



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL



LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

JUNE 2020



DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

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REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed every 7 years or as required in the event of legislative changes. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council and in the spirit of this Policy. Any amendment to the Policy must be by way of a Council Resolution or, for administrative reasons, the approval of the General Manager.

Foreword

The Leeton Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is a community driven document that identifies, shapes and acknowledges the short, medium and long-term strategic town and environmental planning objectives for the Leeton Shire community.

The Leeton LSPS is shaped by how the Leeton Shire and its communities have developed, the special characteristics that makes us unique and our values and expectations that we wish to achieve, protect and enhance over the next 20 years.

The statement brings together important information about our unique environment, the character of our communities, our cultural identity and our economy to set priorities for building a prosperous and liveable Shire.

The Leeton LSPS will establish a consistent framework for the Leeton Shire that will:

1. Explain development standards important to the Leeton community.
2. Support the decisions relating to the assessment and consideration of development applications.
3. Set future strategic planning reviews and decisions.



Acknowledgement of Country

Leeton Shire Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to all Elders past, present and future.

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Leeton Shire's Vision

To enjoy outstanding lifestyles and prosperous livelihoods within a caring and inclusive community and a healthy environment. To be inspirational leaders leaving a legacy in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area of which we are enormously proud.

We are/will be successful when we describe ourselves as having:

A healthy and caring community:

We enjoy an excellent quality of life from childhood through to our senior years. Healthy lifestyles are enjoyed by all in a caring, safe and friendly community. Learning is a constant with access to quality education opportunities for all ages.

An active and enriched community:

We can join in with a variety of sports and leisure activities at any age. Our community has a diverse arts and culture following and supports a wide arrange of artistic events. We come together regularly to celebrate our history with pride and what makes our community great. We enjoy sharing our rich heritage with younger generations.

A healthy and natural environment:

We have beautiful natural attractions that we can appreciate and enjoy. As a community we come together to preserve and enhance our wetlands and river system to ensure their beauty will be able to be maintained and enjoyed by residents and visitors for many years to come. We love participating in outdoor activities and playing in our natural environment.

A thriving economy with good jobs:

We have a wide range of employment choices available to us. The community enjoys celebrating together at festivals and events and to share this fun and excitement with visitors to our towns. Water is our lifeblood and we continue to innovate to ensure our ongoing success.

A quality-built environment:

We have reliable infrastructure such as water, sewer and roads. We take great pride in our lovely towns and villages and enjoy the abundance of open space and park areas around our Shire. The community is well serviced with regular public transport options available to us when we need to travel.

Strong leadership:

We are confident that our leaders will listen to what we have to say, make decisions that are good and strongly advocate with peak bodies for the betterment of the entire community. There are many opportunities available for our residents and visitors to speak up and engage with each other to make a difference to our future. We are resilient as a community as we anticipate change, plan for it and deal with it well.

About Leeton Shire

Leeton Shire is located within the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area in south west Riverina Murray of NSW and has from its humble beginnings grown to be a major producer of irrigated based food and fibre and a significant centre for manufacturing and education in the region.

Leeton is situated 550 km from Sydney and 460 km from Melbourne. The land is Wiradjuri Country and the Murrumbidgee River flows along the southern boundary of the Shire on its way from the Snowy Mountains of eastern NSW to join the Murray River near Balranald.

Leeton Shire owes its existence, economy and culture to the provision of water from the Murrumbidgee River for irrigated agricultural. The origins of what is now the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) can be attributed to noted pastoralist, Sir Samuel McCaughey, who in the late 1800's convinced the NSW State Government that land around his North Yanco holding (principally what is now the Leeton Shire) was suitable for irrigation. In response, the NSW Government commenced the construction of the Barren Jack Dam (now called Burrinjuck Dam) in 1906, following the severe drought of 1902, to dam the waters of the Murrumbidgee River to provide a regulated water supply downstream of the dam to drought proof inland NSW.

At the completion of Burrinjuck Dam and the supporting network of canals and channels the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was officially opened with a turning on of the water ceremony at Yanco on the 13th July 1912.

Since these early beginnings Leeton Shire has grown to a population of 11,445 with the major town of Leeton and rural villages at Whitton, Yanco, Wamoon and Murrami.

A snapshot of the Leeton Shire

- An area of 1,167 km²
- Population of 11,445
- Approximately 90% of the Shire is located within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA)
- Significant environmental areas of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park and the RAMSAR listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil wetlands
- Headquarters of the Australian rice industry.
- Largest cotton gin in the Southern Hemisphere
- Centre of walnut production and processing in Australia
- Two major wineries
- 8,500 ha of citrus farms producing 180,000 tonnes of citrus annually
- 58,000 cattle feedlot and abattoir
- 3 high schools (two major boarding schools) and 6 primary schools
- Agricultural research centre at Yanco
- WRConnect a regional road/rail freight hub and inland port.

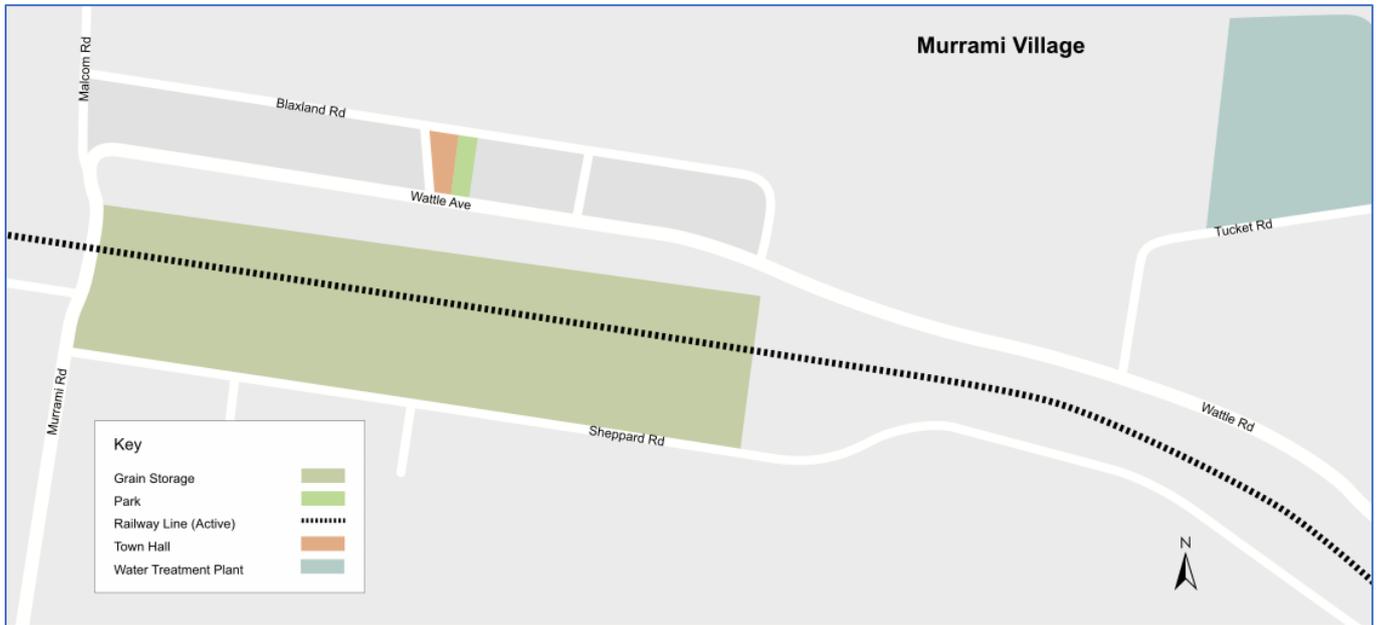
Leeton (population 8,620)

The town of Leeton was established as the administration headquarters of the MIA and was named after Charles Lee, the then Minister for Public Works. The town was initially designed by the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Trust and established in 1913 when the first blocks were made available for sale.

In 1914 the American architect Walter Burley Griffin re-designed the town along similar designs to Canberra on an essentially circular design with four street precincts leading out from the

town centre. Whilst this original design has over time been modified following inevitable growth of the town, many basic elements of the Burley Griffin design remain, notably the circular streets of Palm and Acacia Avenues, the centre avenues of Pine, Kurrajong and Wade leading from the central business district and 2 water towers at Chelmsford Place.





Murrami (population 326)

Murrami is a small village approximately 32 kilometres to the north west of Leeton. It consists of a main street and has 29 residential lots of approximately 1,000m² and 5 small farm lots of approximately 2 ha.

Murrami is connected to a reticulated potable water supply. The village is zoned RU5 Village. The Griffith-Junee railway line passes through Murrami

and there is a major SunRice rice receival depot adjacent to this railway line.

There is a community hall and playground in Murrami and a recreational reserve located adjacent to the village. Previously Murrami was serviced by a general store, however this no longer operates.

Whitton (population 496)

Whitton is a village approximately 20 kms to the west of Leeton on the intersection of Irrigation Way and the Whitton-Darlington Point Road. Initially called Hulong, Whitton grew from a small settlement that was established in the 1850s due to its proximity to a shallow crossing for stock at the Murrumbidgee River.

Whitton was officially declared a town in March 1885 following the completion of the south west railway line from Junee to Hay via Narrandera and Yanco and was named in honour of then Engineer in Chief of the NSW Railways, Mr John Whitton. The railway station attracted teamsters delivering copper from mines in the area until 1910 and freight from pastoral stations and farms throughout the life of the line. It distributed mail to and from Lake Cargellico until 1916, Mt Ida, Tabbita until 1920 and local areas.

Whitton today can be described as a rural village and is fully serviced with reticulated sewer and water, a Council operated swimming pool, weekly garbage and recycling service, a public school up to year 6, a general store/cafe, post office, hotel and

bowling club. Whitton also has a community run museum that recognises the rail, irrigation and station history of the town and surrounds.

Under the Leeton Local Environmental Plan, Whitton is zoned RU5 Village with an area of land zoned IN1 General Industry. SunRice have established a number of rice receival and storage sheds in Whitton. The disused south west rail corridor also divides the village in half.

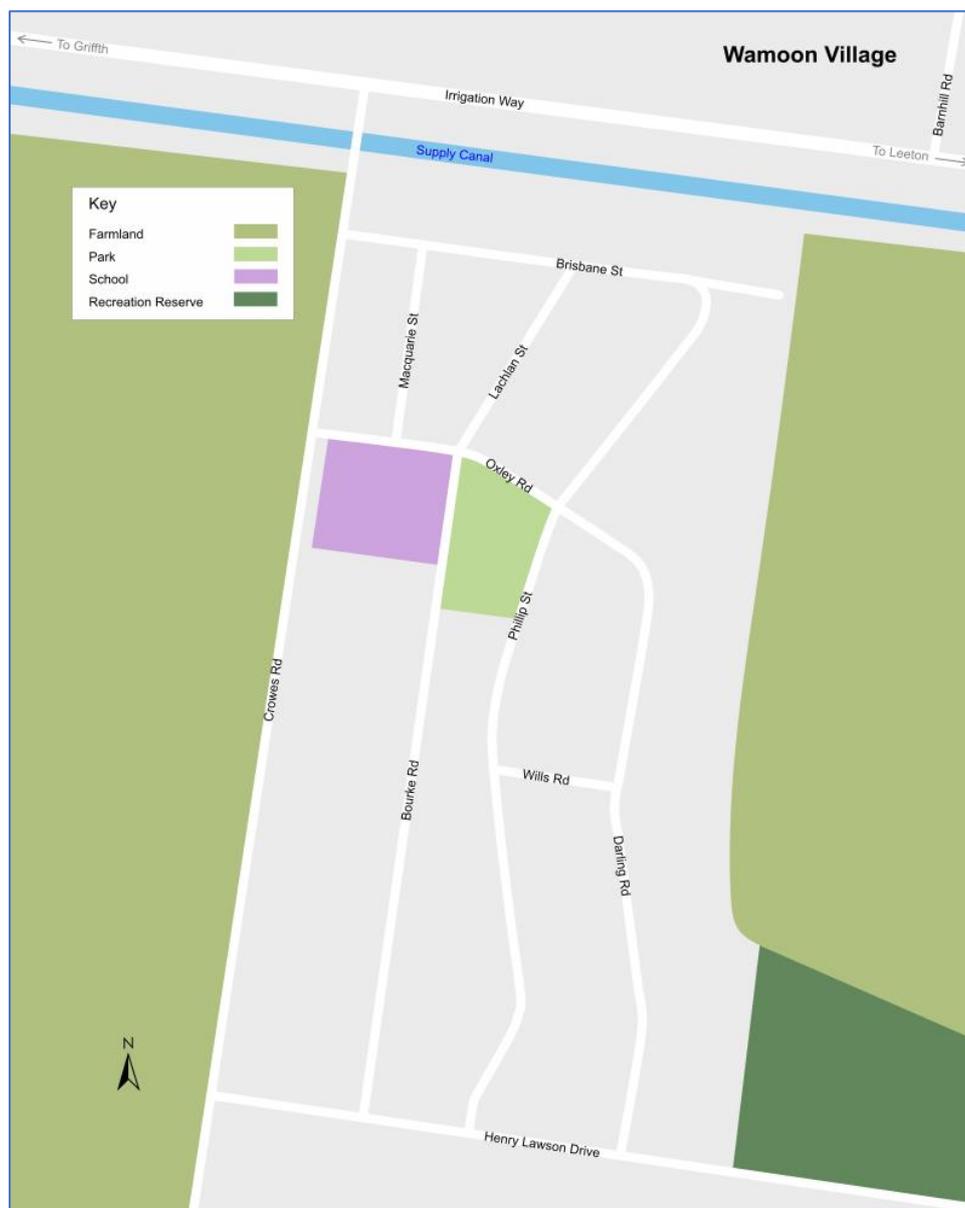
The Whitton village is also located approximately 8.5 kms from the state of art Southern Cotton Gin, which since its completion in 2011 has ginned one million bales of cotton and employs 40 people.



Wamoon (population 200)

Wamoon is a small village located adjacent to Irrigation Way approximately 10 kms west of Leeton. Wamoon was established to provide a place of residence for farm and cannery workers when the rice and fruit industries were being established in 1912. The Wamoon Public School, which is still open today, was established in 1913.

Wamoon is serviced with reticulated potable water, a weekly garbage and recycling collection and plans are currently being finalized to connect dwellings in the village to reticulated sewer. The village has 34 residential lots of approximately 1,000m² and 30 small farms ranging in size from 4,000 to 8,000m² and is zoned RU5 Village.



Yanco (population 505)

The village of Yanco is approximately 6 kms south of Leeton and is known as the gateway to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

Yanco was established in 1882 on the existing Yanco Station when the south west railway line from Hay to Junee was completed. The camp was established to load freight (principally wool) from Yanco and North Yanco Stations.

The development of Yanco as a town can be traced to 1908 with the development of the Yanco Experimental Farm in 1908 which undertook trials of rice production and the Yanco powerhouse in 1913 which was built to provide power to Sir Samuel McCaughey's irrigation scheme on Yanco Station.

Yanco is a fully serviced village, with reticulated water and sewer, a public school, parks, multi-use sports ground, a central business area with a hotel, club, general store/café and post office.

Yanco is zoned principally R2 Low Density Residential with an area of B2 Local Centre. Yanco has an area of typical residential development with lots averaging 1,000 m² and a larger area to the north and east of small 4,000m² to 8,000m² farms.

Yanco remains the home of the Yanco Agricultural High School which is based around the historical McCaughey homestead and offers education from year 7 to 12, as well as the Yanco Agricultural Institute which employs 95 people and is NSW DPI's Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Rice and Horticulture and Tocal College runs short courses from the site.



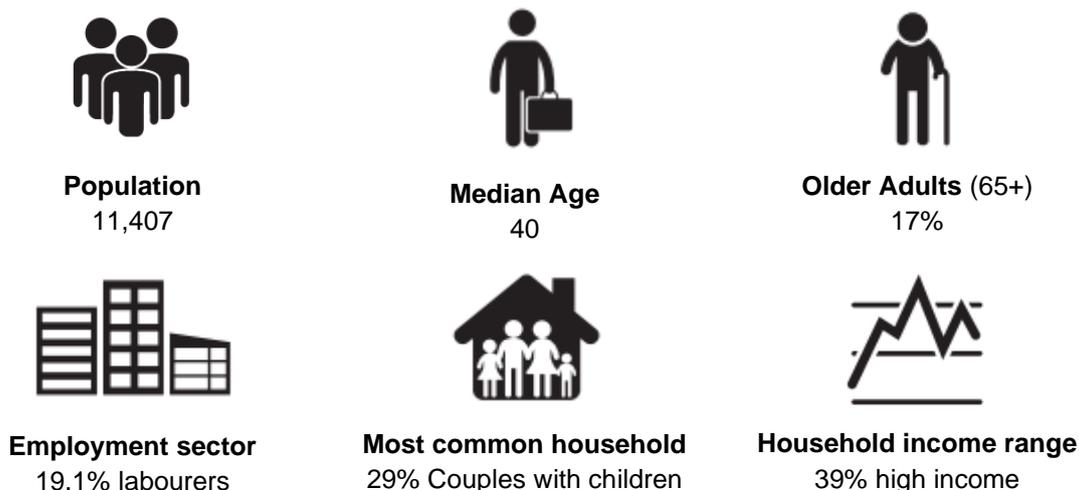


Our Demographics

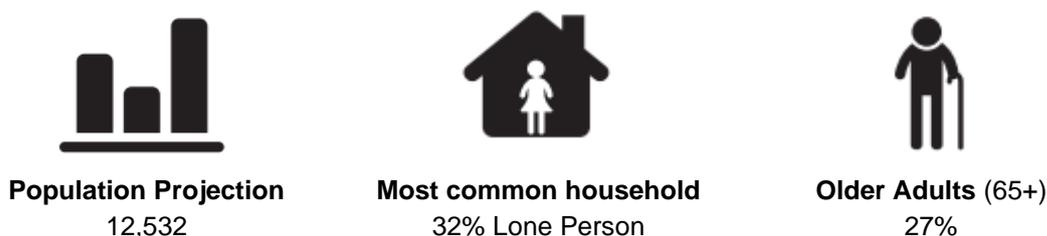
Understanding where we are now will provide guidance for the opportunities and challenges Leeton Shire will face in the future. Of people aged 15 and over, most had completed Year 10 (20.1%) or Year 12 (15.6%) as their highest level of education. The largest employment sectors in Leeton Shire is manufacturing, followed by agriculture. Leeton Shire has and will continue to play an integral role in value-added agricultural processing, agriculture production, education and research, transport and logistics.

By 2036 our population is expected to increase by about 1,125 people. This will comprise of a larger aging population and we will need to ensure we have adequate services and facilities to support the ageing demographic. Reviewing our local planning controls and supply of diverse housing, community facilities, health services, education establishments and employment generating sectors will be a focus of our Shire.

Leeton Shire in 2016



Leeton Shire in 2036



Data sources:

- ABS, 2018, *Regional Population Growth, Australia (Cat. No. 3218.0)*, ABS, Canberra
- DPE, 2019, *NSW population, household and implied dwellings projections*, DPE, Sydney

Figure 1: Leeton Shire Demographics

Our Population Projections

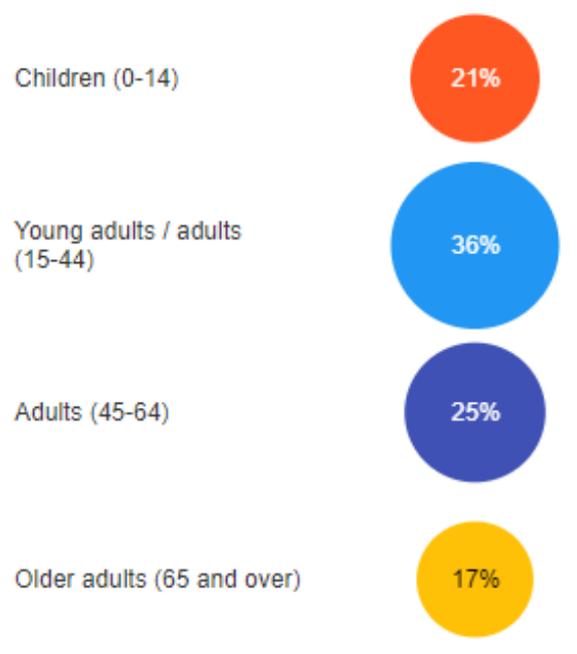
The Shire was home to an estimated 11,407 people in 2016 and is the third largest regional centre in the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation area. The estimated population in April 2020 is 11,445. The population of Leeton Shire is expected to grow by 8.9% by 2036, in comparison to the Riverina Murray region which will grow by 4%.

While most of the Shire's population were born in Australia (81.6%), Leeton Shire has a diverse cultural population with Italy (1.7%) and New Zealand (1%) being the next most common countries of origin for residents (ABS, 2016).

Approximately 5.7% of the Leeton Shire population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, which is higher than the State average of 2.9%.

The age structure of Leeton Shire from 2016 to 2036 will decrease for young adults and adults and, increase for older adults (**Figure 3**). The median age will also increase from 40 in 2016 to 45.9 in 2036. An ageing population is a common trend across NSW and Australia and will require proactive planning to enable residents to age in place.

Percentage of all people in age group (2016)



Percentage of all people in age group (2036)

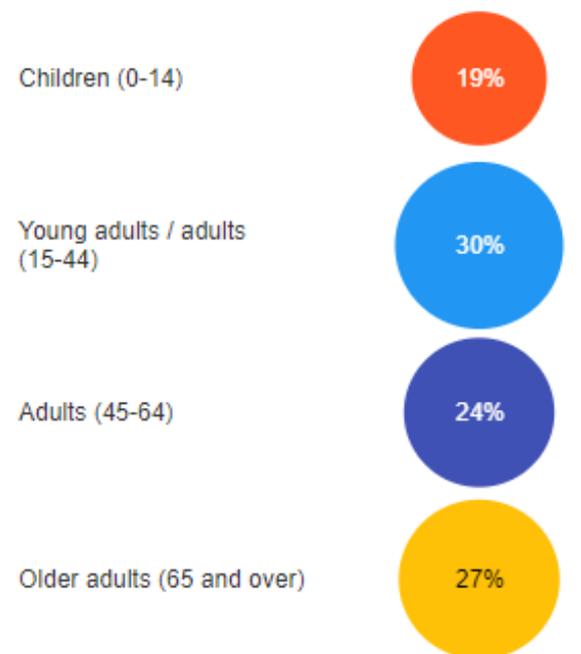


Figure 2: Age structure breakdown for Leeton Shire between 2016 and 2036 (DPE, 2018).

Our Economy and Employment

The Shire enjoys a strong economy with an economic output of \$443.5 million and the Gross Value Agricultural Production valued at \$91 million in 2010-11 (RMCG, 2016). Leeton Shire's economy is largely centred around agriculture and manufacturing, as is the rest of the Western Riverina region. Leeton also has a strong education and research sector that supports technological advances and provides varied career opportunities, including infrastructure, health, education, retail, and affordable environments for start-ups.

Most people who live in Leeton Shire also work here, with only 6% of residents working elsewhere. In 2016, Leeton Shire had an unemployment rate of 5.2%, lower than the State average of 6.3%.

Leeton Shire residents have a diverse range of incomes. The median weekly household income is \$1,190, slightly below the state average (ABS, 2016). Despite this, 39% of residents are in a

"high income" bracket. This is likely due to the differing income levels between the most common types of employment in Leeton Shire including labourers, technicians and managers (**Figure 3**).



Occupation	Leeton (A)	%	New South Wales	%
<i>Employed people aged 15 years and over</i>				
Labourers	902	19.1	297,887	8.8
Managers	738	15.7	456,084	13.5
Technicians and Trades Workers	650	13.8	429,239	12.7
Professionals	632	13.4	798,126	23.6
Clerical and Administrative Workers	511	10.8	467,977	13.8
Machinery Operators and Drivers	442	9.4	206,839	6.1
Community and Personal Service Workers	382	8.1	350,261	10.4
Sales Workers	357	7.6	311,414	9.2

Figure 3: Most common occupation types in Leeton compared to the NSW average (ABS, 2016).

Our Environment

The iconic Murrumbidgee River winds its way along the southern edge of Leeton Shire and forms part of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park. Created in 2010, the National Park protects part of what is now the largest continuous tract of River Red Gum forest in the world.

The Murrumbidgee River and Ramsar-listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands play an important part in the local ecology, recreation and tourism. The iconic wetlands span 400 hectares, are considered home to tens of thousands of wetland birds including 86 species of water birds and contain sites of great significance to the local Wiradjuri people. Protecting the wetlands environmental heritage significance is paramount while enabling access for tourism, research and recreation where appropriate.

The region also relies on the Murrumbidgee River and extensive



irrigation channels to supply Leeton Shire's agricultural lands. Given the variable climate, water security and water availability are a priority for the Shire to balance the needs of the community, environment, industry and agriculture.



Local Strategic Planning Statement Context

This Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) gives effect to Leeton's Community Strategic Plan by setting the framework for Leeton Shire's economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years. The LSPS 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 Section 3.9 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). As well as Leeton's Community Strategic Plan, 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), Envisage 2024 (Leeton Shire Council Economic

Strategic Development, Tourism and Events Plan) and Leeton Shire Flood Study. The LSPS also gives effect to the Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036, implementing the directions and actions at a local level and has regard to the Riverina and Murray (RAMJO) Statement of Regional Strategic Priorities. The LSPS planning priorities and actions provide the rationale for decisions about how we will use our land to achieve the community's broader land use vision.

Consultation

Leeton Shire Council has collaborated with the local community and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to develop this LSPS. This LSPS will be reviewed every seven years to ensure it remains current with the communities needs and strategic direction at the local, regional and state level.



Figure 4: Alignment of the LSPS to other strategic planning documents

Connection to the Riverina Murray

Regional Plan

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036 is a 20-year vision for the Riverina Murray region, which is **to be a diversified economy founded on Australia's food bowl, iconic waterways and a network of vibrant connected communities.** The Regional Plan outlines directions to achieve the vision for the region and Leeton has a role to play in their successful implementation.

Situated in South-Western New South Wales, Leeton Shire is central to the

Riverina Murray region, situated along the Murrumbidgee River (**Figure 5**). Leeton Shire has an important role to play in inter-regional connections to support the agricultural supply chain to the main domestic and international ports at Sydney (550 kilometres east) and Melbourne (450 kilometres south). Leeton Shire has strong connections to its two nearest regional cities of Griffith and Wagga Wagga, where residents can access higher-order health, education, retail, commercial and transport services.

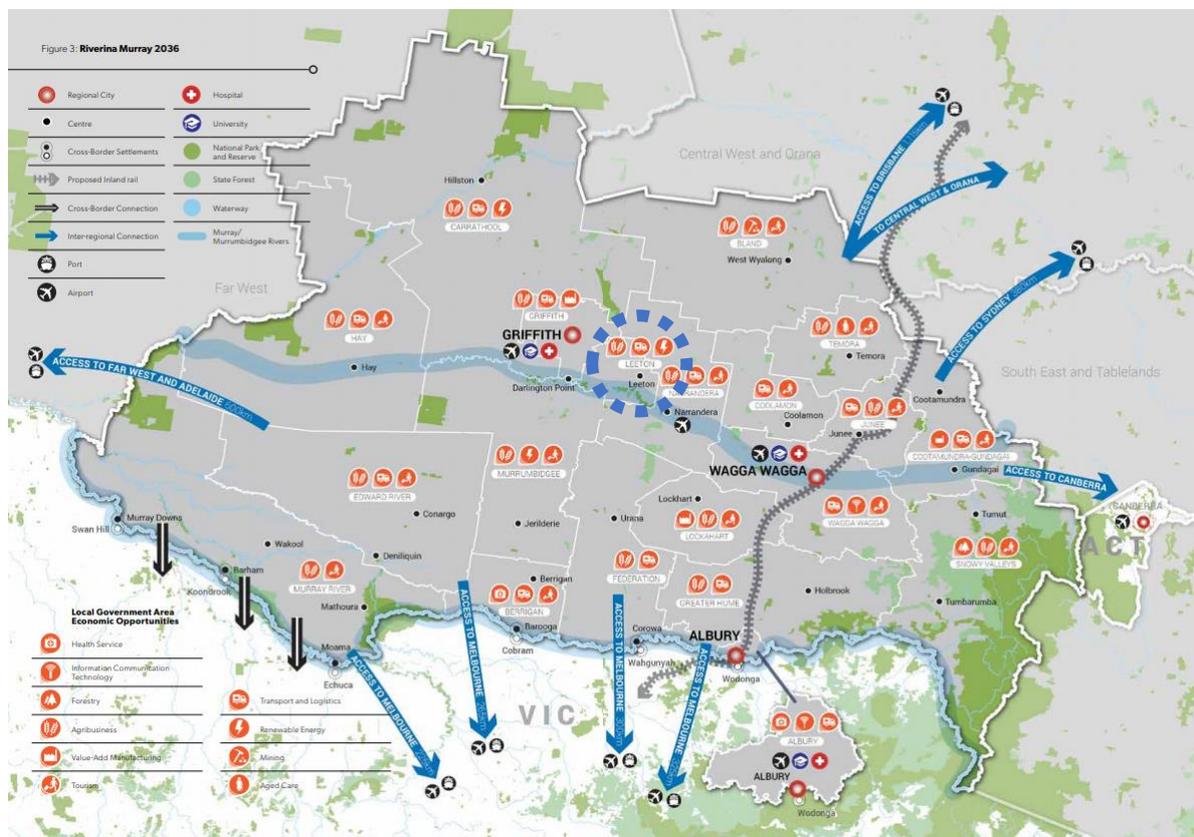


Figure 5: The Riverina Murray region

Global Mega Trends

By 2030 we expect a more variable climate with warmer temperatures, less rainfall, and more extreme weather including droughts and floods. Energy consumption will grow by 30% with greater demand for renewables. Superbugs will flourish with growing resistance to antibiotics, herbicides and pesticides.

By 2030 the world will need to feed another 1B people and Australia's population will reach 30M. Global food production will need to increase by 35% by 2030. Asia-Pacific will be a focal point for wealth generation, including education, health, banking and finance, tourism, administration and other service sectors.

Transport and logistics will be a focus as more freight is moved and more people travel. On-line purchasing will increase and the quantity of data transmitted over the internet will continue to rise exponentially.

The population is ageing and the demand for aged care facilities and healthcare will increase putting huge pressure on national budgets. Rates of chronic illness associated with diet and lifestyle remain high as sedentary behaviour increases.

Digital technology advancements and innovation will reshape business models, jobs, learning, communication,

governance systems and lifestyles. There will be more and more automation, augmented by artificial intelligence.

The physical spaces in which we live, work and play will hold even greater significance. Humans need to escape the virtual world and will seek ways in which to do a "digital detox". As houses reduce in size, green spaces will be more important than ever.



Local Planning Challenges

1. Growth of Solar farms resulting in a potential loss of irrigated farmland for non-agricultural production.

The economy of Leeton Shire is largely dependent and driven by irrigated agriculture. The production and value adding of seasonal food and fibre crops underpins the economy and associated manufacturing, transport, retail, professional services and educational establishments of the Shire.

Any loss of significant areas of irrigated land from the production of food and fibre is considered to be a serious threat to the sustainability of the area given that irrigated land is highly developed with established infrastructure such as irrigation supply canals and channels and irrigation drainage channels (arguably nation building infrastructure). The change of land use from irrigated crop production to a non- agricultural purpose has the potential to have long term negative consequences to adjoining farms.

To address this issue Council could undertake a Rural Land use study to investigate current threats and opportunities to identify suitable options to address the issues created by solar farms in agricultural areas.

2. Changing rural tenure patterns leading to the expansion of broadscale farming businesses and the effect on minimum lot sizes and existing dwellings in RU1 areas.

There is anecdotal evidence that indicates that land use patterns within the broad scale irrigated cropping farms are changing with existing irrigated farms being amalgamated into larger production units. This often occurs when an existing farm owner wishes to retire from farming yet remain on the farm on a smaller lot and sell the remaining larger part of the farm, often to an adjoining landowner to increase their holding.

Where farmers wish to expand their holding and are forced to purchase an entire farm with an existing dwelling on it. The presence of the existing dwelling effectively increases the purchase price of the farm and at the same time the area on which the unwanted dwelling and associated building reduces the area of available land to the purchaser.

Currently the minimum lot size on a which a dwelling exists in these areas is 150ha.

To maintain the local economy based on irrigation and associated rural based manufacture the LEP must be adaptive to changing farm business needs and new agricultural

commodity opportunities by also being adaptive to applying minimum lot sizes whilst minimising potential land use conflicts.

Council could undertake a Rural Land use study investigating current threats and opportunities and identify suitable options to address lot sizes and succession planning in the primary production zone.

3. Increasing demand for low-cost short-term labour housing

Council continues to receive applications for low-cost short-term labour accommodation, both on and off farm.

Council supports the provision of low-cost short-term labour accommodation that are constructed to appropriate minimum standards and in appropriate locations to assist farmers and to protect the occupants of the accommodation and the amenity of the surrounding area.

Currently the Leeton Local Environmental Plan permits rural workers dwellings in rural zones and boarding houses in most residential areas.

The standards of boarding houses are set by the Boarding Houses Act. For backpackers and rural workers accommodation the standard is set by the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings)

Regulation 2005 and Rural Housing Code.

Council needs to establish development standards that permit farmers to establish required accommodation options for their workers, whilst at the same time providing healthy levels of accommodation for the occupants and protecting local amenity.

4. Lane way development in Leeton

Within the R3 Residential zone a number of night soil lanes exist that provide access to the rear of the lots. These laneways have existed since the development of the residential area and were established to provide access for a weekly nightsoil collection service prior to the installation of reticulated sewer. These laneways generally average 6m in width.

Council continues to receive development applications seeking to develop residential accommodation that are accessed from the rear laneway, which have been dealt with on the individual merit of the development in lieu of a development control policy. These laneways provide a unique opportunity to increase the residential lot yield within the R3 zone.

However, this opportunity must also be accompanied by appropriate development standards to ensure that increasing usage does not create issues as traffic congestion,

on street carparking, garbage collection etc.

5. Demand for rental accommodation

Anecdotally and from Council experience, Leeton has a shortage of rental accommodation. Skilled workers recruited from out of town are often reluctant to purchase

homes immediately. Industries report that they lose workers to other towns as they cannot easily find suitable rental accommodation in Leeton. The Whitton Town Improvement Committee also reports that demand for rental accommodation outstrips supply in Whitton.



Opportunities To Be Harnessed

1. Leverage off existing rural manufacturing base

Leeton Shire has a number of established manufacturing-based business, including agricultural product value adding industries, product manufacturing businesses and construction business.

These businesses are supported by a range of transport companies, skilled labour and local training opportunities.

2. Council developed industrial land

Leeton Council has a long history of developing fully serviced industrial allotments.

Council has developed 2 stages covering 48 ha. at the Vance Industrial Estate which currently represents 110 lots which have been developed and is currently planning the next stage comprising of 10 ha.

The Vance Industrial Complex represents a unique area of high-quality industrial lots from 2,000m² to 8,000m² with road train access, internet and full services and provides a vital element in the economic prosperity of Leeton Shire. An opportunity exists to leverage of the existing industries to attract new business to the region.

Land use planning has a role to play in this process through the zoning of

suitable industrial land, protection through exclusion zones of industrial developments and transport routes and establishment of a special use zone over the WRConnect development at Wumbulgal.

From a land use planning perspective, a long-term action should be to identify and acquire the next stages for future expansion of industrial land.

3. Freight, Logistics and Industrial Precincts

The site for the WRConnect road rail freight hub and rural industry precinct is located in Leeton Shire but is regionally significant.

This site has unique attributes that makes it extremely suitable for the further development of a range of rural base industries and business.

Located on the northern boundary of the Leeton Shire the site consists of approximately 350ha and is bounded on its western boundary by a classified road Irrigation Way and along its northern boundary by the Wagga/Junee railway. A high-pressure gas main also runs along the northern boundary.

This site which currently has 7 lots with 4 established businesses is remote from any adjoining dwellings and is

surrounded by broad scale irrigated and dry area farming land.

Its location and access to road and rail transport and a number of large regional industries creates enormous potential for future development which needs to be protected through the establishment of an activation precinct in order to streamline the planning and development process for the site.

4. Lane and development in Leeton

Within the R3 Residential zone a number of night soil lanes exist that provide access to the rear of the lots. These laneways have existed since the development of the residential area and were established to provide access for a weekly night soil collection service prior to the installation of reticulated sewer. These laneways generally average 6m in width.

Council has over the past received development applications seeking to develop residential accommodation that are accessed from the rear laneway, which have been dealt with on the individual merit of the development in lieu of a development control policy.

These laneways provide a unique opportunity to increase the residential lot yield within the R3 zone. However, this opportunity must also be accompanied by appropriate development standards to ensure that increasing usage does not create issues such as traffic congestion, on street carparking, garbage collection etc.

5. Agri-Tourism and accommodation

Leeton Shire has a mix of agricultural production and activities which presents an opportunity in the agri-tourism sector.

Through planning and land use controls various agri-tourism and alternate accommodation uses and types can be further encouraged. An increase in agri-tourism and associated agri-business opportunities has the potential to have a positive impact on the economy via increased tourism whilst having a positive impact on employment opportunities across the Shire.

Leeton LSPS Mission

The Leeton Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement will, in recognition of our Wiradjuri Heritage and our pioneering forefathers who established our irrigation farming

culture, assist our diverse, committed and innovative community to strengthen and protect our agriculture, manufacturing, education, heritage and environmental assets.



How Do We Get There?

Planning Priorities

To achieve the Shire's 20-year vision, 37 planning priorities have been identified to guide us towards this vision. The planning priorities cover eight (8) themes to improve the social, environmental and economic development of our Shire and will form the focus of our strategic planning.

Actions

We will work towards the planning priorities by completing the actions according to the short (1-3 years), medium (3-5 years) or long term (5-10 years) schedule. Actions may include preparation of strategies or policies, updates to the LEP or sourcing funding for projects aligned with our planning priorities. These actions are consistent with our CSP and LEP and will enact some of the Regional Plan actions.

Implementation,

Monitoring and Reporting

Council will ensure the planning priorities are achieved through regular review and monitoring of the actions progress. Monitoring of the actions will where possible, be aligned to existing review and reporting schedules including the LEP (5 years) and CSP (4 years). The entire LSPS will also be reviewed every 7 years. This approach is consistent with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Actions will be incorporated in Council's Delivery Program and Annual Operational Plans, which are formally reported to Council and Community on a 6-monthly basis.



Priority One – Agriculture

Protect agricultural land functions and support the diversification and value-adding opportunities of agriculture

Agriculture is a significant contributor to Leeton Shire's economy. The primary agricultural commodities in Leeton Shire are citrus, rice, grapes, cotton, nuts, aquaculture, cereals, cattle feedlots and abattoirs. The agricultural production sector employed 11% of the Shire's population and contributed \$91 million to the economy (RMCG, 2016) in 2010-2011.

The importance of agricultural production is reflected in the LEP. Across the Shire, 1,011 square kilometres (87%) is zoned rural to allow for a range of agricultural land uses. Of this land, 886 square kilometres are mapped as Important Agricultural Land (DPI, 2018), notably as it is irrigated farmland that benefited from the nation building Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme.

It is important that our local planning controls are adaptive to accommodate new land uses which also uphold the agricultural function and productivity of our productive land. Land use conflict and fragmentation of high value agricultural land can impact our region's economy by limiting the productivity, employment potential and diversification of agricultural industries. Therefore, we will preserve our high value productive agricultural land and infrastructure, while providing appropriate locations and transition zones for incompatible land uses to

grow, for example urban expansion and solar farms.

Link to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan -2030

Providing development opportunities that support the growth plans of existing MI Customers.

Link to Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018-2022

A need for more timely water allocation notification, improved agricultural productivity through diversification, value adding and innovation, a reduced reliance on high water use crops, and improved water trading to better manage risk and optimise outcomes for farmers.



Link to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 1 – Protect the region's diverse and productive agricultural land

Direction 2 – Promote and grow the agribusiness sector

Direction 3 – Expand advanced and value-added manufacturing

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Undertake a Rural Land Use Study to determine current and likely drivers to agricultural production in the Shire, identify current land patterns, trends, opportunities and threats to ensure land use, zoning and planning standards reflect industry requirements. This will include identifying all areas of important Agricultural Land within the Shire to protect them from land use conflict and fragmentation that have the potential to remove or reduce agricultural land from agricultural production.



Action 2 – Implement strategies identified by the Rural Land use Study into the Leeton Local Environmental Plan.

Medium Term 3-5 Years

Action 1 – Encourage co-location of agricultural value-added industries where appropriate.



Priority Two – Employment

Protect key employment lands and their access to markets

Leeton has a key regional role within the agricultural production and manufacturing sector. Value-adding industries are based at the Vance Industrial Estate, Brady Way and Calrose Street industrial areas and are an important component of Leeton Shire's economy. Leeton is also the home of Western Riverina Connect (WRConnect), a regionally significant freight, logistics and industrial hub in the Western Riverina region. Appropriately locating, servicing and protecting our industrial lands and logistics hubs from incompatible land uses is necessary to maintain growth in the agricultural production and manufacturing sector.

The viability of our agricultural production and manufacturing sector is also based on access to domestic and international markets via the Ports of Sydney and Melbourne. Protecting our important freight transport routes, including key road and rail linkages to WRConnect and Leeton Industrial Precinct as well as Leeton Bypass ensuring connection to the Inland Rail.

With the diversification of agricultural output and the drive toward intense and high value produce, the importance of providing further access to domestic and international markets via airfreight logistics affords Leeton Agricultural producers the capability to meet market demands for fresh produce. This will enhance employment opportunities with the

expansion into new markets and provide diversity in output for high value agricultural products.

Link to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan - 2030

Helping existing businesses to grow, including increasing our export potential.

Expanding the range of industries in the Shire.

Building and Development Approvals being processed by Council in a timely manner.

Using different kinds of renewable energy.

Link to Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018-2022

Seek to improve connections between our towns and villages as well as to capital cities and consider technology and innovative service models.

A shared Strategy and a shared Implementation and Resourcing Plan (I&R Plan) for industry, workforce and jobs growth in the region.

Link to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 3 –

Expand advanced and value-added manufacturing.

Direction 4 –

Promote business activities in industrial and commercial areas.

Direction 17 –

Transform the region into the eastern seaboard's freight and logistics hub.

Direction 18 –

Enhance road and rail freight links.

Direction 20 –

Identify and protect future transport corridors.

Direction 22 –

Promote the growth of regional cities and local centres.

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Advance with neighbouring Councils the establishment of the WRConnect at Wumbulgal for freight, logistics, industrial and port functionality in support of agribusiness, ideally as a NSW Government endorsed local or special activation

precinct. Progress next iteration of the masterplan and business case.

Action 2 – Complete an Integrated Watercycle Management Plan.

Action 3 – Review Section 64 Contributions Plan.

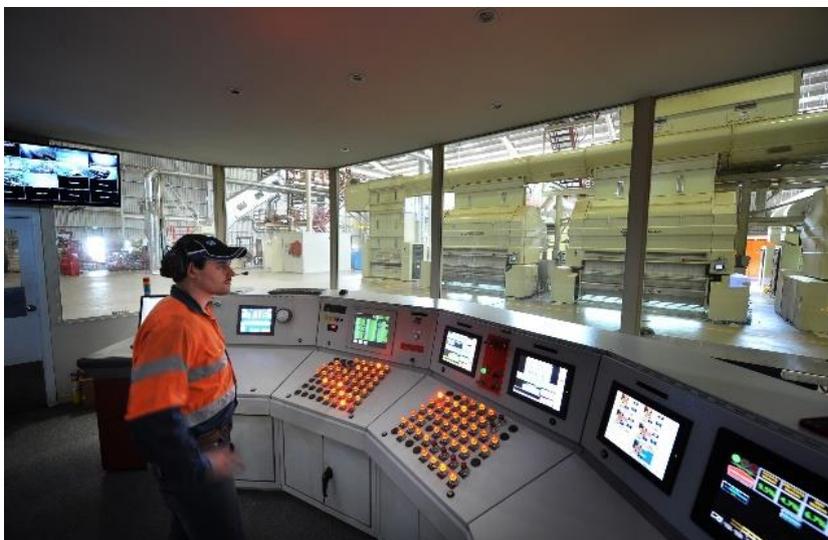
Action 4 – Review location and quantity of Industrial Zoned land.

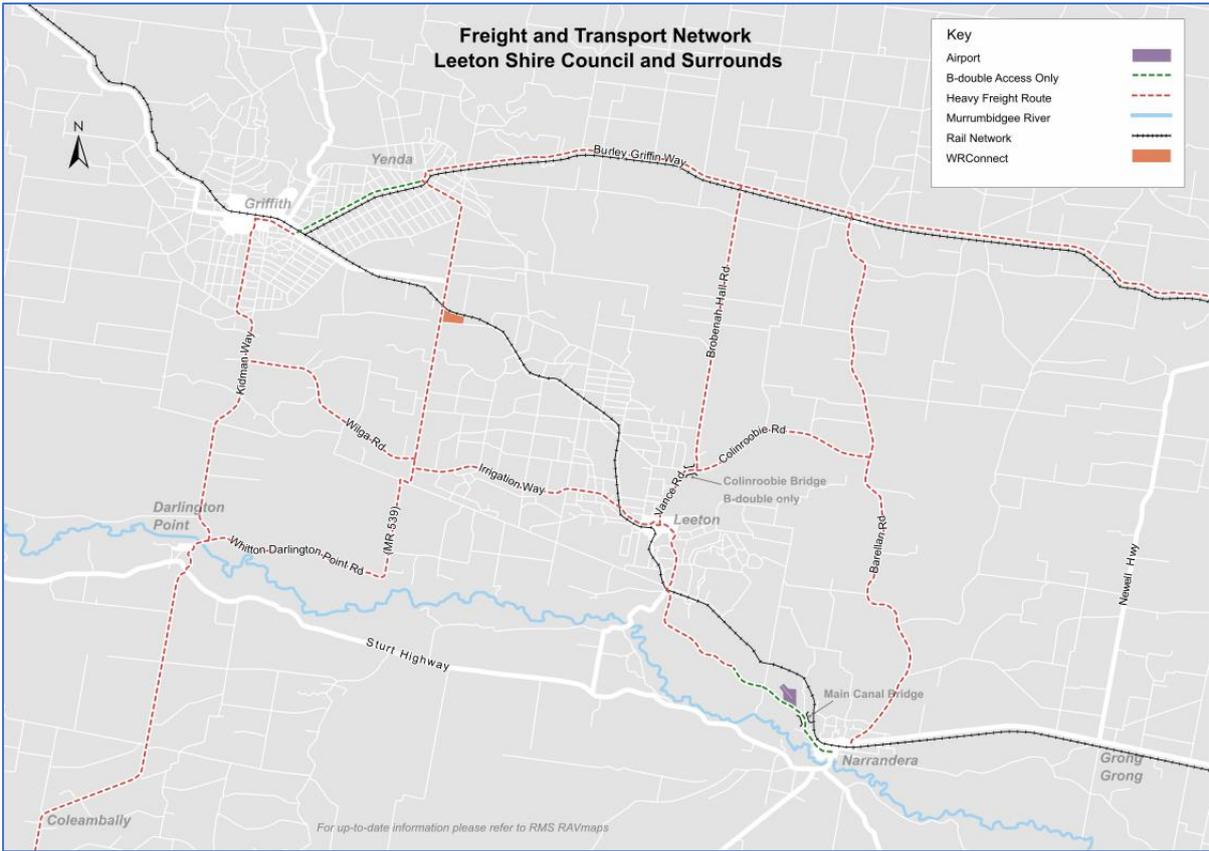
Action 5 – Advocate for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass for Leeton Shire that connects regional roads to industrial areas and WRConnect.

Medium Term 3-5 Years

Action 1 – Review Section 7.12 (formally Section 94A) Contributions plan.

Action 2 – In conjunction with Narrandera Shire investigate the potential for expansion of the current Leeton-Narrandera Airport in support of International Freight and Logistics capability.





Priority Three – Tourism

Promote tourism opportunities

Tourism is an opportunity within Leeton Shire to diversify the region's economy. In 2019 tourism contributed \$11m to the Leeton Shire economy. Despite Leeton not being situated on the major transport route between Sydney or Melbourne, several tourism opportunities draw visitors from the surrounding and wider region.

Examples of such opportunities are the Leeton Art Deco Festival, the Bidgee Classic Fishing Competition, the Bi-annual SunRice festival, the Leeton Eisteddfod, Leeton Band Spectacular and Leeton F1 Gliding Championships. Leeton Shire has exceptional sporting and recreational facilities that cater for a wide range of activities. This includes touch football, rugby league, cricket, rugby union, soccer, futsal, basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton, squash tennis, swimming, little athletics, gliding, harness racing and more.

A major sporting precinct is Leeton Town Ovals Complex on Palm Avenue. In the vicinity is the Mark Taylor Oval, Leeton Tennis Courts, Leeton Indoor Stadium, Leeton Regional Swimming Pool and the Leeton Skate Park.

Other sporting venues in the Shire include the Leeton Show Ground, Leeton Golf Course, Yanco Sports Ground, Leeton District Bowling Club, Leeton Soldiers Club, Leeton Pony Club,

Leeton High School Ovals, gymnasiums and more.

Leeton takes advantage of its rich architectural history, environment and local attractions to draw crowds of up to 25,000. Other tourism opportunities include RAMSAR listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands that attract visitors due to the environmental significance and abundant birdlife.

In order to accommodate overnight visitors, adequate short-term accommodation options within Leeton are essential. There are also opportunities to partner with Griffith and Narrandera centres to supply adequate accommodation during periods of high demand. The provision of more short-term accommodation can also benefit working holiday makers employed for seasonal horticulture work.



**Links to Leeton Shire Council
Community Strategic Plan – 2030**

Improving the range and quality of accommodation in town.

Link to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 7 –

Promote tourism opportunities.

Direction 26 –

Provide greater housing choice.

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Investigate agri-tourism opportunities in the primary production zones and recommend land uses that maximise innovation and diversification potential in local farm and recommend supporting accommodation.

Action 2 – Develop a masterplan or precinct plan for Gogeldrie Weir and surrounds.



Priority Four – Retail

Enhance Pine, Kurrajong and Wade Avenues to promote retail opportunities and a vibrant place for the community

The Leeton Central Business District (CBD) is characterised as a 'retail strip', comprising of Pine Avenue and Kurrajong Avenue. These roads also function as the primary transport corridor through the township of Leeton, providing connections to Narrandera and Griffith. Notable features of Leeton's CBD include the Roxy Theatre, a heritage-listed 1930's art-deco theatre and cinema. Many businesses also occupy historic buildings built during the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme from 1912 onwards.

Leeton's CBD provides essential services to the villages of Whitton, Yanco, Murrumbidgee and Wamoon as well as surrounding centres. It is essential that these services be retained and encouraged to grow to provide a focal point for the community to work, meet and shop.

Leeton's retail strip hosts numerous restaurants, cafes, shopping and office buildings. Preservation of the retail strip is important to us and can be achieved through encouraging several larger 'anchor' retailers along Pine, Kurrajong and Wade Avenues rather than co-located within a shopping centre. A "Movement and Place" framework will be explored for the CBD in association with TfNSW.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment Planning for the Future of Retail Study identified the retail sector will undergo rapid changes over the next 20 years in response to demand for online and unique retail experiences. To protect and grow our CBD the local planning system will need to be flexible to accommodate emerging retail trends.

Council recently successfully led a land use proposal to allow greater accommodation choice in the CBD.

Links to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan – 2030

Finalise and implement the CBD Enhancement program.

Have a deliberate focus on Leeton's Art Deco heritage.

Ensure our planning rules strengthen and do not compromise our CBD.

Have our main street being controlled locally instead of by State Government.

Link to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 4 – Promote business activities in industrial and commercial areas.

Direction 29 – Protect the region's Aboriginal and historic heritage.

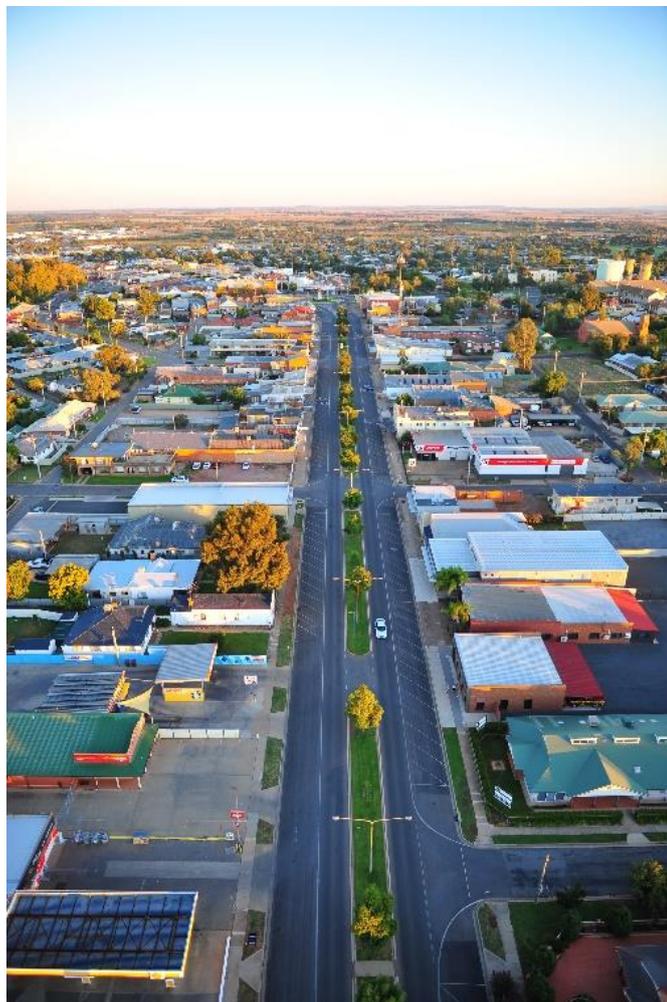
Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Develop a Development Control Plan to preserve and enhance heritage buildings in the CBD by introducing development standards on signage, facades and external colours.

Medium Term 3-5 Years

Action 1 – Complete the Leeton CBD Enhancement Project to improve the amenity and usability of the Leeton CBD by making it a more attractive retail precinct.



Priority Five – Housing

Ensure the community has access to diverse housing options

Leeton Shire's population is expected to grow by 8.9% by 2036, with a 10% increase in people aged 65 and over (DPE, 2018). Leeton also experiences a seasonal population growth from itinerant workers employed in industries such as fruit picking and processing.

In order to accommodate the changing population, there will need to be diverse housing options available for permanent and itinerant residents. This is particularly vital as the current most common household (couple with children) will be replaced by single person households in 2036 (DPE, 2018).

Housing in Leeton is dominated by low-rise detached dwellings. Greater housing choice will be needed to accommodate a diverse range of lifestyles and the needs of an ageing population. Encouraging a diverse range of housing will make Leeton a more attractive place for people to live.

Leeton lacks housing for new retirees who have a desire to downsize. These retirees are independent, active and not ready to transition into an age-care facility. Leeton also lacks rental accommodation.

Any future housing within Leeton Shire should be appropriately located, with easy access to community facilities, adequate infrastructure and avoid environmental impacts where possible. The flood study has revealed areas previously identified in the LEP as flood

prone and will require consideration during the LEP review.

Other potential areas for future housing development may include the likes of the Roxy Theatre precinct, Brobenah Reserve alongside Soldiers Club or towards Lake Paddock. These potential areas for further development may be desirable options, however, would need to be explored further for viability.



Detached dwellings 85%



Semi-detached dwellings 5.1%



Apartments 5.5%

Link to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan - 2030

Identifying land that might be good for building more houses, including special housing types like elderly, youth, lower income and backpacker places and making sure there is enough transport available for their needs.

Promoting house builds that foster health and wellbeing and long-term affordability.

Link to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 25 – Build housing capacity to meet demand.

Direction 26 –

Provide greater housing choice.

Direction 28 –

Deliver healthy built environments and improved urban design.

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Complete a local housing strategy to ensure adequate supply of diverse housing choices and should include a review of current residential zoned land against the Flood Plain Risk Management Study (FRMP).

Action 2 – Develop Water and Wastewater Development Services Plan (DSP) that will facilitate residential growth.

Action 3 – Review local planning controls to provide greater housing choice by investigating existing density standards and minimum lot sizes.

Action 4 – Introduce a Development Control Plan to reflect community acceptable development standards in

relation to residential accommodation design, energy efficiency, accommodation suitable for aging population, affordable housing and short-term accommodation such as backpackers.

Action 5 – Develop and establish laneway development standards for inclusion in a Development Control Plan.

Long Term 5-10 years

Action 1 – Complete Flood Studies for villages including Murrami, Whitton and Wamoon.



Priority Six – Community

Ensure the community has access to liveable neighbourhoods and quality open space

Leeton Shire residents enjoy a high level of accessibility to open spaces, parks, community facilities, sporting fields and reserves. This accessibility is important to our community's quality of life. Ensuring community facilities and spaces are suitably located, maintained and accessible to all residents is a priority to sustain our growing population.

Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin designed Leeton in their classic geometric forms and is the first Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area town. Leeton is characterised by tree lined streets which radiate out from the town centre based around a prominent hill which is topped by two art deco water towers. Protecting, promoting and enhancing Leeton's historic structure is important to maintain our local character for visitors and residents.

There is also an important greenbelt running from the Leeton Pool, to the ovals, golf course, showground and racecourse.

One method of protecting our local landscape is by producing a Development Control Plan (DCP). A DCP will support the Leeton Shire LEP and assist council in the Development Application process. A DCP can contain guidelines to meet certain development outcomes such as design, engineering and hazard controls which are specific our needs.

Links to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan – 2030

Ensuring land in the Shire is zoned appropriately, including more mixed zones, to encourage safe, healthy living and good business.

Implementing measures to cater for a range of potential natural disasters. By developing footpaths, disability car parks and cycleways that meet priority needs.

Link to Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018-2022

Maintaining basic health services and addressing the changing needs of the ageing population (e.g. supporting aging in place) and the increased demand for mental health services for both young people and adults.

Improving digital connectivity is noted in multiple strategy documents as crucial for economic growth as well as our health and safety.

Links to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 22 –

Promote the growth of regional cities and local centres.

Direction 28 –

Deliver healthy built environments and improved urban design.

Direction 29 –

Protect the region's Aboriginal and historic heritage.

Leeton Shire Playground Strategy 2017-2032

By establishing a hierarchy for playgrounds Council will have a framework by which it can deliver more consistent approach to the management, development and maintenance of play space areas which are similar in scale, scope and function. It will enable Council to plan for a suite of facilities providing diversity for the community, and a consistent distribution throughout the LGA which minimises duplication of like spaces and facilities within neighbourhoods and districts.

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Prepare Development Control Plan to incorporate safer by design principles for residential subdivisions, adequate levels of servicing, provision of appropriate street trees and protection and enhancement of local character.

Action 2 – Further refine the Active Transport Strategy (formally known as PAMP) to increase pedestrian and disability access friendly pathways and cycleways to promote active transport options in Leeton Shire.

Action 3 – Review the existing Playground Strategy to include development of open greenspace to the North of Leeton correlating with residential expansion.



Priority Seven – Environment

Protect the region’s environmental assets and increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change

Water is the lifeblood of the Shire. Whether it is from rainfall or the Murrumbidgee River, water security is key for our strong irrigation and manufacturing community. With the extremes of our variable climate, increasing natural hazard resilience is vital for Leeton Shire to manage the impacts from drought, water availability and floodplain management. To help manage these impacts we will embrace new technologies and practices to reduce carbon emissions, efficiently manage natural resources and appropriately locate developments.

Within Leeton Shire protected environmental areas are restricted to Murrumbidgee Valley National Park and the RAMSAR listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil wetlands. Identifying non-protected areas with high environmental value is a priority to preserve our local biodiversity like our

Travelling Stock Routes. We will adopt the principles of avoid, minimise and mitigate to appropriately manage and protect biodiversity values from inappropriate land uses and development. This will provide a balance between the growth of our communities and economy, and preservation of local biodiversity values for future generations.

The RAMSAR listed wetlands offer a valuable location for biodiversity offsets to be applied if and when relevant in Leeton Shire.

Links to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan – 2030

Tackling climate change and adapting to it. Promoting alternate energy and increasing renewable energy projects. Including responsible and sensitive use of water in future urban and landscape planning.



Link to Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018-2022

The need for affordable and clean energy is important for both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Links to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

These actions give effect to:

Direction 11 – *Promote the diversification of energy supplies through renewable energy generation*

Direction 14 – *Manage land uses along key river corridors*

Direction 15 – *Protect and manage the region's many environmental assets*

Direction 16 – *Increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change*

Actions

Short Term 1 to 3Years

Action 1 – Prepare Development Control Plan to incorporate minimum solar access levels, appropriate street trees to achieve cooler street microclimates, responsible and sensitive use of water in future urban and landscape planning.

Action 2 – Prepare a Development Control Plan with the inclusion of regulations for vegetation clearing in non-rural areas consistent with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-rural Areas) 2017.

Action 3 – Prepare an Adverse Event Plan in conjunction with RAMJO (and having regard to the Murray-



Murrumbidgee Climate Change Snapshot) partners to manage and mitigate risks associated with likes of climate change, including but not limited to floods, droughts and extreme temperatures.

Action 4 – Investigate and develop controls to mitigate and adapt to the effects of Climate Change to improve people's quality of life and reduce urban heat.

Medium Term 3 to 5 Years

Action 1 – Review current mapping and characterise the environmental values within Leeton Shire.

Action 2 – Identify protected areas in Leeton LGA (e.g. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Estate, Crown Reserves) and avoid land use intensification adjacent to protected areas.

Priority Eight – Heritage and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Recognise and respect Heritage and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Value

Many different cultures and events have helped shape Leeton Shire's rich history. The traditional owners of the land, the Wiradjuri people, have lived in the area for thousands of years and continue to influence Leeton Shire's identity. Aboriginal heritage, cultural values and assets need to be better understood, communicated and celebrated with pride as shared history between all community members.

Some noteworthy historic influences in Leeton included people such as Henry Lawson, Walter Burley Griffin and a strong influx of Italian immigrants as well as the development of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area from 1906 and the renowned Letona Cannery.

Leeton's main street features many art deco buildings, some which have been carefully restored and maintained. The most well-known is the Roxy Community Theatre.

Leeton has 8 State Heritage Register Items

- The Roxy Theatre,
- Yanco Ag High School,
- Gogeldrie Weir,
- Koonadan,
- WCIC Building and artefacts,
- Yanco Weir,
- Leeton Railway Station and
- Hydro Hotel.

The Shire has one Aboriginal Place being 'Koonadan' burial site and 64 recorded Aboriginal Places. Leeton Shire has 110 Local Heritage Items

which includes several items and buildings in Leeton's main street.

Leeton Shire has many cultural treasures that need to be displayed and celebrated. Museums such as the Leeton Museum (newly developed), Yanco Powerhouse Museum and the Whitton Museum sympathetically display the history and heritage of Leeton.

Leeton Shire partners each year with the Office of Environment and Heritage to provide Local Heritage Places grant funding for the refurbishment and enhancement of heritage buildings in the Shire.

Links to Leeton Shire Council Community Strategic Plan – 2030

By the whole community ensuring our main street and central areas preserve and showcase our heritage.

By collaborating with our local Aboriginal people to celebrate our Wiradjuri history.

By sourcing grant funding to complete the Roxy Community Theatre refurbishment project. Who may be available to help?

Links to Riverina Murray Regional Plan

Direction 8 - Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

Direction 29 - Protect the region's Aboriginal and historic heritage assets.

Actions

Short Term 1-3 Years

Action 1 – Promote Leeton Shire's Local Heritage Places grant and Heritage Advisory Service to enhance Heritage items and the heritage buildings in Leeton's CBD.

Action 2 – Introduce a Development Control Plan to include the preservation and enhancement of heritage buildings in the CBD by introducing development standards on heritage compliant designs, signage, facades and external colours.

Action 3 – Increase heritage protection and revitalise the main streets, town centres and villages through community education and development incentives in local plans.

Action 4 – Maintain heritage listings in Leeton Shire Local Environmental Plan

to facilitate the conservation of the Shire's heritage.

Medium Term 3-5 Years

Action 1 – Undertake and implement regional Aboriginal cultural heritage study in consultation with Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council, to inform local land use strategies.

Action 2 – Facilitate the repair, maintenance and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings, along with appropriate infill development, that ensures the conservation of the Shire's heritage.

Long Term 5-10 Years

Action 1 – Investigate applying for Leeton's CBD "Streetscape" to be State Heritage Listed.



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