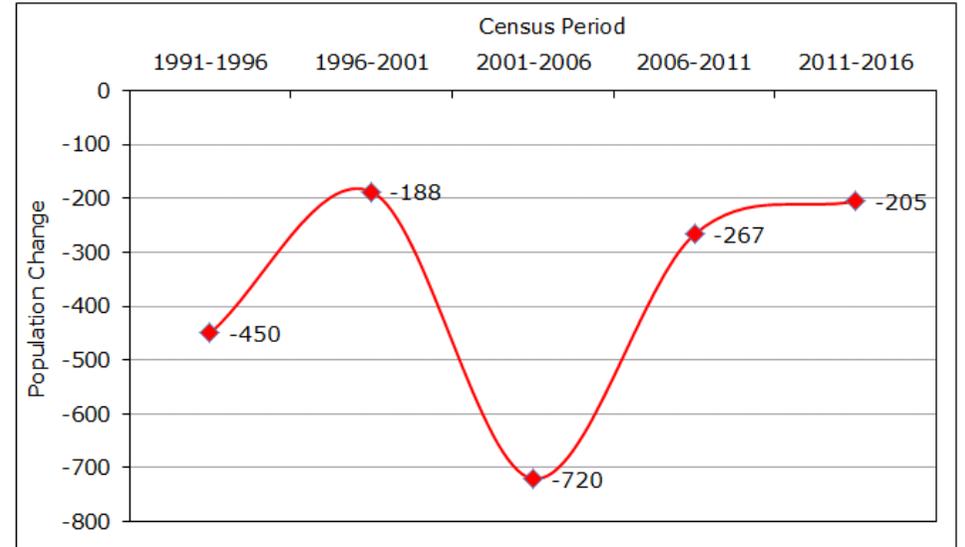
	<p>visitation, and diversify the economy.</p> <p>Build support for local business by taking advantage of Inland Rail, integrating advantage into major projects and tenders and providing business upskilling opportunities.</p>
<p>Enabling Regional Adaptation Report</p>	<p>The Western Enabling Regional Adaptation (WERA) identifies how the expected impacts of climate change may affect local communities, and identify opportunities to respond.</p> <p>The Enabling Regional Adaptation (ERA) process:</p> <p>provides a credible evidence base to inform government adaptation planning by developing regional understanding of the impacts of projected climate change and vulnerability for key systems</p> <p>builds on the capacity of decision-makers to capture opportunities for regional climate change adaptation projects between sectors across local and state government.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation pathways to transition key Central West and Orana systems to a more resilient future, have been developed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small communities • Transport • Water • Regional knowledge • Mixed farming • Horticulture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Tourism
Destination Country and Outback NSW Management Plan 2018-2020	<p>The DMP has six high level goals:</p> <p>Create a positive collaborative culture to support the growth of the visitor economy.</p> <p>Increase visitation and yield to Destination Country and Outback NSW.</p> <p>Strengthen the perception and awareness of Country and Outback NSW.</p> <p>Build the capacity and capability of the industry and local government, to deliver on the expectations of visitors to the region.</p> <p>Facilitate the development or enhancement of products, experiences and events.</p> <p>Enable effective and efficient communication with stakeholders and communities across the network.</p>
Remplan RDA Orana, 2018).	

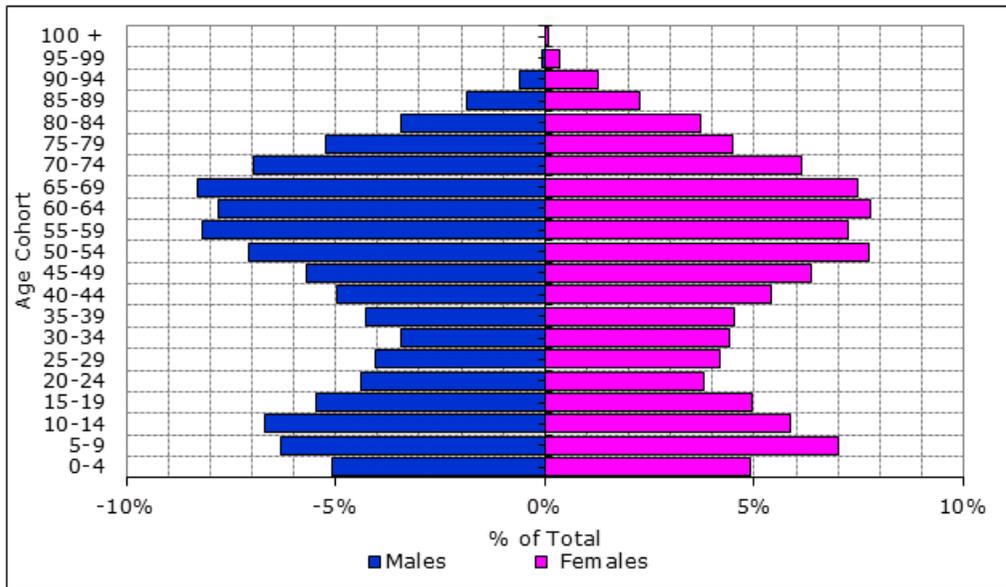
APPENDIX 1



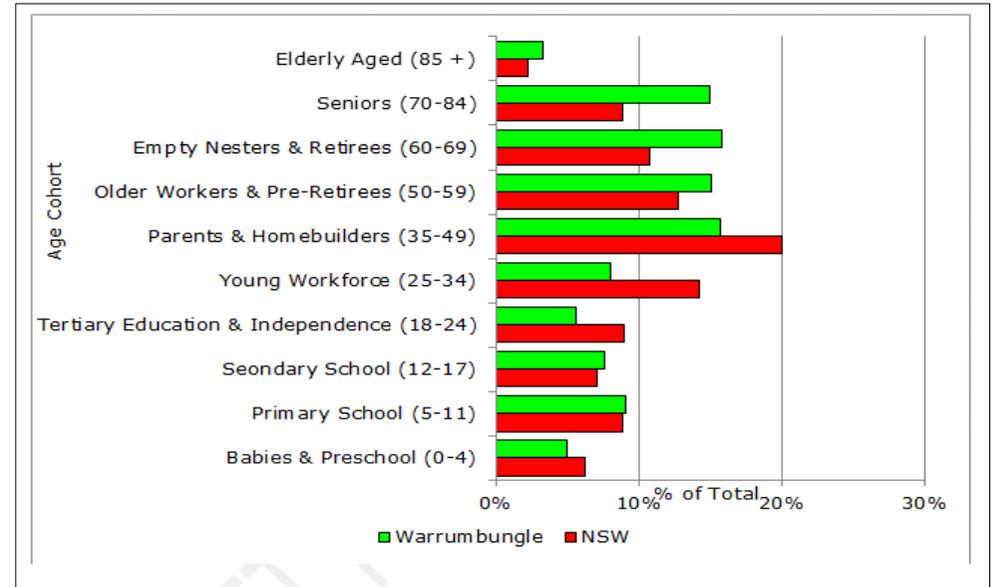
Population Change 1991-2016



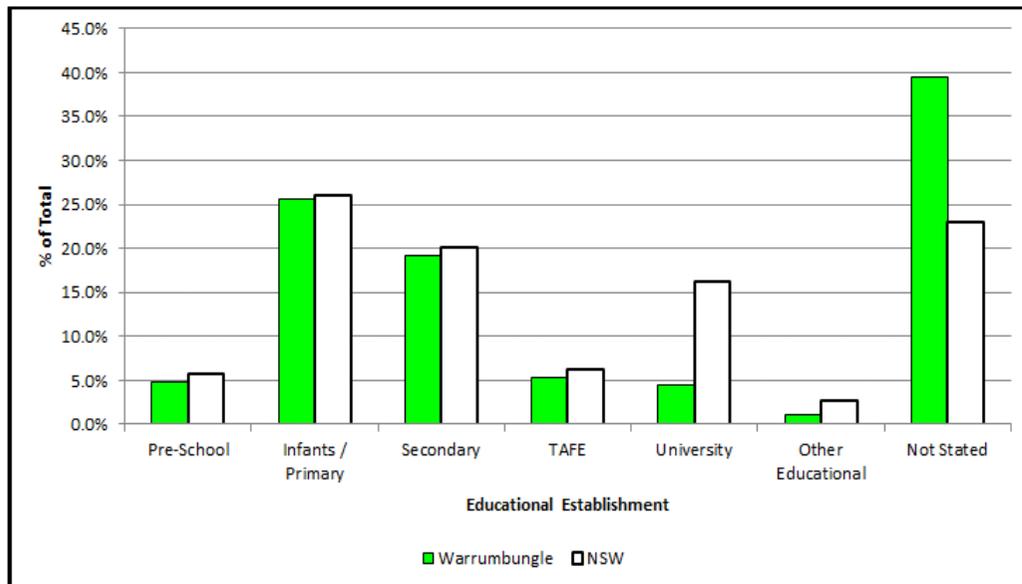
Intercensal Population Change 1991-2016



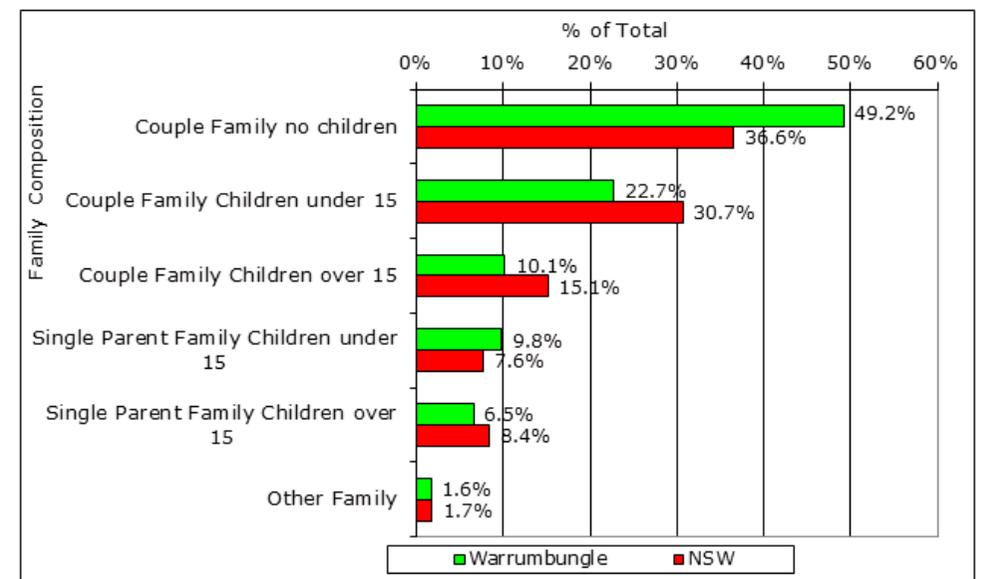
Population Pyramid



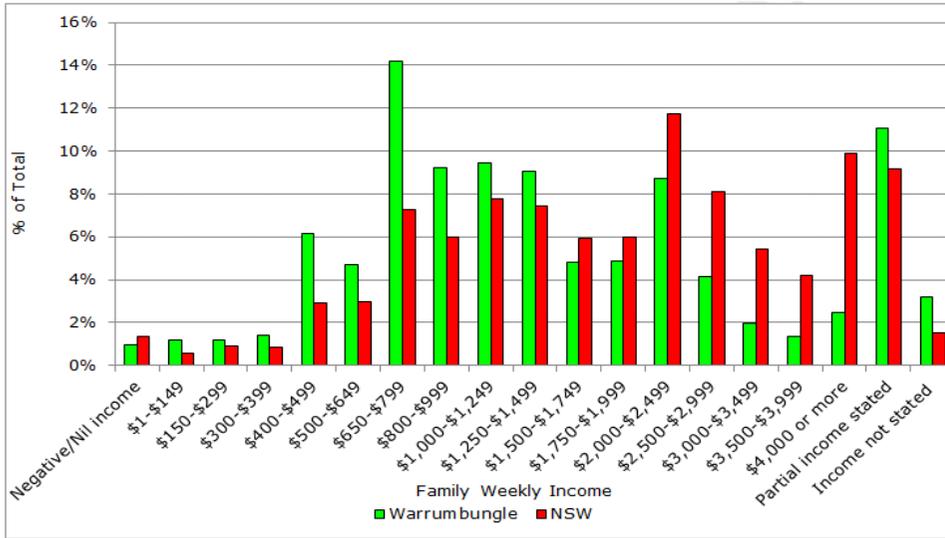
Age Cohorts Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



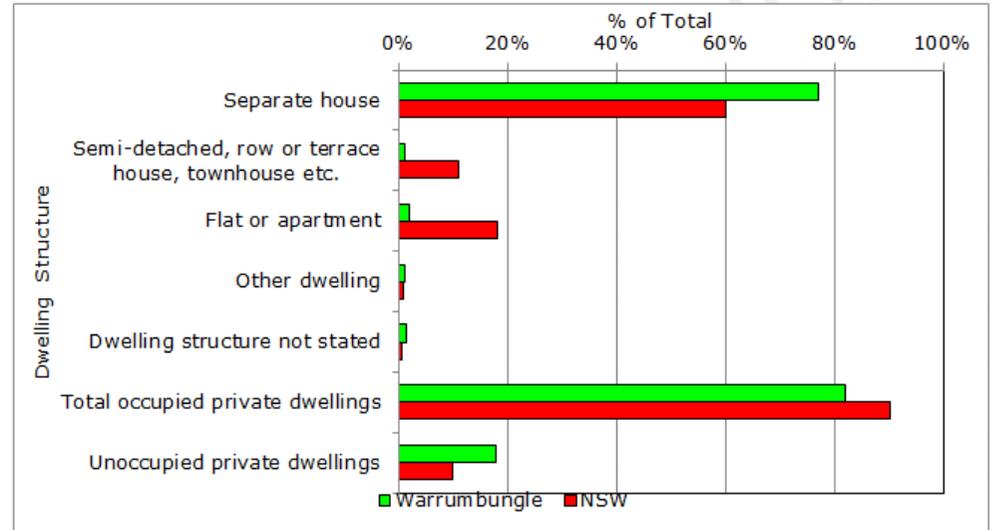
64 Educational Establishments Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



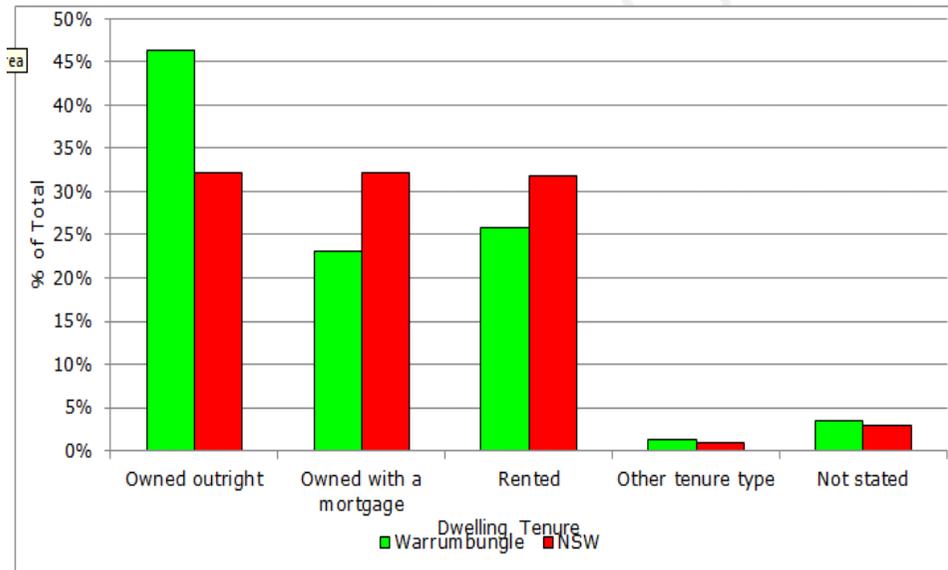
Family Composition Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



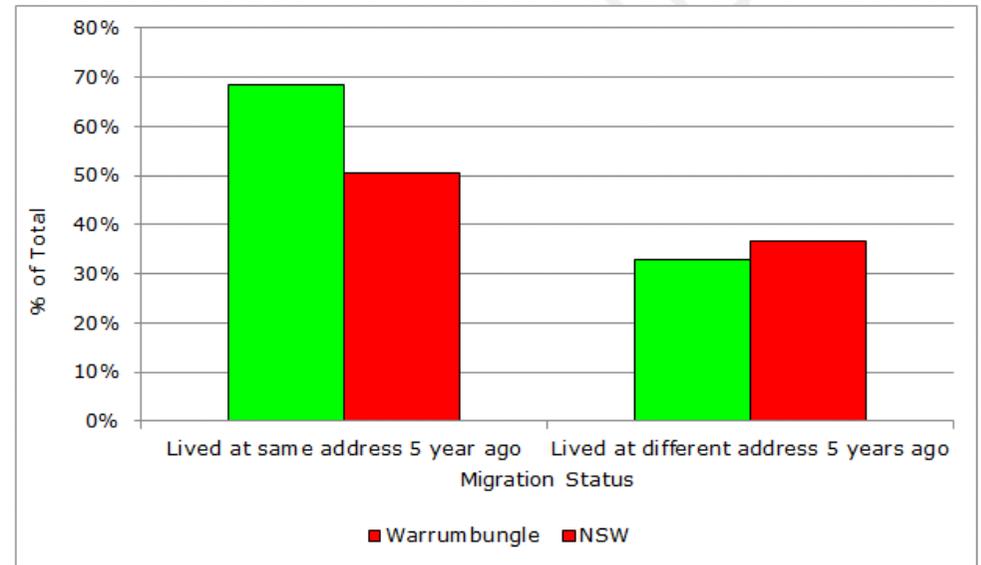
Total Family Weekly Income Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



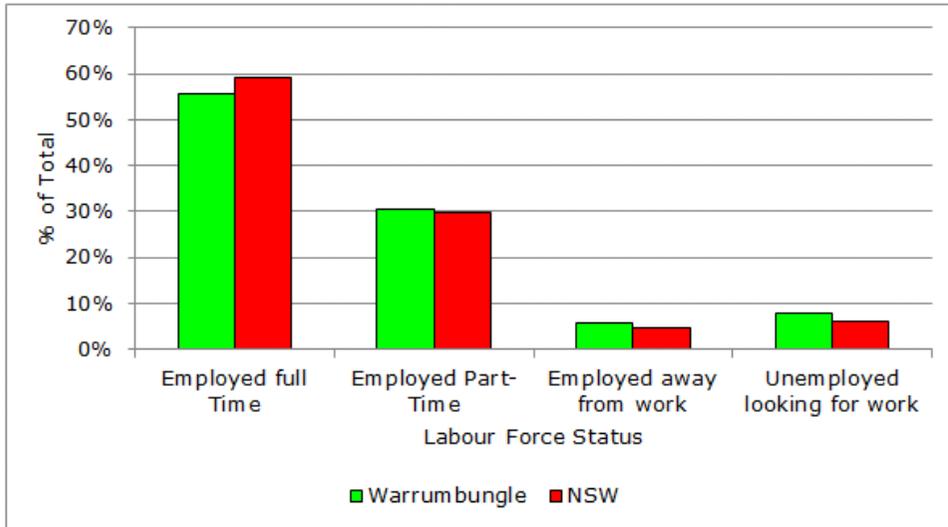
Dwelling Structure Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



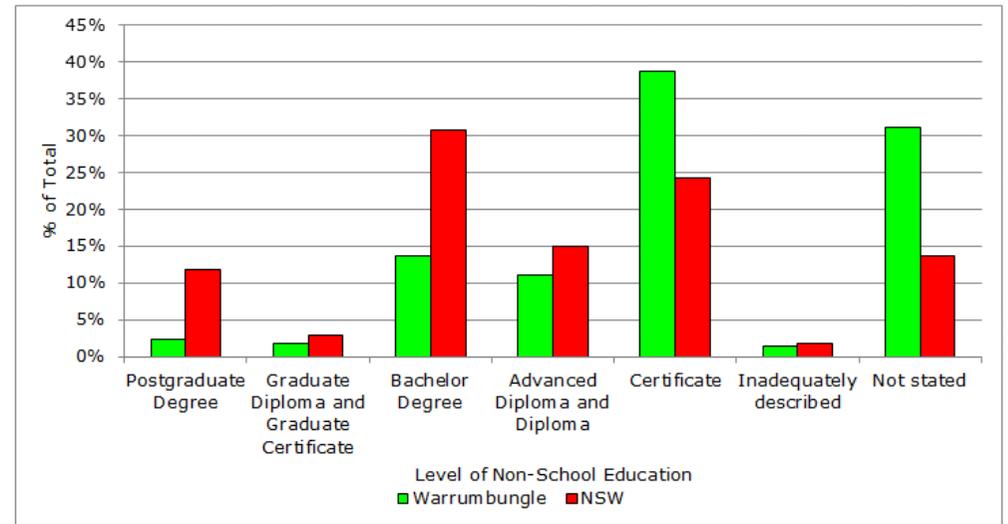
Dwelling Tenure Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



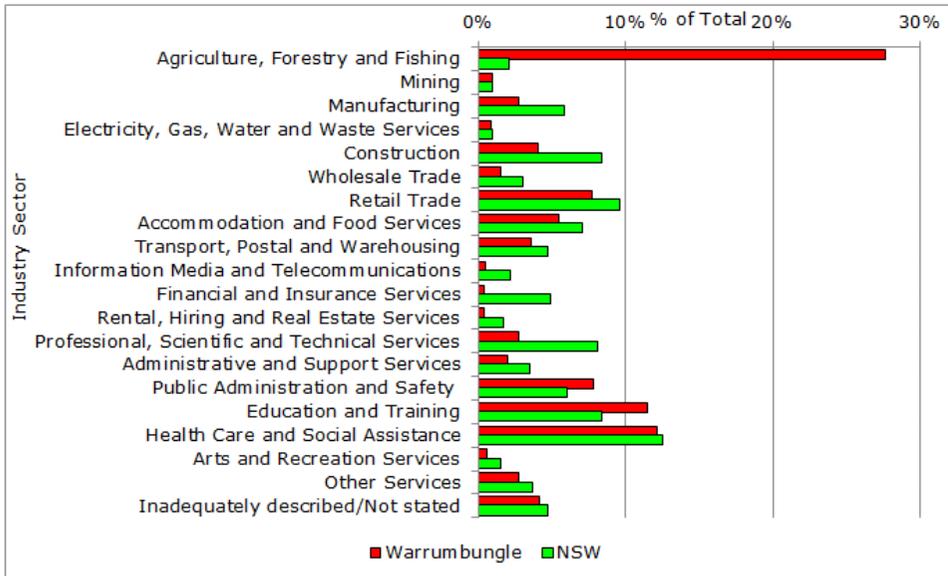
Migration Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



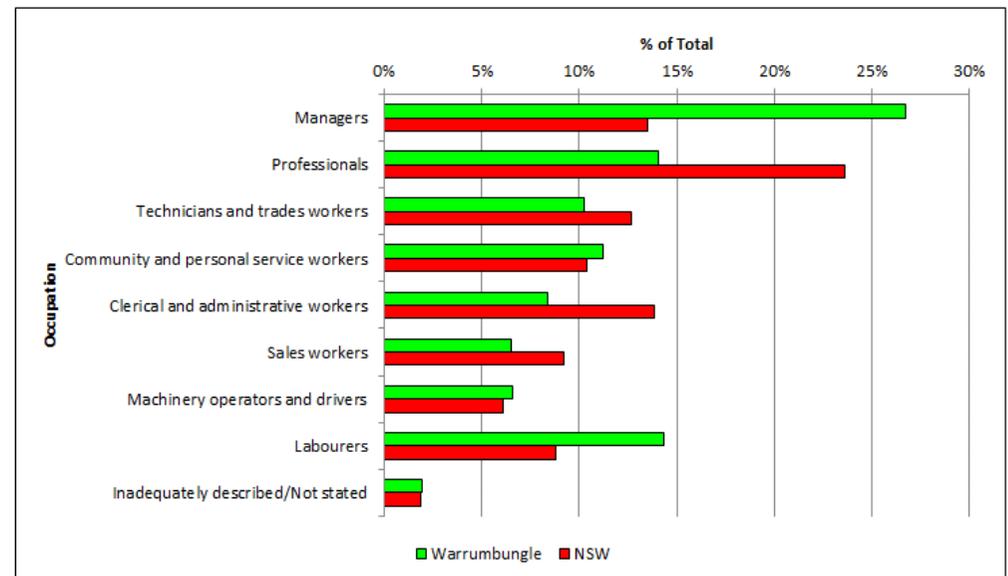
Labour Force Status Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



Level of Non-School Education Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



Industry of Workforce Warrumbungle Shire and NSW



Occupation of Workforce Warrumbungle Shire and NSW