

Liveable Leeton 2035 *Community Strategic Plan*



The *Liveable Leeton 2035* Community Strategic Plan has been developed for and by the community of Leeton Shire with support from Leeton Shire Council.



In conjunction with other Wiradjuri activities, the digitised artwork of Wiradjuri artist William Ingram was projected onto the Chelmsford Place Water Tower during Australia Day celebrations. Acquired by Leeton Museum and Gallery (LMAG), this artwork is proudly displayed in the museum foyer. It is woven into LMAG's branding to honour the Wiradjuri peoples, the traditional custodians of the land on which LMAG is located and to cherish the richness of their artistic and cultural expressions.

The Leeton Shire community acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people, and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers. We also acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians to this country we all live in and share together.

Foreword

As a community we believe that Leeton Shire has a bright future. We know that achieving this takes a clear vision, strong leadership and dedicated commitment to see our aspirations delivered in full.

The *Liveable Leeton 2035* Community Strategic Plan not only provides a clear vision it also sets out the priority steps we can take towards achieving that vision so that we can work together to make Leeton Shire the place we want it to be.

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now. – ALAN LAKEIN

The aim of the *Liveable Leeton 2035* Community Strategic Plan is to protect and strengthen what we value about Leeton Shire – such as our sense of community and friendly people, our rural/small country town lifestyle, and our peace and quiet – and enhance our future socially, economically, culturally and environmentally.

The plan builds on previous community plans and has been developed with significant community engagement. We have asked ourselves the following questions:

- Where are we at today?
- Where do we want to be in 10+ years' time?
- How will we get there?
- Who may be able to help?
- How will we know that we're on track or that we have arrived?

Liveable Leeton 2035 sends a series of important messages to Council, Government, non-government organisations and community groups about where the community would like to see valuable resources such as time, energy and money directed over the coming years to ensure our long-term wellbeing.

Both our individual and organisational decisions and actions (or inaction) have a result or impact on our community life. They have implications not only for what we are working towards achieving but also what we are giving up to achieve something else.

Leeton Shire Council has helped to steward the collation of this Plan on behalf of the community. The Council is one agency that will consider what the community has said when it develops its Delivery Program 2022–2025.

We have our plan. The challenge for us all now lies in continuing to work together to ensure that our aspirational outcomes are achieved.

If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself. – HENRY FORD



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1 Introduction

What is a Community Strategic Plan?

Liveable Leeton 2035 is Leeton Shire's Community Strategic Plan. It outlines the community's aspirations and long-term vision for Leeton Shire.

This plan is a community plan. It has been prepared by Council in collaboration with, and on behalf of residents, other levels of government and agencies. Responsibility for meeting the long-term community vision and desired outcomes rests with everyone. When the plan refers to 'we', it refers to the collective community including Council, government agencies and other organisations and groups, as well as its residents.

A good plan is like a road map: it shows the final destination and usually the best way to get there.

- H STANLEY JUDD

The Community Strategic Plan is broken into five focus areas:

- A connected, inclusive and enriched community
- A safe, active and healthy community
- A thriving regional economy
- A quality environment
- Strong leadership and civic participation.

For each focus area there is set of **outcomes**. These outcomes are based on our community's vision for the future.

For each outcome there are **strategies** for achieving the outcome.

And for each strategy, there's a list of stakeholders who may be able to help. We've called them **partners in delivery**. These are the organisations, groups and segments of the community who may be able to undertake the strategy or parts of the strategy.

In essence, the outcomes and **strategies** in each focus area are our road map: the outcomes are the destination and the strategies are how we're going to get to that destination.

Finally, there are **indicators** that measure our progress along the road towards reaching our destination.

While the Community Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the local Council to prepare, it does this on behalf of the community. The Community Strategic Plan is not a Council plan, but rather a plan for the whole community.

Community groups, sporting organisations, other levels of government and individual community members can use this Plan to guide the way they deliver services, invest resources, prioritise actions and in other ways make contributions towards achieving the community's goals.

At the beginning of each Council term, a progress report called the State of the Shire Report will be provided to the community about how its goals are progressing. This will also serve to inform the development of the next Community Strategic Plan.



Why is the Community Strategic Plan important?

The *Liveable Leeton* 2035 Community Strategic Plan is important because it will guide the direction of the Leeton Shire community for the next 10+ years. It shares the vision and aspirations for the future of Leeton Shire and sets out the community's long-term plan.

Leeton Shire Council will use *Liveable Leeton* 2035 as its key strategic planning document. All Council's plans and activities will be geared towards achieving the aspirations of the community as set out in the plan. Council will measure its success as an organisation based on its ability to make progress in achieving those aspirations.

Council isn't the only organisation that will look to the Community Strategic Plan for guidance on what activities they should undertake. State and Federal Governments and their agencies will base some of their decisions, including funding decisions, for a local government area or region on what is included in the local government area's/ region's Community Strategic Plan(s).

How do we know the Community Strategic Plan truly reflects our views?

This Community Strategic Plan was prepared with the input of many people from the Leeton Shire community. Starting as early as 2020, a range of community engagement activities were undertaken to give Leeton Shire residents the opportunity to list what they value now, what they'd like to see changed and what they'd like Leeton Shire to look like in 2035.

The first activity was undertaken in early 2020 as engagement for Leeton's Local Strategic Planning Statement. This engagement yielded lots of feedback, including feedback that fed into the development of the Community Strategic Plan.

A telephone survey of 403 was conducted in June 2021.

In July 2021, community engagement sessions were held in Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Wamoon, Whitton and Yanco. Attempts were made to visit Wattle Hill during NAIDOC week celebrations but there was an increase in COVID-19 cases at that time and the celebrations were cancelled.

Also in July, emails requesting input into the development of the Community Strategic Plan were sent to a range of community groups, government agencies and other organisations identified as having a stake or a role to play in Leeton Shire. The list included but was not limited to:

- Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder
- Country Universities Centre
- Destination Riverina Murray
- Fivebough Tuckerbil Wetlands Advisory Committee
- Kurrajong
- Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council



- Leeton Art Society Inc
- Leeton Bidgee Classic Committee
- Leeton Business Chamber
- Leeton Connect
- Leeton Family and Local History Society
- Local schools and sporting clubs
- Murray Darling Basin Authority
- Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- Murrumbidgee Valley Food and Fibre Association
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- NSW Irrigators
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- NSW Police Force
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Ricegrowers Association of Australia
- Riverina Local Land Services
- TAFE Leeton
- Visit Riverina Inc
- Volunteering Australia
- Western Riverina Arts.

In December 2021–January 2022 Council conducted on-line engagement with a Have Your Say Survey, an on-line mapping tool and an ideas board.

Once a draft of the *Liveable Leeton* 2035 Community Strategic Plan was developed, the community was asked if it 'hit the mark'.

Feedback on the plan was requested via a media release, social media posts and Council's website. A *Liveable Leeton* 2035 display featured in a prominent shopfront over Easter, along with QR Code access to a 'Have Your Say' campaign. Drafts of *Liveable Leeton* 2035 were sent to a range of stakeholders, including community groups and government agencies, and Council staff were encouraged to distribute the draft document to contacts within the community. Council staff were also asked to provide feedback on the document.

Following the 30-day consultation period, all feedback was considered at the Council meeting of 25 May 2022.

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who had input into our Community Strategic Plan.

2 Where are we at right now?

Snapshot of Leeton Shire

Leeton Shire is one of the most innovative, inclusive and progressive places in inland Australia. Located in the Riverina 584km from Sydney, 470km from Melbourne and 371km from Canberra, Leeton is the birthplace of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and was purposely built by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission.

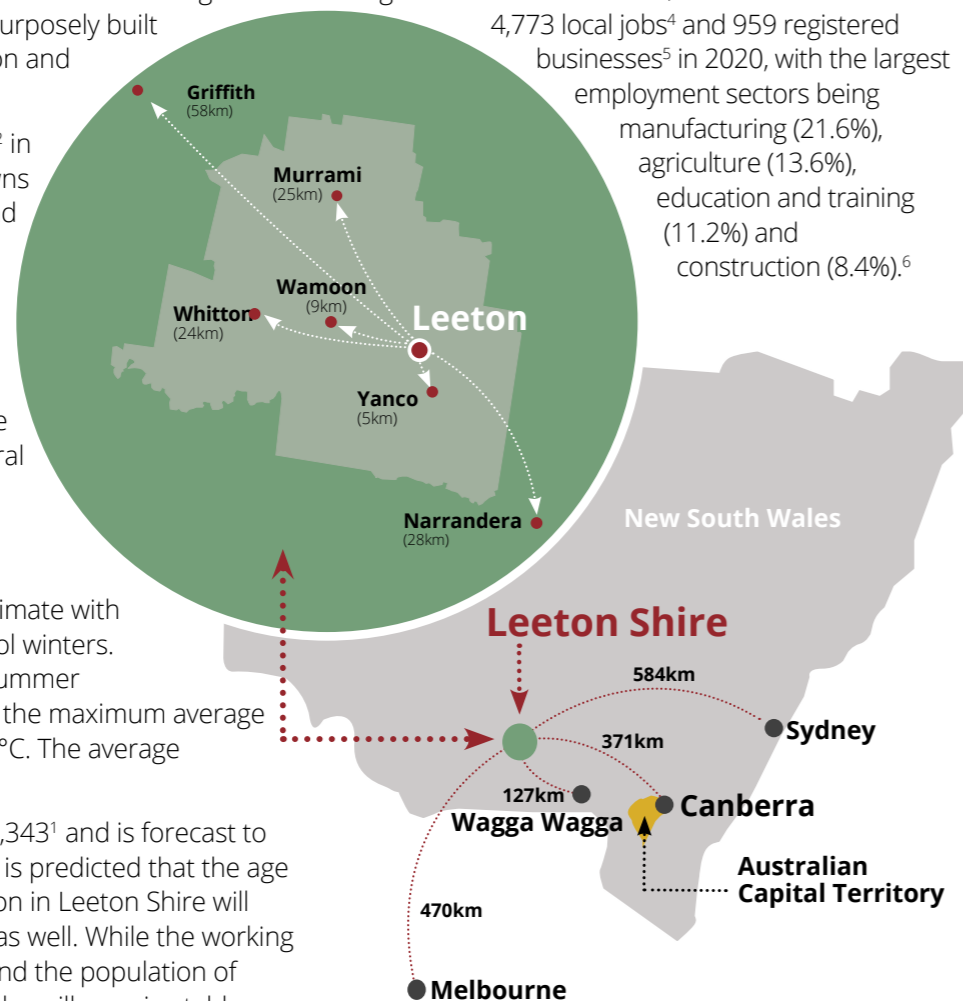
Leeton Shire is 1,167km² in size and includes the towns of Yanco and Whitton and the villages of Murrami and Wamoon. Leeton is the second largest regional centre in the Western Riverina region and plays an integral role in value-added agricultural processing, agriculture, education and research, transport and logistics.

Leeton has a semi-arid climate with hot dry summers and cool winters. The maximum average summer temperature is 32°C and the maximum average winter temperature is 15°C. The average annual rainfall is 457mm.

Leeton's population is 11,343¹ and is forecast to reach 12,700 by 2041.² It is predicted that the age structure of the population in Leeton Shire will change over that period as well. While the working age population (15–64) and the population of children aged 14 and under will remain stable, there will be an increase of more than 50% in the number of people of retirement age (65 and over).

Situated within the river environs of the Murrumbidgee River, water is central to Leeton Shire. The Ramsar-listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands also play an important part in the ecology by hosting migratory birds, some from the northern hemisphere, during the warmer months with 174 bird species being recorded.

The Shire enjoys a strong economy with the Gross Regional Product valued at \$584 million.³ There were 4,773 local jobs⁴ and 959 registered businesses⁵ in 2020, with the largest employment sectors being manufacturing (21.6%), agriculture (13.6%), education and training (11.2%) and construction (8.4%).⁶



Leeton is renowned as the heart of Australia's rice industry and is home to the SunRice headquarters. Between 2012 and 2020, SunRice made more than \$2 billion in paddy payments to Riverina (Murrumbidgee, Coleambally, Leeton and Murray River) rice growers.

In average crop years – as is predicted for 2022 – when a crop in excess of 600,000 paddy tonnes is expected to be harvested, SunRice directly employs more than 500 full-time equivalent employees and indirectly employs up to 8,000 people, contributing up to \$400 million in direct payments to the Riverina economy.

In 2021, there were 13,000 tonnes of walnuts processed in Leeton and 2021 saw 153,000 head of cattle processed at JBS Riverina Feedlot.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Estimated Resident Population 2020
² NSW Government 2019 population projections
³ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2021
⁴ NIEIR 2021
⁵ ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 2016 to 2020
⁶ NIEIR 2021

The above data has been compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions)

Note: Most of the data referred in this document has been compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). Much of that data is drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census, the 2021 Census data having not yet been released. The sources of other data will be cited in footnotes.

- **Population (ABS ERP 2020) 11,343**
- **Average number of children per family for families with children is 1.9**
- **2,731 – Families**
- **49.5% – Males**
- **50.5% – Females**
- **The median age is 40**
- **Top five countries of birth of residents is: Australia, Italy, New Zealand, England and Philippines**
- **Rateable properties as at June 2021 is 5,330**
- **Top four languages spoken at home (other than English) Italian, Punjabi, Filipino and Hazaraghi**
- **5,039 – Employed residents**
- **2.6% – Unemployment rate, the NSW average is 5.2%**
- **Median weekly income per household is \$1,190**
- **Gross Regional Product valued at \$584M**
- **More than 957 local businesses**
- **411km of local sealed road**
- **362km of local unsealed road**

Leeton Shire today – Our community

As shown by the latest Census data that gives a breakdown of Leeton’s population in 2016, the Leeton Shire community is quite diverse, particularly in relation to many other regional communities. People of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin make up 5.7% of our population. The percentage of people born overseas is 8.1%, with the countries of birth other than Australia including Italy (1.7%), New Zealand (1%), England (0.8%), Philippines (0.8%) and India (0.8%).

Given its diversity, Leeton has a remarkable degree of social cohesion. Many of us are actively working to promote mutual trust and understanding so that everyone can love living in Leeton. We find sharing food and cultural experiences helps to bring about togetherness and respect.

We have further shown our commitment to social cohesion by becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone. We have a new residents’ kit aimed at helping people to quickly settle in and a Multicultural Support Group to help people make connections and achieve a sense of belonging.

One of the best things about living in Leeton Shire is being part of a community that is friendly, caring and inclusive. People who move here for a short-term job often decide to stay. And those who leave often return because they appreciate everything the Shire has to offer.

At last count there were more than 320 community groups in Leeton Shire including 43 sporting groups, 57 support groups or organisations, 13 religious groups and 8 service clubs. This represents a range of opportunities for people to get involved in community life, make friends and have a sense of belonging.

We value our community facilities such as our local halls as these provide us with opportunities to meet, discuss, celebrate, entertain and hold events.

Some of us live with a range of disabilities (5.2% of our population report needing some level of help in their day-to-day lives due to disability) and while our facilities and services cater reasonably well for some types of disability, we have a way to go before we can say we’ve achieved a full sense of inclusiveness. Although we have improved access for the aged and people with physical disabilities in recent years, we still hear comments on the difficulty or impossibility of entering some shops in a wheelchair, and that there are some footpaths and kerbs that are still difficult to navigate.

The Community Transport Program provides transport support for the frail aged, people with disabilities and their carers, people with special needs and those who are transport disadvantaged throughout the Leeton Shire. Unfortunately, our local taxi company ceased operation of their wheelchair accessible vehicle because it was no longer financially viable.

Eighty-five percent of residents agree that living in Leeton Shire gives you a sense of living in a community.⁷

Seventy-four percent of residents agree that the community in Leeton shire is harmonious, cohesive and inclusive.⁸



A recent development is a partnership between My Plan Connect and the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery (LMAG), which has resulted in people with various disabilities staffing the Lands Office Café. This is a fantastic program aimed at giving people with disability a chance to do something meaningful. But we need more of these types of programs.

Older people in our community in need of support can access Meals on Wheels, Home Modification and Maintenance Services and social support via a service that has operated for more than 55 years.

Our youth make good use of our sporting facilities and excel at sport but we wonder if there are enough other youth-related facilities, services and events to keep them here in Leeton Shire.

During COVID-19 our spirit of community came to the fore through the Leeton Connects with Kindness campaign organised by Leeton Connect.

The Rapid Relief Team and Leeton Op Shop continue to support families with emergency food supplies as needed.

The Leeton and District Aboriginal Lands Council is planning a community garden at Gossamer Park and with Men’s and Women’s groups.

⁷ A Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 26
⁸ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 21



Community of Wagga Wagga

Community Strategic Plan

Our health

As a community we know that our health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) is closely linked to the conditions into which we are born, grow, live, work and age. Having access to appropriate housing, a secure early life, good education, nutritional food, job certainty, social support and healthcare systems all help to keep us healthy.

Statistics from the Murrumbidgee Local Health District show that for Leeton Shire our four biggest issues are alcohol abuse, smoking, being overweight and diabetes.

As a community we appreciate having a range of health services both in our Shire and regionally, including base hospitals in both Griffith and Wagga Wagga. Compared to many rural communities we have a good number and selection of General Practitioners (GPs) or GP Registrars, dentists and allied health services. However, we can no longer rely on GPs servicing the Leeton Hospital Emergency Department.

We are concerned that our access to a range of quality health services is declining. We are worried, for instance, about our inability to attract and keep sufficient medical staff to run an effective health service at the Leeton Hospital. Our birthing unit at the Leeton Hospital is at risk of closure because we do not have enough doctors who are trained obstetricians and registered to deliver babies.

We also have community members who struggle to find timely and appropriate mental health services. This is a situation that is often worsened for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

In response to growing community concern the Leeton Health Services Crisis Committee has been established and a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Leeton Shire Council. The project aims to develop an Integrated Health Services Strategy with the purpose of evaluating systemic issues within key health services – Leeton Hospital, Ambulance and Mental Health – and providing achievable solutions to overcome them. The project is being carried out in collaboration with the Leeton community, local health workers, Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) and the NSW Ambulance Service.

The Leeton Health Advisory Committee (LHAC) has been struggling for some years now to sustain an effective committee – this needs attention going forwards.

Some of us think that we are fortunate to be able to access specialist services within 1–1.5 hours, while others would like to see more specialist services offered in Leeton.

Leeton is well served by a range of commercial and public sporting facilities that promote fitness and health.

Only 25% of residents believe we have access to a good range of health services.⁹

⁹ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 21

Physical activity

Sport has been a big part of Leeton Shire for a long time and we are very proud of that. The Shire has been home to many great athletes over the years and we enjoy celebrating their success!

Some people play sport to stay fit or have fun with family and friends. Playing organised or social sport helps us to be physically and emotionally healthy and more connected as a community.

Some of our sports venues are really good but others need to be improved.

Recently, Leeton has not been able to field a senior cricket team due to low numbers and there are no longer regular tennis competitions, either social or competitive.

Many of the clubs and organisations are run by wonderful volunteers and we need to help them to keep doing that. Our local schools are also important places for introducing children to organised sport.

Our Council spends almost 30% more money each year on leisure activities than other areas our size and this is great because it helps make Leeton Shire a healthier and happier place to live.

At the moment there are 43 registered clubs across a range of sports.

We have some great areas for recreation such as the Leeton and Whitton pools, sports stadium, golf course, ovals, bike trails, bowling greens, showgrounds, pony club grounds, Murrumbidgee River, Gogeldrie Weir, Fivebough Wetlands, parks, netball courts and gyms.

The Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre recently received a massive facelift including an additional two lanes in the 50m pool. This allows Leeton to maintain its standing as the regional swim centre for the Western Riverina. Although some parts of the facility need to be tweaked and there's a waterslide to come, most of us agree that the new facility looks fantastic.



Some of us are very keen to add a warm water swimming facility to our list of exercise and therapy options. According to the results of a survey carried out in 2021, 77% of the population believe they would use a heated pool at least once a year. More than 50% of those residents think they would attend more than 25 times a year.

Some of us are keen to extend the Leeton Indoor Stadium to accommodate at least one other basketball court.

We've recently completed new women's change rooms at the Yanco oval. We have a new grandstand at the showground, and new women's change rooms are underway at the showground. The Leeton Golf Club is in the process of building a new golf club clubhouse.

Eighty-one percent of residents say sporting facilities in the area meet their needs.¹⁰

¹⁰ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 21

Our safety

As residents of Leeton Shire, we like to feel safe in our homes and on our streets. Generally, our communities are safe places to live and move and raise a family.

Our police station falls under the Griffith Local Area Command. Most of the time we feel our policing service is good but sometimes the time it takes to respond is not satisfactory. We are very unhappy when Leeton's local police are used to transport prisoners, leaving our Shire without service for hours on end.

Drugs (especially Ice) and alcohol abuse is a worry. Crime here is a bit different than in other places. The latest crime statistics¹¹ indicate that the rate of theft-related crimes seems to have dropped overall with 'break and enter dwelling' offences dropping by 7.7% over the past 5 years and 'other stealing offences' dropping by 11.6%. The rates of non-family assaults and most other major crimes has remained fairly constant. The real concern is the level of domestic violence-related assault, which has risen by 12% over the past 5 years. Our local government area ranks 13th in the state for this type of offence. We think the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted incidence and reporting in recent times.

Leeton has CCTV coverage in busy public areas, and businesses and homes are also putting in

more video systems. Well-lit streets are important, and most of ours are well lit. However, there are a few areas that still need attention. It is also important to give young people things to do so that they aren't bored.

We also want to be safe on the roads and that includes making sure people aren't speeding or hooning, that the roads and streets are in good condition and that vehicles are safe. This is especially important around schools.

We enjoy our walkways and bike paths as they keep us separate from traffic. The shared pathway network has expanded slightly in recent years. However, in some area's paths are of a low standard or don't connect well enough and in other areas, there are no footpaths at all. This can be a big challenge for people with physical disabilities, parents with prams and older residents.

We have zero tolerance for dogs running loose and attacking people or animals. Our hard line is paying off. In 2014/15, 57 dog attacks were reported. In 2020/21 there were 30 reported. That is still too many attacks, so we have more work to do in this area.

We have been luckier than many other communities in that we have not been ravaged by fire and flood in recent years, but we are aware that we must remain vigilant. We will 'hope for the best but plan for the worst'.

Leeton remained COVID-19 free up until Christmas 2021. This is a testament to the community commitment to keeping us COVID safe.

Nearly 50% of the community feel that the police services could be more responsive and effective.¹³

¹¹ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) Recorded Crime Statistics 2017-2021

¹² Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 23

¹³ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 23

Housing

As a community we believe that housing is one of the most basic needs for everyone. Through their lives most people spend more on housing than on anything else.

All families need to be able to live in an affordable home of a decent quality so that they can still pay for food, clothing, education and medicine. In Leeton Shire most people live in separate houses as opposed to flats and units.

Leeton is experiencing a dire shortage of housing, including rental housing. In recent years house prices have gone up exponentially, further challenging affordability.

In 2016, there were 4,762 dwellings in Leeton Shire, 4,066 of which were separate houses (not duplexes or units). Of the total number of dwellings, 4,742 were private dwellings of which 4,232 were occupied and 510 were unoccupied.

In Leeton, 33.1% or around a third of homes are fully owned and 28.4% are owned with a home loan. Twenty-seven percent of households are renting. Of the households with mortgages, 4.4% have mortgage repayments greater than or equal to a third of their income. Of those who rent, 7.6% pay rents of a third or more of their household income. These households often struggle to make ends meet.

Generally, fewer than three new properties are listed for sale on real estate listing sites each week and, at the time of writing, there were only six properties listed for rent on one popular site and one on another. Rents ranged from \$280 for a 2-bedroom unit to \$540 for a 4-bedroom house. Most people feel that there are too few rentals and that landlords are charging too much because of that shortage.

Argyle Housing provides housing for some older people which is good but there is a growing need for more elderly housing and single person housing. There is very little in the way of housing for people with disabilities.

In coming years, the increase in the number of people aged 60+ will mean there will be a need for more flexible, accessible, well located, secure, low maintenance and affordable housing to meet the needs of seniors and the frail aged. While some people will remain in the family home until they need some form of retirement or aged care accommodation, others will want to downsize from the family home to smaller more manageable properties that are closer to services. It is likely that there will be an increase in the number of 'granny flats' being built.

Leeton is also going to require additional retirement/lifestyle village housing. If we wish to retain newly retired professionals who may want to give back to the community in a volunteer capacity, we need appropriate housing for them.

Social housing for the vulnerable and lower income earners is supplied in various forms across Leeton Shire Council, from medium density apartment complexes to detached housing. The wait list for social housing in our area is between 2 to 5 years. The long waitlist can lead to an increase in homelessness and those seeking crisis accommodation. The homelessness rate in Leeton is relatively low with less than 0.3% of residents classed as homeless at any one time.

There are currently five social housing providers in the Leeton local government area being Argyle Housing, Aboriginal Housing Office, Leeton and District Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Land and Housing Corporation and Southwest Community Housing.

Argyle Housing is the managing body of Eventide Homes (owned by Leeton Shire Council) who provide 14 1-bedroom units for the aged located in Yanco. Over the past 2 years Council has assisted with approximately \$100,000 in upgrades to these units. The Aboriginal Housing Office has nine properties, and Leeton and District Aboriginal Land Council have 15 within the Leeton town area. These two housing providers ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to some affordable, quality housing.



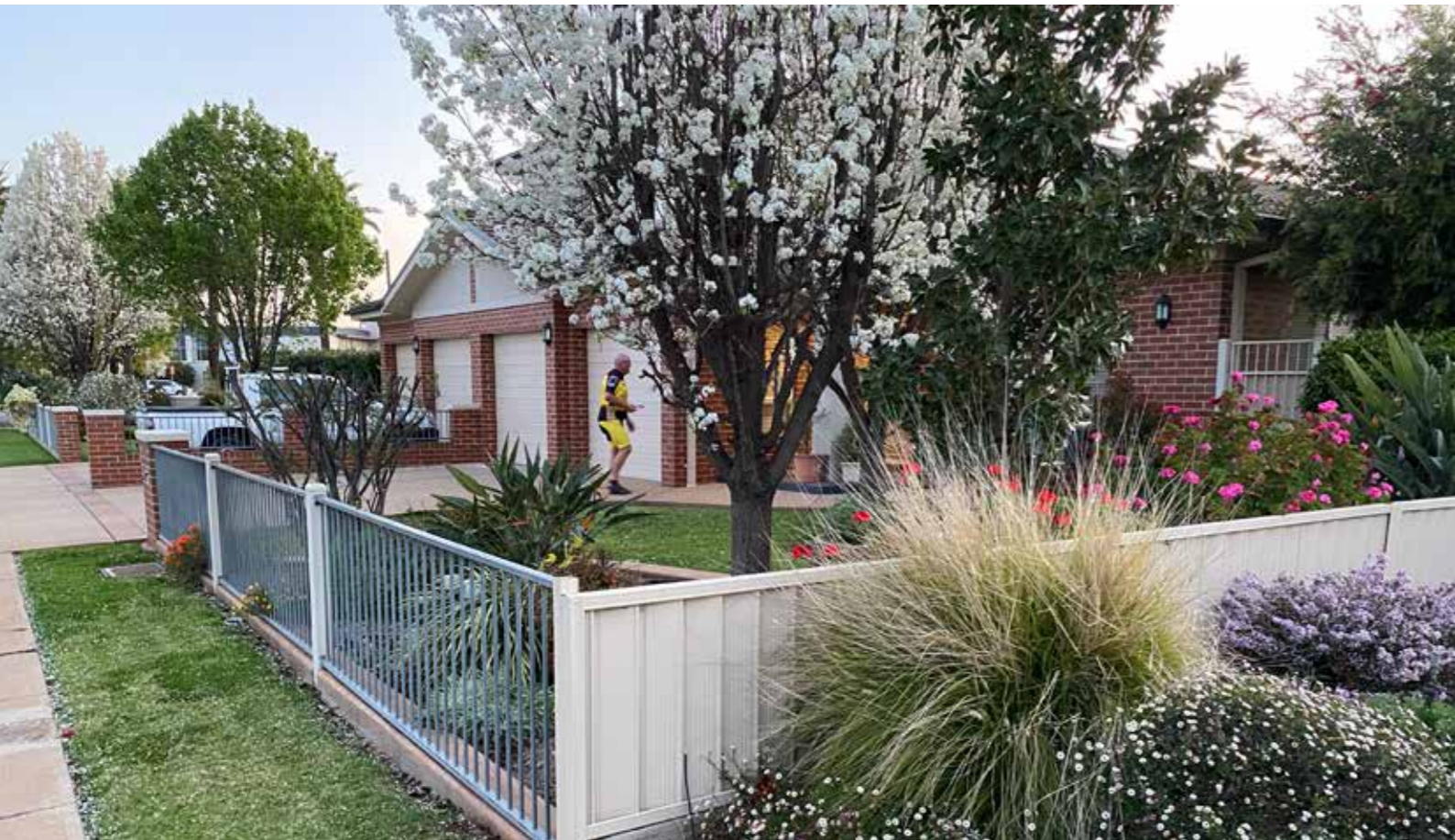
NSW Land and Housing Corporation own 31 properties and Southwest Community Housing own six. They offer a range of housing from 1–2 bedroom units to 3–4 bed houses to cater to the different needs of the community.

Leeton Shire and the surrounding region have an increasing number of medium- to large-scale businesses that will require a significant increase in the workforce to achieve their business goals. Leeton will need to continue to focus on land and housing availability across the spectrum of type and price range to attract working age people to the area.

Leeton LGA experiences seasonal population growth from itinerant workers across a range of industries including fruit picking, manufacturing, and processing. These workers require low-cost temporary accommodation. The current Local Environment Plan (LEP) allows for rural workers dwelling in rural zones and boarding houses in most residential zones.

Leeton Shire Council is continuing consultation with stakeholders to establish affordable housing/ accommodation options. Several sites within Leeton LGA have been identified as suitable for affordable housing development. Leeton Shire Council is currently looking at funding options including partnering with community housing providers to provide suitable options for lower income groups.

In Leeton Shire in 2016, 61% of households were purchasing or fully owned their homes, 22.5% were renting privately, and 3% were in social housing.



Town water and wastewater

Having access to clean, safe drinking water to keep us healthy is one of our community's highest priorities. Having a modern and well-maintained sewerage system to keep us safe from disease is very important too.

We get town water for Leeton, Yanco, Whitton, Wamoon and Murrumbidgee from Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited, which is treated by the Leeton Shire Council so that it is safe to drink. There are water treatment plants in Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Whitton with 3,910 properties connected to 173km of public water mains.

Having reliable water is also a huge incentive for new businesses.

There are sewer treatment plants in Leeton, Yanco and Whitton. There are 3,270 properties connected to the 102km of public sewer mains.

As a community we love the environment and think that it is excellent that our treated sewerage from Leeton is released into the Fivebough Wetlands. Our sewerage system is also able to accept some pre-treated industrial wastewater which is important for attracting new manufacturing businesses to our town.

To run the Leeton Wastewater Treatment Plant as cost effectively as possible, a solar power plant has been installed at the plant.

There are residential areas across the Shire that are still serviced by septic systems. In some cases, these do pose a risk to public health and can be unpleasant if they fail or are not operating properly. Wamoon residents will be benefiting from a \$4.1 million investment into reticulated sewer during 2022.

Whether it is commercial or private home users, it is important that we use our water and sewerage systems responsibly.

Leeton is the biggest town in the Shire and if it keeps growing at the rate it is now, we will have enough water to supply it for another 15–20 years. There is also some room for growth for trade waste in the sewerage treatment system if we get the right licenses.

The average annual residential water usage in Leeton is 431kL per property. This is very high compared to the rest of NSW at 225kL per property. This is because of the climate, where we are located, the fact that our properties are bigger and that we use evaporative cooling in summer. That said, there is probably scope to become more water wise.



In 2016, 53.1% of the resident workers in Leeton Shire had qualifications, compared to 66% for the whole of New South Wales.

Education

Leeton Shire has a strong education network. This includes three major high schools, two of which offer boarding facilities that draw students from across southwest NSW and other states, six primary schools, an independent school, a support school, two long day care centres, one pre-school and several family day care providers.

TAFE NSW Leeton campus offers a variety of vocational training choices locally for the community and the Country Universities Centre (CUC), which is located in the Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library, provides access to university courses. The Yanco Agricultural Institute also offers, as part of Tocal College, short-term training courses for primary producers.

In Leeton Shire as a whole, 22.9% of the population was studying, with 1.8% of the population attending pre-school, 8.2% attending primary school, 9.8% attending high school, 3.1% attending TAFE/University/Other (1.6%, 1.2% and 0.3% respectively).

We can compare this to NSW which has 23.9% of people studying. Of the total population of NSW, 1.8% of the population was attending pre-school, 8.1% was attending primary school, 6.2% was attending secondary institutions and 7.8% was attending TAFE /University/Other (1.9%, 5% and 0.9% respectively).

The biggest difference here is the percentage of the population attending university. In 2016, 138 people in Leeton Shire were attending university. This represents 1.2% of the population, compared to 5% in NSW as a whole.

Of the people aged over 15 years living in Leeton Shire, 27.7% of people have completed Year 12 or equivalent (compared to 52.1% for the whole of NSW) and 9.5% have a Bachelor or higher degree (23.4% for NSW), while 5.4% have an Advanced Diploma or Diploma (8.9% for NSW).

Of the people aged 15 years and over with trade qualifications, 21.9% have trade qualifications at Certificate level (compared to 18.1% for NSW as a whole and 23.6% in regional NSW).

Our community enjoys and values our local library service that caters for all ages with programs that cover children's story time, people of other cultures or languages, materials for the home-bound, and online resources. There is also opportunity for computer access so that everyone can benefit from modern technology.

Older residents in the community successfully set up a University of the Third Age (U3A), which offers intellectually stimulating courses for the retired and semi-retired.

The Council offers free wi-fi for community to access the Internet in the main street, the library and several other facilities.



Arts and Culture

We love our art in Leeton Shire. The general community is supportive of artistic events and is becoming more active and connected. There is still room, however, for many more people to attend and support the artistic programs to keep them running.

Leeton is fortunate to have a magnificent Roxy Theatre that offers lots of opportunities for performing art and film which run consistently over weekends and through the week for special events. Local talent is developed and showcased on an annual basis at the Leeton Eisteddfod including speech and drama, music and instrumental, ballet and revue and line dancing.

In 2021 the community showed its significant dramatic potential when its members teamed up to create Henry V, which played to sold-out audiences four nights in a row.

We have an award-winning new museum and art gallery. The LMAG, which is housed in the former Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission building, opened its doors on 15 June 2020. The museum section of the building is home to a popular permanent exhibition called Water by Design: The Leeton Water Story. The gallery section features a range of exhibitions and programs. We are very proud of the LMAG and can see it going from strength to strength.

New initiatives that have been undertaken in recent times include the Leeton Writers Collective, the Yanco Cultural and Arts Hub at the Yanco Agricultural Institute, and the Roxy Institute of Performing Arts (RIPA). RIPA is a platform for artistic excellence in rural and regional Australia focussed strongly on youth arts training and mentorship. RIPA has been selected by the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) as its regional partner for NSW, with programming commencing in 2022.

Leeton has several independently run dance studios with a focus on traditional ballet and tap lessons which is especially good for our young people.

The Wiradjuri community has a strong history of art in the region and a growing contemporary presence which could be further developed.

Our heritage is also displayed in public art forms including statues of the Letona lady at the Leeton Visitor's Centre and Sir Samuel McCaughey in Yanco. In 2019 we celebrated the launch of the Lyrics, Landscapes and Lintels Art Heritage Trail, which is popular with locals and visitors alike.

The Leeton Town Band, which caters for all ages, has grown from strength to strength in recent years and its Band Extravaganza has genuine potential to be a significant event for Leeton to draw visitors from within the region.

Each year the Penny Paniz Memorial Award is hosted in the Shire, attracting painting entries from across the region. The winning work of art takes pride of place as part of the community collection held by Council.

With Henry Lawson having been a famous historical resident in the Shire we celebrate the literary arts in association with the Henry Lawson Cottage.

Leeton has many existing partnerships celebrated within the community, such as the Local Aboriginal Land Council and Western Riverina Arts (WRA). Both are dedicated to increasing and improving arts and culture within the Leeton Shire. The Leeton Art Society (LASI) is also active in promoting art appreciation and participation in the area.

Sixty-seven percent of residents agree there is a good range of opportunities for cultural and artistic activities and expression.¹⁴

¹⁴ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, pages 21 and 26



Heritage

Many different cultures and events have helped shape our rich history as a Shire and, as a community, we feel it is important that these be recognised and celebrated.

The traditional owners of the land on which Leeton Shire is located, the Wiradjuri people, have lived in the area for thousands of years and continue to influence our identity as a community. Aboriginal heritage, cultural values and assets need to be better understood, communicated and celebrated with pride as shared history between all community members.

People such as Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion, who influenced the design of our town, and Henry Lawson have left an indelible mark on Leeton and should be remembered. As should the development of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area from 1906 and the establishment of a fruit factory, which became the renowned Letona Cannery.

The story of how we turned the area from an arid landscape into a lush and profitable agricultural area is a fascinating one of which we are very proud. It is this story that is showcased in 'Water by Design: The Leeton Water Story' in the LMAG.

Unfortunately we are losing our pioneers, so it is more critical than ever to capture those oral histories as soon as possible. Our oral history capability is at a formative stage only and needs to be developed.

We have a small but highly motivated Leeton Family and Local History Society that plays a critical role with archival storage and responding to family history enquiries. The Society has relocated to the LMAG and are working on securing, consolidating, expanding and cataloguing their collection. It's a big job but it will prevent the loss of some important artefacts and early records related to the Shire.



Our main street features a glorious selection of art deco buildings, many of which have been lovingly restored and maintained. Others need attention. The most well-known of these is the Roxy Community Theatre, one of only two in NSW. As a community we love our 'grand old lady' and look forward to seeing the results of the refurbishment currently being undertaken by Leeton Shire Council.

In 2019, we relaunched the Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton. The festival was a great success and there were plans to host it annually. COVID-19 put paid to that idea. In 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 outbreaks and restrictions caused the festival to be cancelled at the last moment. We're all hoping we can begin hosting the festival on a regular basis in 2022.

Leeton Shire has a number of cultural treasures that need to be displayed and celebrated. Along with the LMAG, museums such as the Yanco Powerhouse Museum and the Whitton Courthouse and Historical Museum display some

of our history and heritage well. However, there is still significant opportunity to tell our important stories in more interesting and accessible ways, including that of our founding town, Hulong (now Whitton).

The Whitton Courthouse and Historical Museum is conducting extensive research into the details of Whitton's prominence as a commercial centre in this region in the pre-irrigation era.

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



Environment

Natural Environment

We know that a healthy environment is important for our social, cultural and economic wellbeing. Rich soil, fresh water and clean air are the foundations for a good quality of life today and for our children. As a community we are committed to leaving a positive legacy for future generations.

Some of the ways we do this is by dealing with our waste responsibly (reduce, reuse, recycle) and using energy more efficiently including increasing our use of renewable energy such as solar energy and hydroelectricity. The Council treats wastewater to a level that can be safely released into the Fivebough Wetlands.

We live in a region with highly variable climate which in the last decade has been steadily warmer on average. As a community we recognise that we need to face up to climate change by preparing ourselves for its effects.

As we are an irrigated area, we tend to have a greater weeds problem than the rest of NSW. Left unchecked, weeds can reduce our productivity on our farms and block our waterways. The species of weeds we have the most problem with are Silver Leaf Nightshade, Spiny Burr Grass, African Box Thorn, Prickly Pear and Indian Fig (cactus).



We are proud of our wonderful wetlands and acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands Advisory Committee, Landcare and a number of other organisations to, under the leadership of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Lands, make the wetlands attractive to locals and visitors. Efforts to date include track upgrades, a new toilet facility and the installation of interpretive signage that make for an improved experience. Carparking is proving an issue as the wetlands become more popular.

A wetlands website provides users with information to enhance their enjoyment of the site.

The Murrumbidgee River also runs through our Shire and is somewhere many of us go to swim, fish, kayak, camp, water ski and nature walk. More can be made of the river for recreation purposes. We note that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service seems to be under resourced to fully manage the area.

Irrigation in our area has been here for more than 100 years. It has created habitat for many birds, animals and fish, making the waterways a valued natural feature for residents and visitors alike.

Leeton boasts excellent examples of River Red Gum forests which provide enjoyable opportunities for recreation such as walking, bicycle riding and birding. There is a scientific program underway to actively manage the forests.

Seventy-seven percent of residents believe the natural environment is respected and protected.¹⁵

Farming is the backbone of our economy. Many research projects are underway aimed at finding new ways to manage pests in an environmentally responsible way and to farm in a water wise manner. Rice growers are participating in a project to save the Bittern (an endangered species).

Carp continue to be a problem in the Murrumbidgee River, but the CSIRO is investigating a virulent strain of herpes virus that kills carp but doesn't affect native Australian or any other introduced fish species. They continue to test whether the virus will affect other fish and amphibians. This is a slow process.

The local community, through the Bidgee Classic Committee sponsored by Council and State Government, has been actively involved with stocking the Murrumbidgee River system with Golden Perch and Murray Cod, with an average of 10,000 fingerlings being released each year.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Lands manages both the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands. Programs include sustainable grazing, bushfire management and weed control.

The Riverina Local Lands Service provides strategic pest management control measures at these important sites. The impacts of feral cats on the Wetlands remain a concern.

Leeton Shire has many natural features that are unique to our area such as the Murrumbidgee River, the Red Gum forests and the heritage listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands.

¹⁵ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 24



Built environment - town centres and other infrastructure

We love our upgraded central business district (CBD). The new plantings and layout, as well as Council's façade painting program, have led to a major refresh of Leeton's CBD. Chelmsford Place is next on the agenda and we're looking forward to seeing the reinvented Chelmsford Place Town Square.

Having attractive main streets is important because it makes us feel proud of our towns. It sends a strong signal that we are doing well as communities. Also, visitors are more likely to stop and spend money and locals will spend more time there.

In our towns and villages services such as the local Post Office, corner shop, pub or club are considered key to community wellbeing.

Our visitors comment on our beautiful, flowered garden beds at the entrance to Leeton. We love them, too. They give a bright and cheery welcome to the CBD. Leeton's business area is fortunate to have a magnificent legacy of Art Deco architecture which, together with the trees and plantings that soften the main street, make for a pleasant shopping and working atmosphere.

Whitton's main street has had a bit of a tidy up and an art deco mural now extends across a number of the buildings. Yanco's main street is still looking a little tired and would benefit from revitalisation.

Having a clean, neat and tidy CBD is important and most people play their part to keep it that way. Sometimes litter like chewing gum, cigarette butts and graffiti spoil the look and feel of our main street. It is great to see shop owners who take extra pride in their shopfronts washing down their windows and pavements on a regular basis.

The charm of our CBD and our sense of safety in the CBD is sometimes compromised when large trucks drive through. We'd like our Council to have full control of Pine Avenue. This control is currently under Transport for NSW which prevents us from making some of the changes we'd like to make.

Our Art Deco heritage is vitally important to us. We aim to protect this built heritage through local and state heritage listings, as well as through a Development Control Plan (DCP) which will be adopted by Council in 2022.

The townships of Yanco and Whitton each have a Town Improvement Plan which is being worked on with the support of Council.

The state of our roads is important to our community, both from a safety point of view and moving farm produce and other goods to market.

We are generally satisfied with our cemeteries, although Whitton cemetery needs additional attention.

Seventy-nine percent of residents believe we are preserving an attractive urban landscape and protecting our heritage.¹⁶

¹⁶ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 24



Generating \$107 million in 2020/21, manufacturing is our most productive industry sector. Agriculture, generating \$104.7 million, is our second most productive industry.

Economy

Irrigation economy

Leeton Shire was founded on irrigation and water remains the lifeblood of our region. The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) is a progressive and changing landscape with a range of innovative farming enterprises, a diversity of crop types and a dynamic processing sector. Our water together with our soils and climate makes us Australia's premier irrigation area.

Legislative reforms in recent years, including water sharing rules introduced in 2004 for Burrinjuck Dam (which supplies the MIA) and the *Water Act 2007* which came into effect in 2012, have seen water become a tradable commodity.

The Act set the framework for the Murray Darling Basin Plan which came into effect in 2012.

As a community we stay constantly vigilant about the impacts of water reform, including water trading, and we do not yet have full confidence that the roll out of the Plan is achieving this balance fairly. We want to be sure that environmental results are not being achieved at the expense of economic and social wellbeing.

We are trying to find a way forward that is fair and sustainable, but we find the policy environment complex and fragmented. We are pleased that our Council leaders are working hard to try and make sense of it all by working constructively with the relevant agencies.

Despite our concerns we believe that the MIA has a bright future. Our Shire is represented on the Murray Darling Association (MDA) which has advocated strongly for the 1,500 gegalitre cap on water buybacks so that we do not lose too much productive water. The MDA is instead advocating for greater investment in both on and off farm water efficiency infrastructure.

We are very proud of the industries in our Shire, many of which are heavily reliant on irrigation

water, who contribute enormously to our regional economy, exports and jobs. Our gross regional product is \$584 million and further growth is anticipated in containerised and bulk freight volumes driven by irrigation.

Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited (MI) manages the delivery of water to its customers. Its corporate plan leads with a vision of "growing our future together – customers, company, community". They aim to achieve this growth through partnerships and efficiency measures. MI and Council are looking to advocate for increased on- and off-river storage along the mid Murrumbidgee. Measures include exploring Lake Coolah as a water storage option, investing in re-regulation capacity higher up the river catchment, improving existing off-river water storages and improving communication and collaboration between the river operator and irrigation companies.

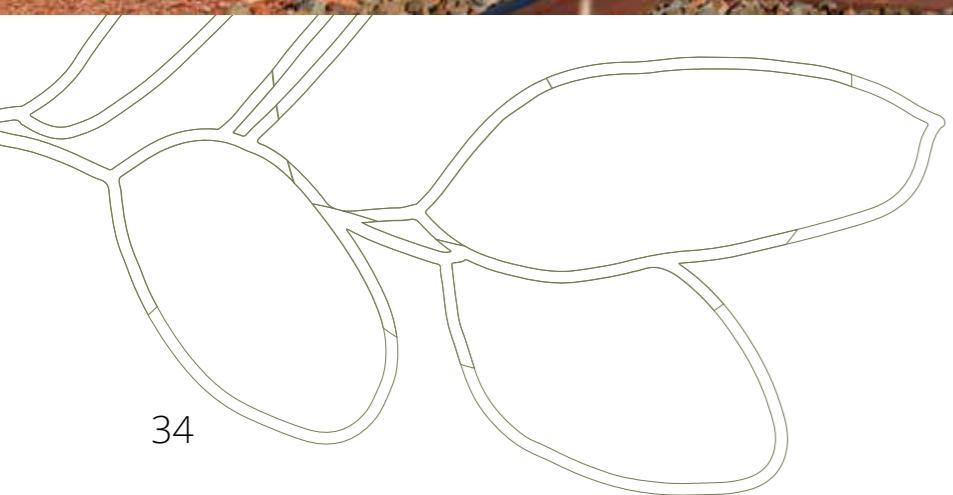
MI has actively pursued further funding from the Federal Government and received \$126.5 million for their Irrigation Automation Project. This is on top of the \$284.5 million and \$84.9 million secured to date through the Federal Government's Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program. This funding has allowed greater efficiencies in water delivery and decreased water losses through seepage and evaporation. MI is also building a 5,000ML surge reservoir near Roaches Escape.

We are very proud of the Yanco Agricultural Institute's contribution to research and development, which has helped to make our farmers some of the most efficient and effective in the world. We are deeply concerned that Government investment in research and development is shrinking and that highly skilled researchers and educators may be lost to our community.

Leeton punches above its weight economically. In 2020/21, our Gross Regional Product was \$584 million.¹⁷

¹⁷ NIEIR 2021





Business and employment

There are 4,773 jobs in Leeton with 22.6% in manufacturing, 15.5% in agriculture, 11.1% in education and training, 7.8% in construction, 6.4% in retail and the rest in a range of sectors including healthcare and social services; public administration and safety; transport, postal and warehousing.¹⁸

The workforce is made up of 20.4% labourers, 15.6% managers, 13.3% technical/trades and 13.7% professionals.

Unemployment here, at 2.6% (September 2021), is lower than the rest of NSW, which has a rate of 5.2% .

Of Leeton's 957 businesses, 311 are in agriculture, 57 are in retail and 155 are in construction.¹⁹ Most businesses employ fewer than 5 staff but 132 have more than 5 and 15 have more than 50.

Our businesses are hamstrung by two things: a shortage of workforce and a shortage of housing. The rapid ageing of our workforce will only worsen the workforce shortage issue.

One strategy we are keen to support is encouraging school leavers to seriously consider Leeton Shire businesses as exciting options to develop their careers.

As a community we contribute significantly to Australia's export earnings. In a normal year more than 18,000 containers leave Leeton. Currently JBS Riverina Feedlot processes 153,000 head of cattle each year. Walnuts Australia processes 13,000 tonnes of walnuts annually at its Leeton facility, with 4,000 tonnes of those walnuts coming from Leeton. In an average crop year in excess of 600,000 paddy tonnes of rice is harvested across the Riverina.

To facilitate cost-effective freight movements, more freight needs to leave the Shire on rail, rather than road. The WRConnect freight intermodal, located on the border of Leeton and Griffith Shires, is a regionally significant project that will interface with Inland Rail.

It needs substantial State and Federal Government support.

During harvest many farmers rely on backpackers to help. The 'Backpacker Tax' has been a concern to local businesses. The recent high-court ruling that the Backpacker Tax cannot be lawfully applied to around 50% of all visitors who come to Australia on 417 or 462 Working Holiday Visas may mean an increased availability of farm workers.

To remain competitive, access to fast speed broadband is important to businesses in the Shire. Speed and reliability remain an issue, as does access to reliable mobile services remains an issue in some areas of the Shire.

Ready access to a regular airline service is important for our businesses, health and tourism. We value our airport partnership with Narrandera Shire Council and we want to support Regional Air Express (REX) to ensure they remain sustainable. Ideally, we would like flights to Melbourne as well as Sydney.

Leeton businesses are the fourth largest users of power in the Riverina and with electricity prices being so high we need to find less expensive options like natural energy.

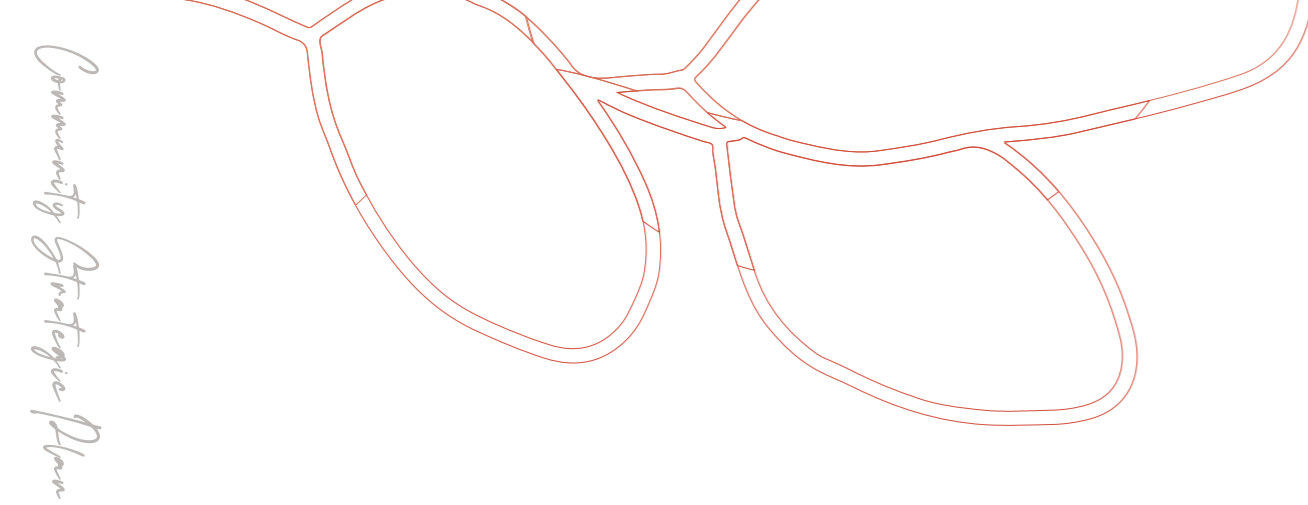
As is the case in many other towns, empty shops are a problem. This is made worse when they are not properly maintained. We really appreciate those who keep the empty shops looking tidy and allow them to be used for displaying art or other products.

Pop up shops create interest in our community and help fill a void.

Manufacturing is the largest employer in Leeton Shire, generating the equivalent of 926 full-time jobs in 2020/21.

¹⁸ NIEIR 2021

¹⁹ ABS Counts of Australian Businesses, including entries and exits 2016 to 2021



Tourism and events

In a normal year more than 43,000 visitors come to Leeton. In recent years, however, visitor numbers and our ability to host events have been impacted by COVID-19. We are all hoping the impacts of COVID-19 are reduced in coming years.

We have a range of destinational attractions and events, both public and private, that help bring 30,000 visitors to Leeton each year. This injects around \$15 million into our community's economy.

Some of our more popular destinational events include the Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton, the SunRice Festival (held biannually), the Bidgee Classic, the Leeton Show, the SunRice Golf Pro Am, the Outback Band Spectacular and the Leeton Eisteddfod. Unfortunately the Formula One paragliding competition has announced that they will relocate to Corowa from January 2023.

Regular community events that are enjoyed locally include Light Up Leeton, Australia Day, Henry Lawson Cottage Open Day and a variety of youth-based events, including the Riverina Skate Championships.

The Farmers and Makers Market, which are held in Mountford Park, and the Yanco Village Markets, which are held in and around the Yanco Community Hall, are also popular.

The value of sporting events to our economy is becoming more appreciated, particularly rugby league, basketball, swimming, lawn bowls, golf, aero sports and motor sports.

Most visitors stay for three nights and spend an average of \$147 per day. People who visit for sport spend about \$115 more than that each day.

There is a lot of scope for Leeton Shire to grow our visitor income. Every dollar spent here by a visitor goes around the area seven times.

Most visitors to Leeton are family and friends or visitors who come to experience our agriculture or our heritage-listed Wetlands, Fivebough and Tuckerbil, as well as the region's newest visitor

attraction, Whitton Malt House. We also attract visitors who are interested in our significant Art Deco heritage, the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery and Gogeldrie Riverside Park.

Leeton's Visitor Information Centre (the VIC) gets about 9,000 visitors per year. Narrandera's Visitor Information Centre, which is located where the Newell and Sturt Highways meet, gets about 26,000 visitors a year. We have leveraged this opportunity to encourage more visitors to detour to Leeton via the establishment of the Murrumbidgee Trails marketing collective which has four participating Councils including Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Lockhart and Narrandera. This touring route is made up of towns within a 100km radius of each other and involved the development of a new destination guide, website and social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram).

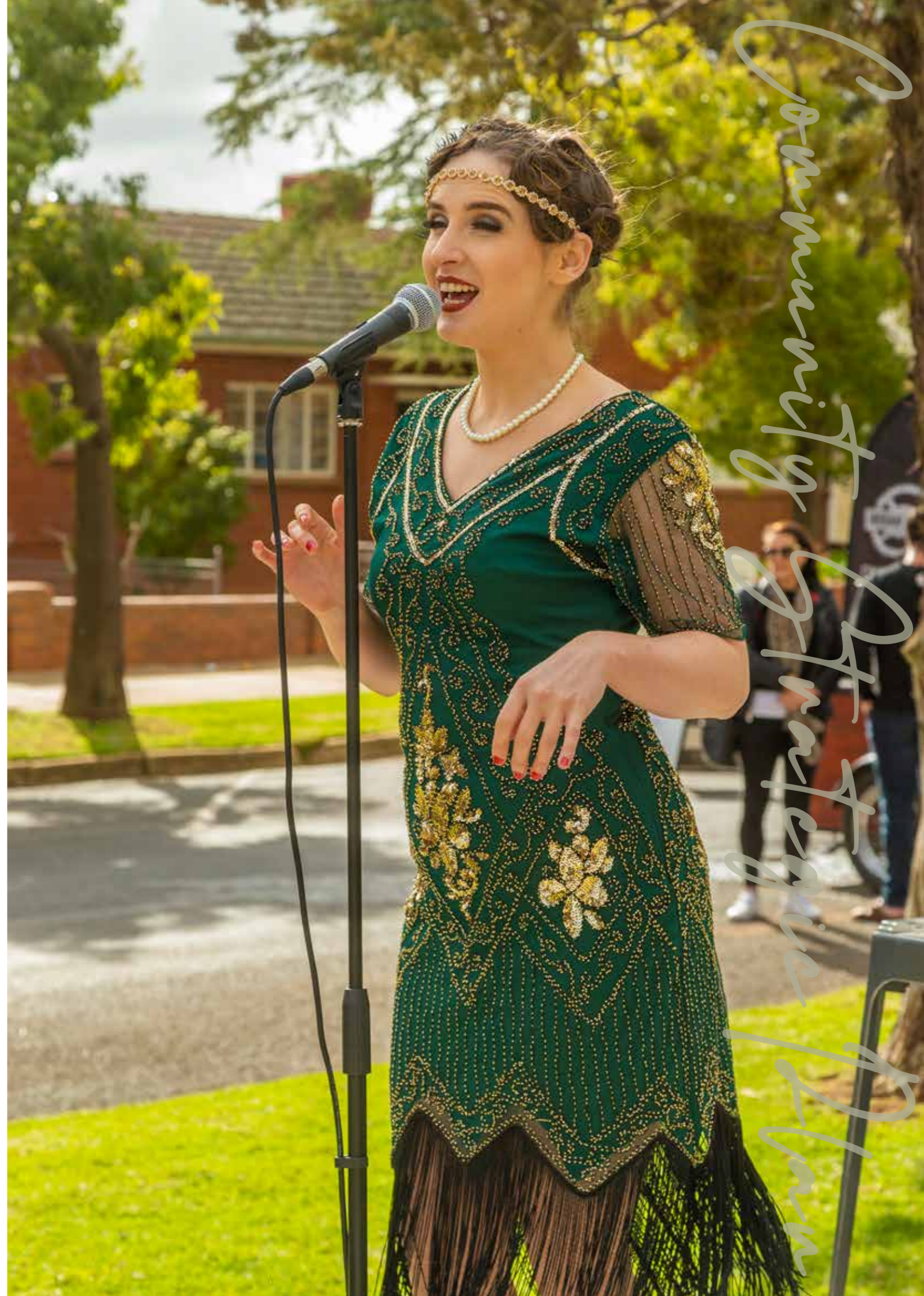
Council is also in the process of developing the Art Deco Touring Route between Narrandera and Darlington Point to draw visitor traffic off the Newell and Sturt Highways.

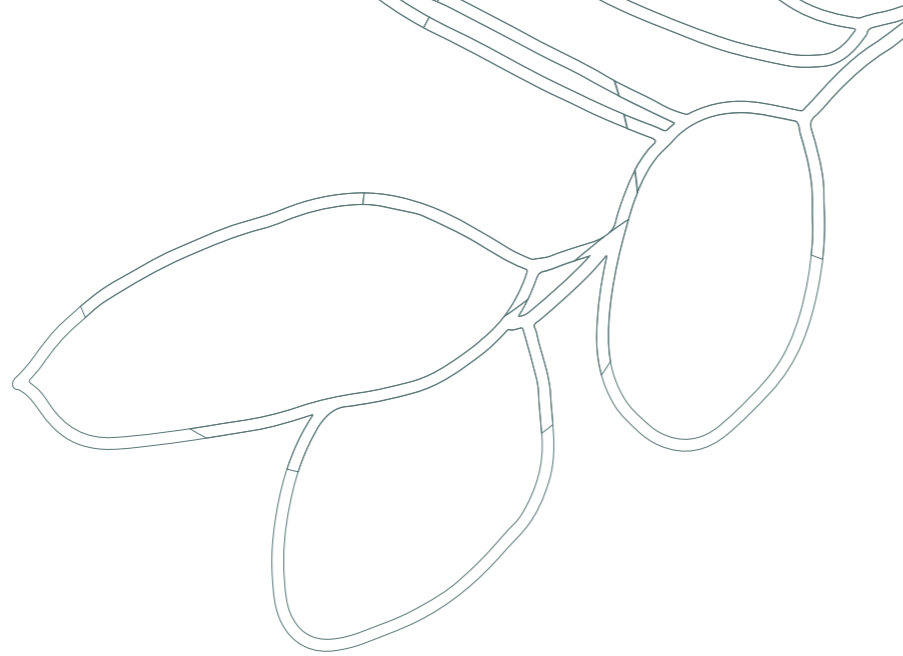
Council recently took over management of the Gogeldrie Riverside Park – a popular camping and recreation spot along the Murrumbidgee River – and has developed a masterplan to upgrade facilities to make the area more accessible and family-friendly. The plan will be carried out in stages over the next few years.

There is lots of unrealised potential in the Murrumbidgee National Park between Narrandera and Darlington Point. It would be nice to see a walking/cycle track along the length of the river, with possible overnight accommodation along the way.

In 2019/20, the total tourism and hospitality sales in Leeton Shire was \$14.6 million. The total value added was \$7.1 million²⁰.

²⁰ NIEIR 2021





Leadership

Government

Australia is a democracy and an important part of that is that we get to have our say in how we want our community and our nation to be run.

Leeton Shire is in the Farrer electorate. In State Government, Leeton is part of the NSW electorate of Murray.

Generally speaking, we feel that we have a strong and effective Council and State and Federal politicians who can be approached when needed.

We believe open, transparent, honest and responsible decision making will benefit the Shire and is one of the highest needs for our future success.

It is very important that the voice of the community is heard and considered before important decisions are made or new laws are passed. We expect our leaders to give serious consideration to how their decisions will affect us before making any moves. This means that they need to work from the facts and keep the long-term future in mind.

Locally, the Leeton community is governed by nine Councillors including the Mayor. We are fortunate to have a Council that has a wide breadth of skills and, relative to NSW, we have enjoyed a good diversity of age and gender. But we could still do better, especially as we become more culturally diverse.

Our Council is actively doing long-term planning to keep us in a sustainable place and is responsive to emerging issues and needs. Council is signalling that remaining financially sound is going to be a challenge.

We like it when our Council asks for our opinions before making difficult decisions about our future.

Leeton Shire is part of the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) of Councils. An initiative

of the State Government, joint organisations were formed so that strategic planning could be done at a regional level. Initially joint organisations were funded by the State Government but this funding has now ceased, making it difficult for joint organisations to operate successfully.

Joint organisations are not enjoying a high degree of active collaboration from State Government with developing regionally significant priorities but member councils are working productively at the local regional level.

Community leadership

We do so well in Leeton because we have leaders of every kind making a difference across all areas of activity in our community. They are our everyday heroes. Our aim is to be effective, sustainable, self-reliant and resilient and to work from our strengths. Whether it is local sports, local schools, local businesses or local charities our community leaders are successful in creating a vision, taking action through mobilising people and getting everyone to collaborate for a shared outcome.

We have a wide variety of associations, organisations, informal networks and social movements where people come together, by choice, to work on common goals. At last count there were more than 320 community groups in Leeton Shire including 43 sporting groups, 57 support groups or organisations, 13 religious groups and 8 service clubs.

Our community-based organisations have great scope for making a difference because they are not constrained by many rules and regulations and are able to explore and implement new ideas quickly.

We would like our youth to take up more leadership roles within our community, and are looking for ways to grow and develop their

Eighty-four percent of residents feel people in Leeton Shire have fair opportunity to participate in community life.²¹

leadership skills. Council is seeking to set up a Youth Council to represent the opinions, issues and concerns of young people across the Shire.

Volunteers play a fundamental role in leading and sustaining our Leeton community. We are concerned that our volunteer base is ageing and reducing in size, mainly because of the fast-paced lives we lead. We often find that the same people volunteer for several organisations and while this is good, it is always nice to have new volunteers step up and help.

As active citizens we do many things to improve the lives of others such as voicing our concerns, building effective networks and acting in ways that promote fairness and social justice.

We don't have an oversupply of resources, so it is important to keep talking to each other, so we don't overlap unknowingly, and we pool our ideas and energy.

Leeton has been selected by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), in partnership with the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF), for investment in building and strengthening

local groups. This program is aimed at increasing capacity and capability, optimising organisational efficiencies and better supporting volunteers.

Leeton Shire Council is making a real effort to hear the voice of its residents and ratepayers before making big decisions. The 'Have Your Say Leeton' website is a place where community members can give feedback on important projects or hot topics if they choose. Using the internet in this way means we can be more involved, regardless of our health, work or family needs. Council also relies on a range of advisory committees and action groups made up of community leaders who are passionate about the future of Leeton Shire and are well placed to give good advice on local priorities.

It is harder to stay up to date about big decisions being considered by State and Federal Governments so that is why we rely on Council to keep us informed and, if necessary, to speak up for us or get us involved.

We are happiest with our Council when it:

- ***Keeps us informed***
- ***Engages with us when it is planning for the future***
- ***Considers our opinions when making decisions***
- ***Practices sound financial management***
- ***Protects and maintains our heritage sites.²²***



²¹ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021

²² Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021



3 Where do we want to be in 2035?

Our vision

We are a healthy, safe and connected community that respects people and the environment, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy underpinned by quality, accessible infrastructure, reliable water supplies and strong leadership.

Our goals

We want to:

- Work together in Leeton Shire as a community informed and engaged in its future
- Enhance and protect the natural environment of Leeton Shire
- Sustain Leeton Shire as a caring and supportive community
- Evolve Leeton Shire's culturally rich and vibrant community
- Progress Leeton Shire as a prosperous community for all
- Position Leeton Shire as a liveable place where we can all continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

What we value

What we value most about Leeton Shire is our:

- Sense of community and friendly people
- Rural country town lifestyle
- Peace and quiet.²³

Our guiding principles

We want a community guided by the following social justice principles:

- **Access** – available resources are distributed fairly across our community
- **Equity** – everyone has access to goods and services, regardless of ability, age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc
- **Participation** – individuals and groups are empowered to take part in making the decisions that affect their lives
- **Diversity** – cultural, religious and other differences are valued and respected
- **Rights** – the civil, economic, political, cultural, and legal rights of individuals, governments and organisations are respected and protected.

Our priorities

Our major priorities,²⁴ in order of importance are:

- Services and facilities, especially health care
- The natural environment
- Infrastructure and development
- Community safety
- Roads and transport.

²³ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 19

²⁴ Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021, page 20

Our areas of focus

We will focus on being:

A connected, inclusive and enriched community (Cc for short)

A safe, active and healthy community (Sc for short)

A thriving regional economy (Ec for short)

A quality environment (En for short)

Strong leadership and civic participation (L for short).

Community Strategic Plan

The outcomes we want to achieve

In each focus area, there are several outcomes we want to achieve. The outcomes are listed below under their relevant focus area heading.

FOCUS AREA 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community (Cc)

Cc1. We are friendly, inclusive and connected

Cc2. We value and celebrate our local history and our diversity

Cc3. We are rich in arts and culture

Cc4. We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities

FOCUS AREA 2. A safe, active and healthy community (Sc)

Sc1. Our community is safe to live in and move about

Sc2. We participate in active sports and leisure

Sc3. We have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs

Sc4. We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members

FOCUS AREA 3. A thriving regional economy (Ec)

Ec1. Our local businesses are prospering

Ec2. We attract and retain new businesses and residents, and our population is growing

Ec3. We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy

Ec4. We have the skills and knowledge to undertake the work available

Ec5. We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of short- and long-term residents

Ec6. We have diverse employment opportunities

Ec7. We are a popular tourist destination

FOCUS AREA 4. A quality environment (En)

En1. We enjoy a protected natural environment and quality agricultural land

En2. We live sustainably, use our resources responsibly and have adapted to climate change

En3. Our built environment is attractive and serviceable

En4. We balance the needs of our natural and built environments

FOCUS AREA 5. Strong Leadership and civic participation (L)

L1. We are well informed and engaged in decision-making

L2. Our leaders speak out for the good of our community

L3. We work together to achieve our goals

L4. We are active community members who recognise we all have a role to play

L5. Our Council operates efficiently and effectively

L6. We demonstrate leadership in the face of disaster

Community Strategic Plan



4 How will we get to where we want to be and who can help us?

The next few pages contain examples of the sorts of comments relevant to each Focus Area made by the community during community engagement.

Our hospital needs permanent doctors and an improved health care system

Integrated social housing needed

Advocate on water and irrigated agriculture

Fire breaks/trails in Murrumbidgee National Park

The sample comments for each focus area are followed by tables showing the aspirational **outcomes** to be achieved, the **strategies** for achieving the outcomes, the organisations who can help and, in the last column, a brief insight into the Leeton Shire Council activities relevant to each strategy.

PARTNERS IN DELIVERY
Those who can play a part in carrying out the strategies to achieve the desired outcomes

The **OUTCOMES** we want to achieve

The broad **STRATEGIES** we can all use to achieve the outcomes

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
It's impossible to measure everything but it is possible to select data indicators that can help us measure whether our strategies are working. Indicators are noted here but current trend data is contained in Chapter 5. How will we know we're on track?

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community (Cc)		
Outcome Cc1. We are friendly, inclusive and connected		
Cc1.1 Build and support connections and relationships within the community	Multicultural NSW, Leeton Connect, Council, community groups eg Leeton Multicultural Support Group, Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council (L&DLALC), Department of Communities and Justice, Department of Social Services, local service providers and inter-agencies	Indicator: Community perceptions of being welcome in/part of the community The aim is to increase percentage of people who welcome in and Leeton Shire cc The two graphs in the first column of show current percentage of welcome in a community in
Cc1.2 Offer facilities and opportunities to enable people to connect	Council, community groups, NSW Department of Planning and Environment Crown Lands, LMAG	
Outcome Cc2. We value and celebrate our local history and our diversity		
Cc2.1 Honour and celebrate our history, and our Aboriginal and multicultural heritage	Council – LMAG, Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library, Whitton Courthouse and Museum, Yanco Museum, L&DLALC, Leeton Family and Local History	Indicator: Heritage funding The aim is to maintain the of heritage advisor funding. Indicator: Number of



- ‘Integrated social housing needed’
- ‘Encourage young people to stay – give training that develop life skills’
- ‘Flexibility with school boundaries’
- ‘My age care Pathway to Assistance – clients have to do that to be able to access subsidies and to get their assessment of needs’
- ‘Events so locals can afford to participate – eg Local aged pensioners could not afford to participate in Art Deco events – locals possibly having a discount?’
- ‘Italian food at golf course club house’
- ‘Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)’
- ‘Improved accessibility’
- ‘People in wheelchairs can’t enter many of the shops on the CBD because they are not wheelchair accessible’
- ‘Sustain daily bus service’
- ‘Cultural stuff – really proud of Aboriginal cultural education’
- ‘TAFE no longer has evening classes in trades – would be good to have again to keep young people here in town’
- ‘Development of projects/initiatives that promote trust and cooperation between Leeton residents – eg: Community Gardens’

Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community (Cc)

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Cc1. We are friendly, inclusive and connected

Cc1.1 Build and support connections and relationships within the community	Multicultural NSW, Leeton Connect, Council, community groups eg Leeton Multicultural Support Group, Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council (L&DLALC), Department of Communities and Justice, Department of Social Services, local service providers and inter-agencies	<p>Indicator: Community perceptions of being welcome in/part of the community</p> <p>The aim is to increase the percentage of people who feel welcome in and part of the Leeton Shire community.</p> <p>The two graphs in the first column on page 66 show current trends in the percentage of people who feel welcome in and part of the community in Leeton Shire.</p>
Cc1.2 Offer facilities and opportunities to enable people to connect	Council, community groups, NSW Department of Planning and Environment Crown Lands, LMAG	

Outcome Cc2. We value and celebrate our local history and our diversity

Cc2.1 Honour and celebrate our history, and our Aboriginal and multicultural heritage	Council – LMAG, Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library, Whitton Courthouse and Museum, Yanco Museum, L&DLALC, Leeton Family and Local History Society, Heritage NSW, Museums and Galleries NSW, Leeton Shire Council Heritage Committee, Leeton Shire Heritage Advisor, Multicultural Support Group	<p>Indicator: Heritage Advisor funding</p> <p>The aim is to maintain the level of heritage advisor funding.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of volunteers – Leeton Family and Local History Society</p> <p>The aim is for volunteer numbers to remain stable at 15 or to increase.</p> <p>The two graphs in the second column on page 66 show current trends in the level of heritage advisor funding and LFLHS volunteer numbers.</p>
Cc2.2 Foster a strong, positive sense of identity and place	Council, L&DLALC	



Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Cc3. We are rich in arts and culture		
Cc3.1 Encourage appreciation of and participation in the literary and visual arts	Council – LMAG, Create NSW, Western Riverina Arts, Leeton Art Society, A Splash of Red (business), the Yanco Cultural and Arts Hub, Leeton Writers Collective	<p>Indicator: Leeton Library Membership The aim is to maintain or increase library membership.</p> <p>Indicator: Community perceptions of the availability of artistic and cultural opportunities/activities The aim is to increase the percentage of people who agree that here is a good range of artistic and cultural opportunities/ activities in Leeton Shire.</p> <p>The two graphs in the first column on page 67 show current trends in library membership, and community perception of the availability of artistic and cultural opportunities/activities.</p>
Cc3.2 Provide a program of theatre, dance, music and cinema that caters to a range of audiences and participants	Council – Roxy Community Theatre, Dance and music teachers, hotels, Roxy Institute of Performing Arts (RIPA), the Yanco Cultural and Arts Hub	

Outcome Cc4. We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities		
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Cc4.1 Provide quality childcare and early learning to pre-school-aged children	Early learning centre/childcare providers including Council's Leeton Early Learning Centre (LELC), NSW Department of Education	<p>Indicator: Community perceptions of access to education services The aim is to increase the percentage of residents who perceive that our access to education services is good.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of students who complete Year 12 The aim is to increase the number of students who complete Year 12 each year.</p> <p>The two graphs in the second column on page 67 show current trends in community perception of our access to education services and the number of students who complete Year 12 each year.</p>
Cc4.2 Provide quality education to local school-aged children	Local schools, Leeton Out of School Care (LOOSC), NSW Department of Education	
Cc4.3 Provide local access to tertiary and further education in our Shire	Country Universities Centre (CUC) Western Riverina, TAFE NSW Leeton, TOCAL College Yanco, other Registered Training Organisations, NSW Department of Education, Universities such as Deakin/Charles Sturt, Australian Apprenticeship Support Network, U3A	
Cc4.4 Provide Library services to the community	Council – Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library	

What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Attend events
- Welcome new residents
- Maintain the heritage items in our custody
- Take advantage of the educational opportunities available
- Join a community group
- Make properties accessible to the aged and people with disabilities (if a business or property owner)





‘Health No. 1 Hospital to have more nurses per patient and doctors sharing shifts’

‘Our hospital needs permanent doctors and an improved health care system’

‘Better mental health services’

‘Emergency services improved GPS for emergency services “passable” routes needed in rural’

‘Space for safe cycling’

‘Stop theft on rural properties’

‘Police 24/7’

‘Monitor crime in villages’

‘Retirement or lifestyle village needed’

‘More integrated social housing’

‘Support cycling as a form of transport, not just recreation’

‘Existing sporting facilities are great – good lighting, layout and traffic management – great for events’

‘Improved safety at school bus drop-off points’

‘Love the multi-generational area of activities at skate park’

Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community (Sc)

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Sc1. Our community is safe to live in and move about

Sc1.1 Support programs and services that promote the safety of residents and visitors	NSW Police Force, Transport for NSW (TfNSW), Council	<p>Indicator: Number of residential break and enters The aim is to reduce rates of residential break and enters.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of domestic violence incidences The aim is to decrease rates of domestic violence.</p> <p>Indicator: Community perceptions of safety The aim is to increase the percentage of residents who feel safe in our community.</p> <p>The three graphs in the first column on page 68 show current trends in relation to these Indicators.</p>
Sc1.2 Take action to safeguard public health and safety	NSW Police Force, TfNSW, Council	

Outcome Sc2. We eat well, drink moderately and participate in active sports and leisure

Sc2.1 Create, maintain and improve safe, inclusive and fun playgrounds	Council, NSW Department of Planning and Environment	<p>Indicator: Number of sporting events on Leeton Shire ovals The aim is to increase the number of sporting events held on Leeton Shire Ovals.</p> <p>Indicator: Leeton Indoor Stadium usage numbers The aim is to increase the number Leeton Indoor Stadium users.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of swimming club memberships The aim is to increase the number of swimming club members.</p>
Sc2.2 Provide, maintain and improve a network of footpaths and cycleways for leisure and active transport	Council	
Sc2.3 Offer sporting, recreational and leisure activities that cater for people of all ages and abilities	Sporting clubs, fitness and recreation businesses, Council, schools, NSW Office of Sport	

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Sc2. We eat well, drink moderately and participate in active sports and leisure *cont.*

Sc2.4 Support and/or undertake programs that promote healthy eating and drinking	Department of Health, NSW Health, MLHD, LHAC, Nutrition Australia, The Heart Foundation, Alcohol and Drug Foundation	The three graphs in the second column on page 68 show current trends in the number of sporting events held on Leeton Shire ovals, the number of users of the Indoor Stadium and the number of swimming club memberships.
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Outcome Sc3. We have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs

Sc3.1 Provide and support health, community and emergency services that meet community needs	Local health service providers, Leeton District Hospital, NSW Health, Federal Government, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN), NSW Ambulance, Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire Brigade, Volunteer Rescue Australia (VRA) Leeton	<p>Indicator: Community perception of the general health of residents The aim is to improve community perception of the general health of residents.</p> <p>Indicator: Alcohol attributable hospitalisation The aim is to reduce the number of alcohol-related hospitalisations.</p>
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Sc3.2 Proactively recruit and retain hospital staff and on-call doctors	Leeton District Hospital/Leeton Health Service, Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), NSW Health, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN), Local Health Advisory Committee (LHAC), Council, Leeton Health Services Crisis Committee	<p>Indicator: Diabetes attributable hospitalisation The aim is to reduce the number of diabetes-related hospitalisations.</p> <p>The three graphs in the first column on page 69 show current trends in community perceptions of the general health of residents, and in alcohol- and diabetes-related hospitalisations.</p>
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Outcome Sc4. We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members

Sc4.1 Support quality social housing in suitable locations across the Shire	NSW Department of Communities and Justice, government and non-government social housing providers including Argyle Homes, Council	<p>Indicator: Waiting times for housing supplied by the Department of Communities and Justice The aim is to reduce the length of time Leeton Shire community members have to wait before they can enter social housing.</p>
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Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Sc4. We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members

Sc4.2 Provide aged care facilities, service and accommodation that meet the needs of residents and their families	Facility owners/Service providers – including Home Care providers, My Aged Care NSW Health, Council, developers, Southern Cross, Masonic Lodge, Argyle Homes	The graph in the second column on page 69 shows the current trend in waiting times for social housing in Leeton Shire.
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Sc4.3 Provide housing and support services suitable for the aged and people with disabilities to enable them to live independently	My Aged Care, NDIS, non-government social housing providers, property developers, disability service providers, accommodation providers such as Argyle Homes, landlords	
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Sc4.4 Provide crisis housing and other support for individuals and families	Local accommodation providers, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army and other religious/non-profit organisations	
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What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Stay safe
- Report hazards
- Eat well, drink moderately and keep active
- Rent out vacant premises (if a property owner)
- Make rental properties more accessible to the aged and people with physical disabilities (if a landlord)
- Register and microchip dogs, and make sure they can't escape (if a dog owner)
- Join a sporting club
- Walk or cycle to work

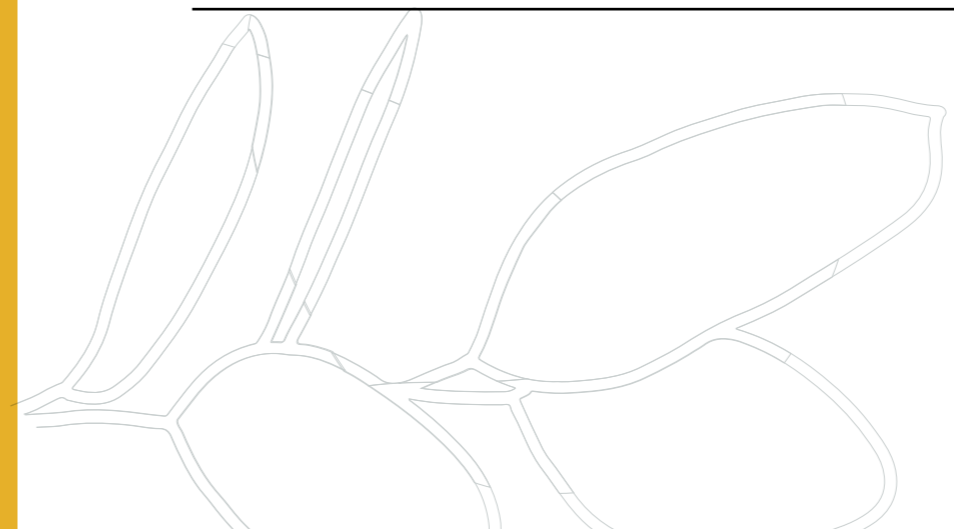


Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy (Ec)



- ‘Encourage young people to stay’
- ‘Support villages to prosper’
- ‘Continue with the rejuvenation of the CBD through the facade painting project’
- ‘Work with owners to improve the look of empty shop fronts’
- ‘Value add industry’
- ‘Continue to position this area as a major food staple producing area’
- ‘Roxy Theatre needs a snack bar/refreshment area’
- ‘Recognise the importance of agriculture in our area’
- ‘Retain water on the farm’
- ‘Incentivise new businesses in town (what we don’t have) promoting jobs and variety’
- ‘Promote Leeton more – make it easier to find information about the shire eg: the number of schools’
- ‘Open all shops on weekends to get out-of-town money on weekend events eg: Henry V, footy events, Art Deco’
- ‘Centrak map at taxi rank featuring events, information displays’

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
Outcome Ec1. Our local businesses are prospering		
Ec1.1 Support local businesses	Leeton Business Chamber, Business Enterprise Centre (BEC), Council	Indicator: Gross Regional Product of Leeton Shire The aim is to increase Leeton Shire’s gross regional product.
Ec1.2 Improve and expand telecommunications capacity across the Shire (NBN, mobile phone coverage)	Telecommunications providers, NBN Co, Federal Government, Local Members of Parliament (MPs), Council	Indicator: Value generated by agriculture in Leeton Shire The aim is to increase the value generated by agriculture in Leeton Shire.
Ec1.3 Ensure Federal and State water policy frameworks enhance productivity in the region	Council, Murray Darling Basin Authority, Department of Planning and Environment – Water, WaterNSW, Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), Murray Darling Association (MDA), National Water Grid Authority, Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Productivity Commission	Indicator: Number of empty shops in Pine Avenue (between the Roxy and McDonalds) The aim is to reduce the number of empty shops in the Leeton CBD. The three graphs in the first column on page 70 show current trends in gross regional product, value generated by agriculture and the number of empty shops in Pine Avenue.
Ec1.4 Facilitate access to labour, both skilled and unskilled	Council, Regional Development Australia – Riverina (RDA Riverina), Multicultural NSW, employment agencies, Skills NSW	



Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Ec2. We attract and retain new businesses and residents and our population is growing

Ec2.1 Promote Leeton Shire as an attractive business location	Council, Leeton Business Chamber	<p>Indicator: Number of registered businesses in Leeton Shire The aim is to increase the number of registered businesses.</p> <p>Indicator: Estimated resident population of Leeton Shire The aim is to grow Leeton Shire's population.</p> <p>The three graphs in the second column on page 70 show current trends in population growth and the number of registered businesses in Leeton Shire.</p>
Ec2.2 Support business development opportunities throughout the Shire	Council	
Ec2.3 Support ideas and programs that will expand the number and variety of local jobs	Council, Business Chamber, local businesses, RDA Riverina	

Outcome Ec3. We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy

Ec3.1 Provide a transport network that meets the Shire's transport needs	Council, TfNSW, Council, neighbouring councils, RAMJO, State and Federal Governments	<p>Indicator: Community perception of access to high speed, reliable Internet The aim is to increase community satisfaction with Internet access.</p> <p>The graph at the bottom of the first column on page 70 shows the current trend in satisfaction with Internet access.</p>
Ec3.2 Improve freight and logistics capabilities	Council, NSW Government, Federal Government, Griffith City Council, Grainlink Storage, LINX Cargo Care Group	
Ec3.3 Provide sufficient appropriately zoned commercial and industrial land to allow for growth	Council	
Ec3.4 Provide enough parking for easy access to shops, services, events and recreation	Council	

Outcome Ec4. We have the skills and knowledge required to undertake the work available

Ec4.1 Increase access to a range of vocational education pathways	TAFE NSW Leeton and other Registered Training Organisations, NSW Department of Education, Local Apprenticeship Centre	<p>Indicator: Levels of education in Leeton Shire The aim is to increase the percentage of the population of Leeton Shire with higher level qualifications.</p> <p>The graph at the top of the first column on page 71 shows levels of education in Leeton Shire (2016) compared to the rest of regional NSW.</p>
Ec4.2 Expand skills and knowledge in sectors of local skills shortage	TAFE NSW Leeton and other Registered Training Organisations, NSW Department of Education, Local Apprenticeship Centre, employers	

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome Ec5. We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of short- and long-term residents

Ec5.1 Encourage and facilitate the development of land for affordable housing in suitable locations across the Shire	Property developers, Council	<p>Indicator: Number of types of dwellings in Leeton Shire The aim is to increase the number of dwellings in Leeton Shire.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of Building approvals for new dwellings The aim is to increase the number of building approvals for new dwellings in Leeton Shire.</p> <p>The two graphs at the bottom of the first column on page 71 show trends the number of dwellings of various types and approvals of new dwellings.</p>
Ec5.2 Provide housing for retirees in Leeton Shire	Retirement village developers	
Ec5.3 Provide helpful and efficient planning and development services across the Shire	Council, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, private providers	

Outcome Ec6. We have diverse employment opportunities

Ec6.1 Provide a wide variety of good jobs	Local businesses, Council	<p>Indicator: Leeton Shire Unemployment figures The aim is to maintain low unemployment figures.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of jobs in Leeton Shire The aim is to increase the number and variety of jobs in Leeton Shire.</p> <p>The two graphs at the top of the second column on page 71 show current trends in unemployment figures and the number of jobs.</p>
Ec6.2 'Grow our own' by providing traineeships and apprenticeships	Local businesses, Council, Australian Apprenticeship Support Network, Grow Our Own	

Outcome Ec7. We are a popular tourist destination

Ec7.1 Promote our towns, villages and attractions	Visit Riverina, Destination NSW, Council, Murrumbidgee Trails Marketing Collective, local businesses	<p>Indicator: Airline passengers to Sydney The aim is to increase the number of airline travellers to and from Sydney.</p> <p>Indicator: Visitor numbers - Fivebough Wetlands The aim is to increase the number of visitors to the wetlands.</p> <p>The two graphs at the bottom of the second column on page 71 show current trends in airline passenger numbers and visitors to Fivebough Wetlands.</p>
Ec7.2 Provide a range of accommodation options to visitors	Accommodation providers, Council	
Ec7.3 Host events, festivals and activities that attract visitors to the shire	Council, community groups, hotels, sporting organisations, local businesses, hospitality outlets	

What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Buy local
- Talk up Leeton Shire as a great place to live, work, stay and play
- Participate in events
- Help host an event
- Observe parking restrictions in front of retail premises



- ‘Social housing is needed. Put pressure on other levels of government to provide integrated social housing’
- ‘Bridge upkeep M1/State Government/Council’
- ‘Develop a climate change mitigation plan’
- ‘Focus on and support regenerative farming’
- ‘Noxious weed control in parks – lots more control of bindii and khaki weed’
- ‘Promote environmental resilience for the Shire – recognise the economy is not competing with the environment, but is dependent on healthy ecosystems’
- ‘Fire breaks/trails in Murrumbidgee National Park’
- ‘Access to Murrumbidgee National Park for wood’
- ‘Access to affordable and fair sewerage for all residents. Sewerage system for Yanco extended’
- ‘Rather than close in open cut channels to stop evaporation, shade them with shade structures. Use the tops of the shade structures for solar panels on a large scale and leave water available for birds’

Focus Area 4. A quality environment (En)

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome En1. We enjoy a protected natural environment and quality agricultural land

En1.1 Support the healthy function of our ecosystems	Riverina Local Land Services, Department of Planning and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Council, MI, and Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands Advisory Committee	<p>Indicator: Community perception of the attractiveness of Leeton Shire's natural places The aim is to improve community perceptions of Leeton Shire's natural places.</p> <p>Indicator: Community perception of environmental protection The aim is to increase the percentage of people who perceive that our environment is respected and protected. The graphs in the first column on page 72 show current trends in community perceptions of the attractiveness of Leeton Shire's natural places and of whether our natural environment is being protected.</p>
En1.2 Provide the access and facilities required to enable community members and visitors to enjoy our natural environment	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Land, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Council	

Outcome En2. We live sustainably, use our resources responsibly and have adapted to climate change

En2.1 Reduce resource consumption, recycle and minimise waste, and manage residual waste responsibly	Council, businesses, community members, businesses	<p>Indicator: Landfill diversion rates The aim is to continue to increase the amount of waste being diverted from landfill.</p>
En2.2 Mitigate the impacts of climate change by reducing our carbon footprint and applying sustainable energy solutions	Council, local businesses, farmers, Department of Planning and Environment	<p>Indicator: Average water consumption per property The aim is to increase waterwise usage. The graphs in the second column on page 72 show current trends in landfill diversion rates and water usage in Leeton Shire.</p>

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
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Outcome En2. We live sustainably, use our resources responsibly and have adapted to climate change *cont.*

En2.3 Use town water responsibly	Council, community members, Department of Planning and Environment – Water	
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Outcome En3. Our built environment is attractive and serviceable

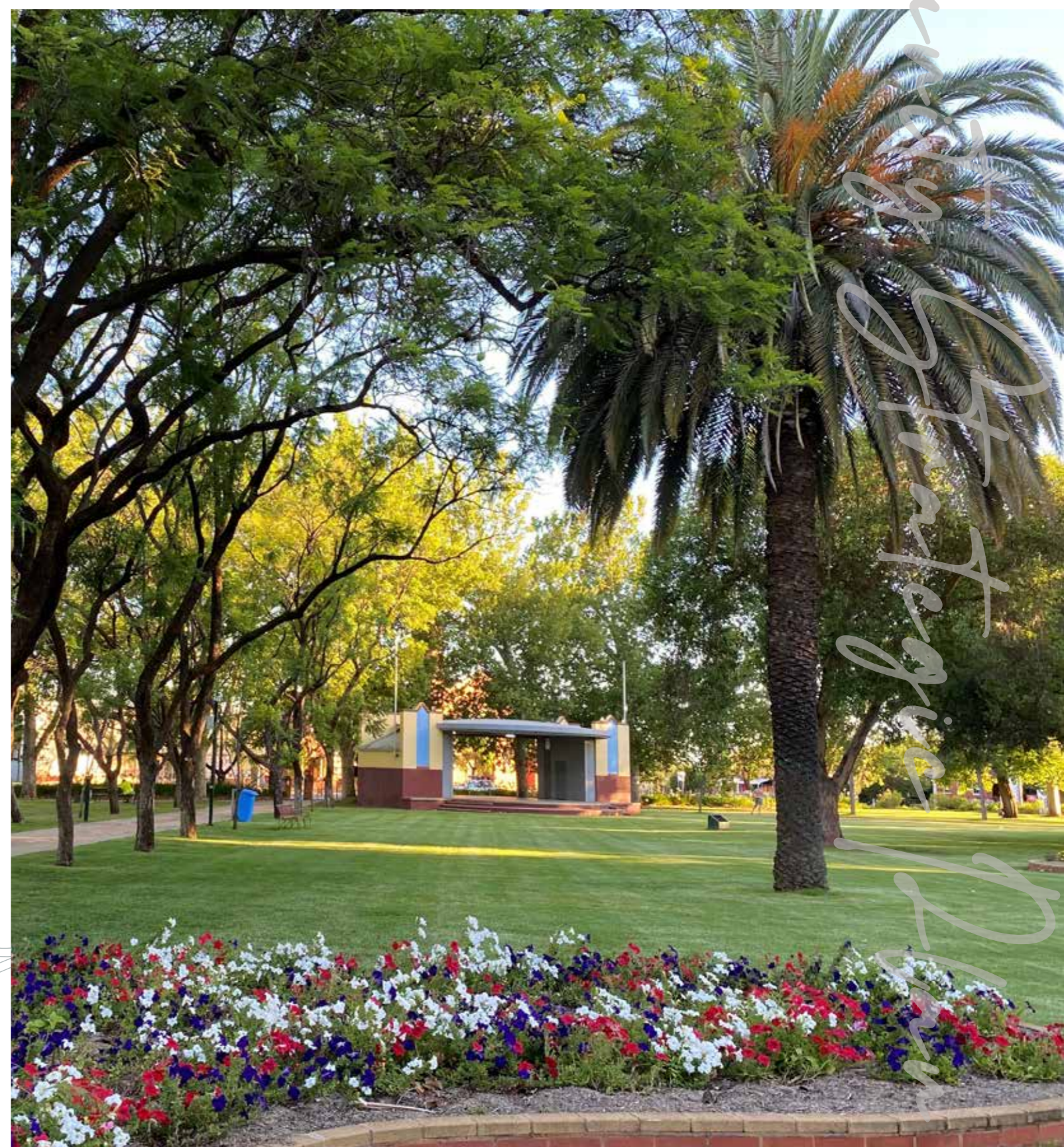
En3.1 Maintain and improve the appearance of our streetscapes, parks, gardens and other open spaces	Council	Indicator: Annual plantings in the Central Business District The aim is to maintain the rate of annual plantings in the Leeton CBD.
En3.2 Provide reliable town water in urban areas	Council, MI	Indicator: Water quality compliance The aim is to maintain high levels of water quality.
En3.3 Provide sewerage systems and services in urban areas	Council	Indicator: Annual Expenditure on parks maintenance The aim is to maintain park maintenance service levels.
En3.4 Maintain local cemeteries, enlarging them as needed	Council	Indicator: Sewerage effluent discharge compliance The aim is to maintain or improve levels of sewerage effluent discharge compliance.
En3.5 Provide reliable stormwater drainage systems in urban and rural areas	Council, MI	The graphs at the top of page 73 show current trends in the number of plantings in the Leeton CBD, expenditure on parks maintenance, and water quality and sewerage effluent discharge compliance.

Outcome En4. We balance the needs of our natural and built environments

En4.1 Implement intelligent land use planning and utilities planning to meet the needs of a growing population, with consideration for the environment and future generations	Council, Department of Planning and Environment, developers Planning and development services, Leeton Local Environment Plan, Leeton Strategic Planning Statement, Development Control Plan	Indicator: Leeton Shire Unemployment figures The aim is to improve community perception of the general health of residents. The graph at the bottom of page 73 shows the current trend in the number of trees being planted by Council in Leeton Shire.
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What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Recycle right (link to recycling dos and don'ts)
- Compost food and green waste
- Start up a worm farm
- Call 02 6953 0911 to report issues with town water and sewer services
- Use water wisely in the home and at work
- Don't be a tosser
- Manage garden pests, such as fruit fly, to protect horticultural enterprises





‘Services and agencies work together please – you waste each other’

‘Need a better Council website to make it easier to find information’

‘More communication that is not digital/electronic’

‘Promote volunteering opportunities’

‘Encourage more first nations input into decision-making’

‘Focus on and support regenerative farming’

‘Improve customer service’

‘Advocate on water and irrigated agriculture’

‘Mentor young leaders and seek advice on future impact of Council decisions from Youth Council’

‘Keep proactive Council Presence in Whitton – eg committee meetings, posting on Facebook page’

‘As a community we need to do more to nurture our youth. Give training that develops life skills’

‘Give young people opportunities to grow. More intergenerational events. The Women’s Day Breakfast 2021 was really good’

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation (L)

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes	Partners in delivery	Indicators of Success
Outcome L1. We are well informed and engaged in decision-making		
L1.1 Provide clear, accessible, relevant and timely information to our community	Council, State and Federal Governments, media outlets, local services	Indicator: Registered Have Your Say Users The aim is to increase the number of registered Have Your Say users in Leeton Shire. The graph at the top of the first column on page 74 shows the current trend in the number of Have Your Say users.
L1.2 Actively engage with and seek direction from our community and other stakeholders	Council, State and Federal Governments, community members	
Outcome L2. Our leaders speak out for the good of our community		
L2.1 Advocate on behalf of the community to ensure the long-term sustainability of our region and lifestyle	Council, local MPs, RAMJO	Indicator: Community satisfaction with the performance of Councillors The aim is to maintain the community’s levels of satisfaction with the performance of Councillors. The graph at the bottom of the first column on page 74 shows the current trend in community satisfaction with Councillors.
Outcome L3. We work together to achieve our goals		
L3.1 Develop and maintain relationships and partnerships that will benefit the community	Council, State and Federal Governments and their agencies, businesses, community groups, Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Lands, NSW Parks and Wildlife, Interagency Forums	Indicator: Community perception – degree of leadership and collaboration The aim is to improve community perception of the degree of leadership and collaboration in the community. The graph in the second column on page 74 shows the current trend in community perceptions of the degree of leadership and collaboration in our community.

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes **Partners in delivery** **Indicators of Success**

Outcome L4. We are active community members who recognise we all have a role to play

L4.1	Provide and promote opportunities for community involvement in projects and programs that make a positive difference	Council, community groups, Leeton Connect, community members	<p>Indicator: Level of volunteering in the community The aim is to improve the level of volunteering in the Shire.</p> <p>Indicator: Community participation The aim is to increase the amount of community participation across the Shire.</p> <p>The graphs in the first column on page 75 show current trends in the levels of volunteering and community participation in our community.</p>
L4.2	Support, operate and participate in volunteering programs	Council, community groups, community members	
L4.3	Provide and facilitate access to grant programs and funding opportunities to help make Leeton an even better place to live and work	Council, State Government, Federal Government, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)	

Outcome L5. Our Council operates efficiently and effectively

L5.1	Practice sound financial and resource management	Council	<p>Indicator: Community satisfaction with Council's administration The aim is to maintain high levels of community satisfaction with Council's administration.</p> <p>The graph at the top of the second column on page 75 shows the current trend in community satisfaction with Council's administration.</p>
L5.2	Maintain a framework of up-to-date plans, policies, procedures, systems and service standards	Council, Office of Local Government	
L5.3	Sustainably manage our assets and infrastructure to ensure they are fit for their current purpose and are maintained for future generations	Council	
L5.4	Effectively manage risk, quality assurance, and work health and safety	Council, Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC), Safe Work Australia	
L5.5	Deliver high quality customer service	Council	

Outcome sought and strategies to achieve those outcomes **Partners in delivery** **Indicators of Success**

Outcome L6. We demonstrate leadership in the face of disaster

L6.1	Provide effective disaster prevention/mitigation, emergency management and disaster recovery services	Council, State and Federal Governments, MI, Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire Brigade, Resilience NSW, NSW Police, NSW Health/MLHD Disaster planning, disaster	<p>Indicator: Community perception – Council helps the community face challenges The aim is to increase the percentage of residents who agree that Council helps our community face challenges.</p> <p>The graph at the bottom of the second column on page 75 shows the current trend in the percentage of residents who agree that Council helps the community face challenges.</p>
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What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Volunteer
- Join a committee or community group
- Prepare for flood and fire emergencies

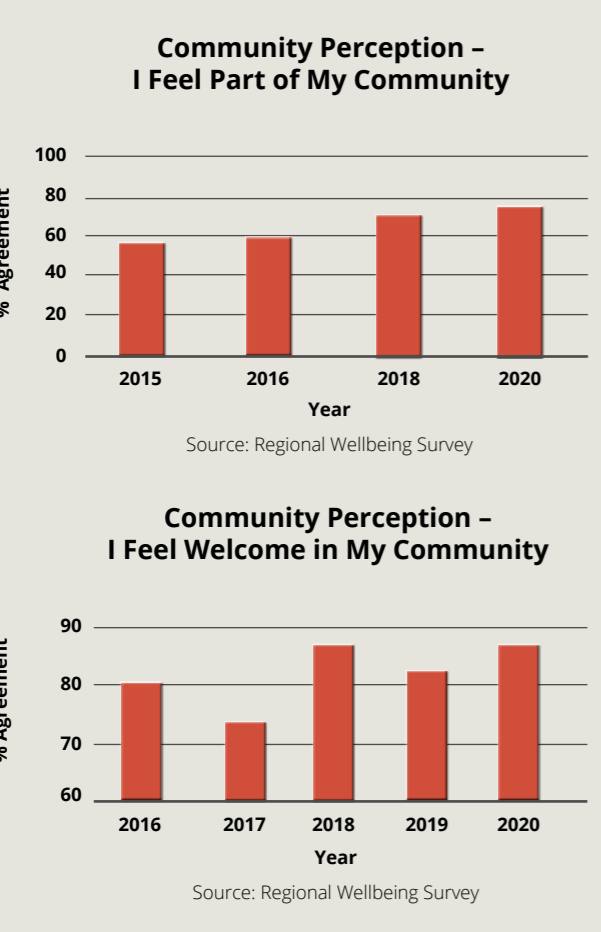


5 How will we know we're on track?

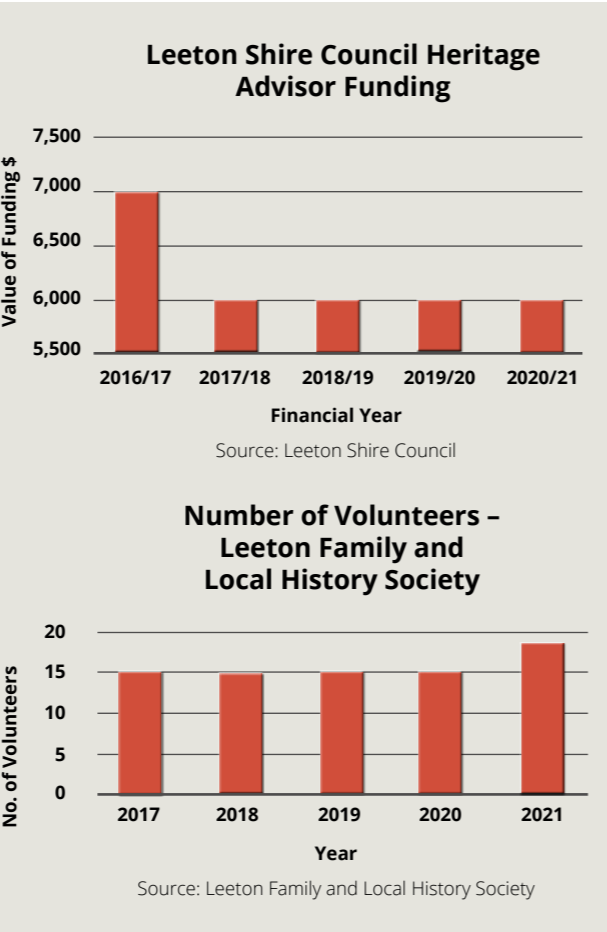
We will know we're on track when we see improvements in data trends over time. The following graphs show the trends over the past few years. They represent the baseline data we will use to measure our success by tracking improvements over time.

FOCUS AREA 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community (Cc)

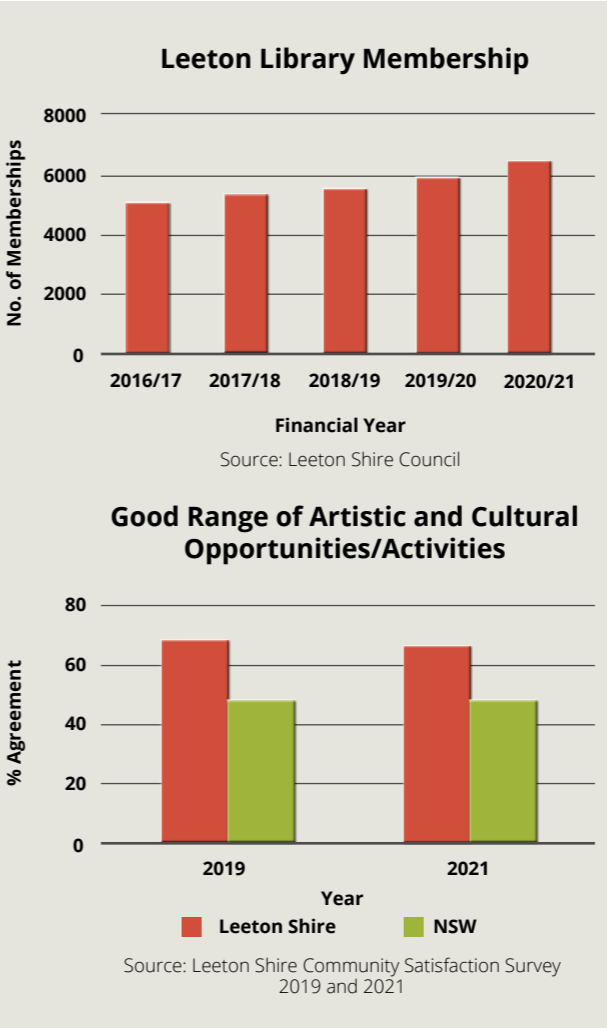
Outcome Cc1. We are friendly, inclusive and connected – Indicators of success



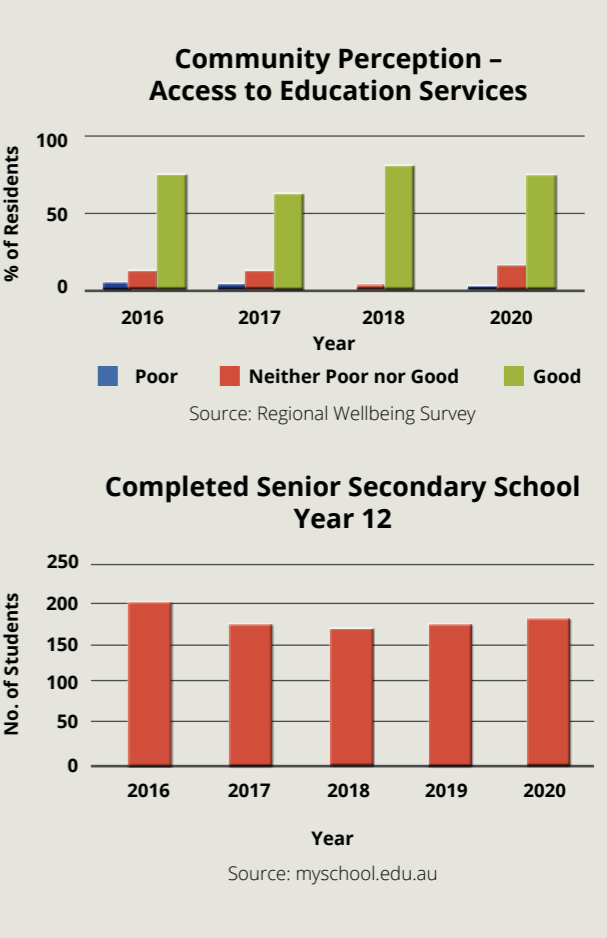
Outcome Cc2. We value and celebrate our local history, culture and diversity – Indicators of success



Outcome Cc3. We are rich in arts and culture – Indicators of success

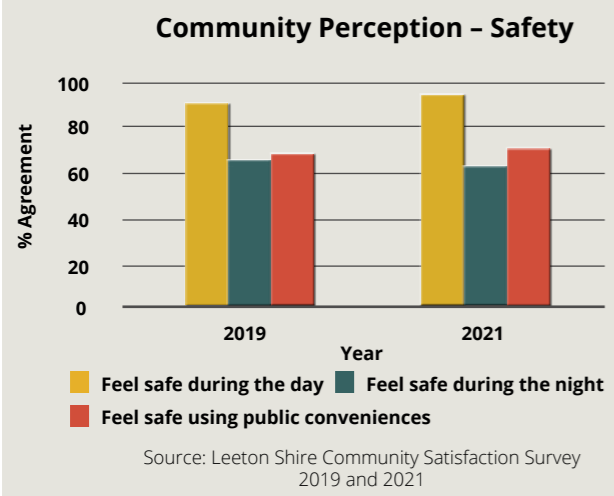
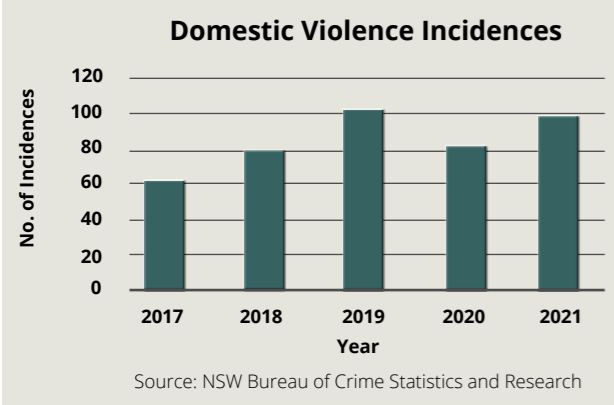
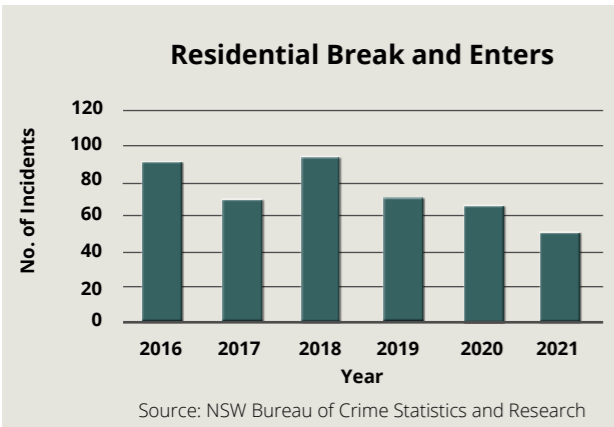


Outcome Cc4. We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities – Indicators of success

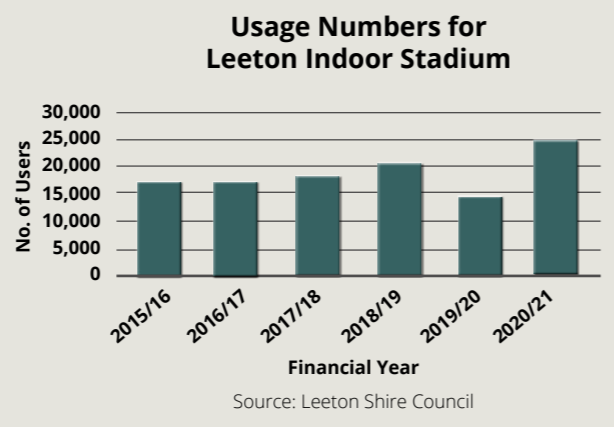
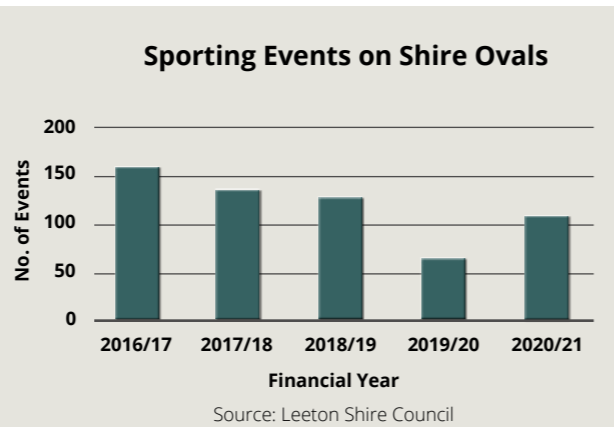


FOCUS AREA 2. A safe, active and healthy community (Sc)

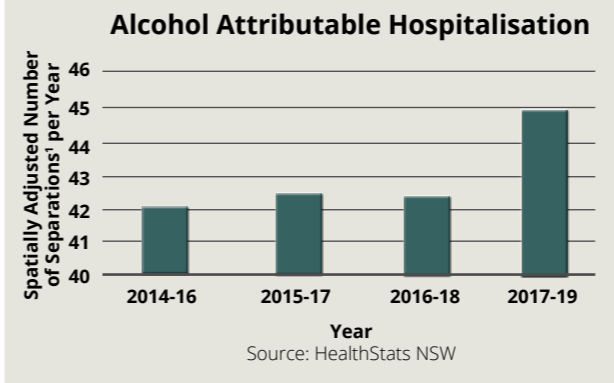
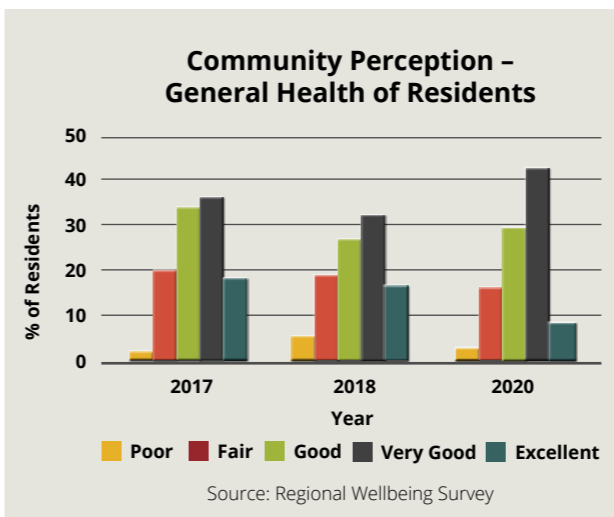
Outcome Sc1. Our community is safe to live in and move about - Indicators of success



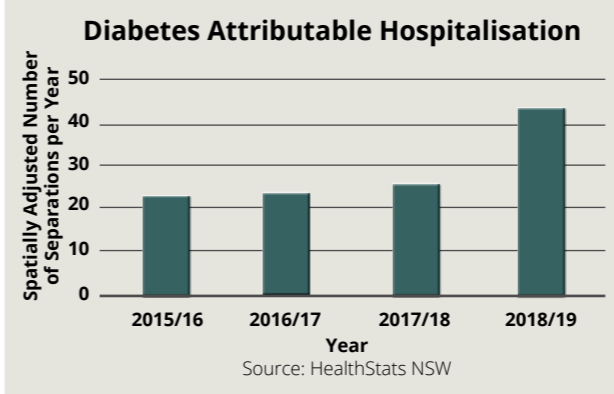
Outcome Sc2. We participate in active sports and leisure - Indicators of success



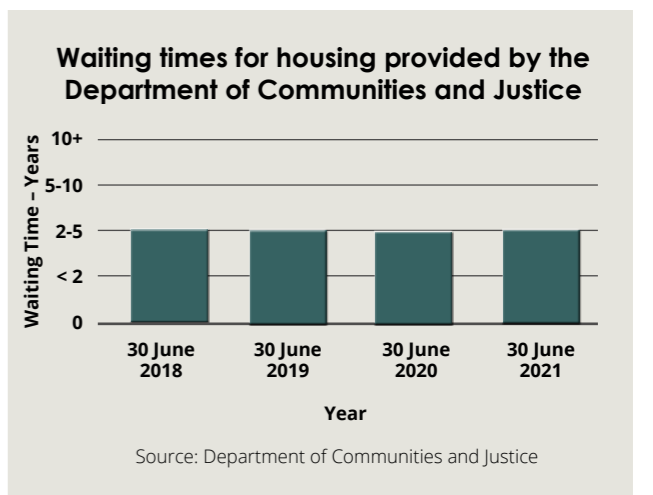
Outcome Sc3. We have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs - Indicators of success



¹ 'Separation' is the process by which an episode of care for an admitted patient is completed.

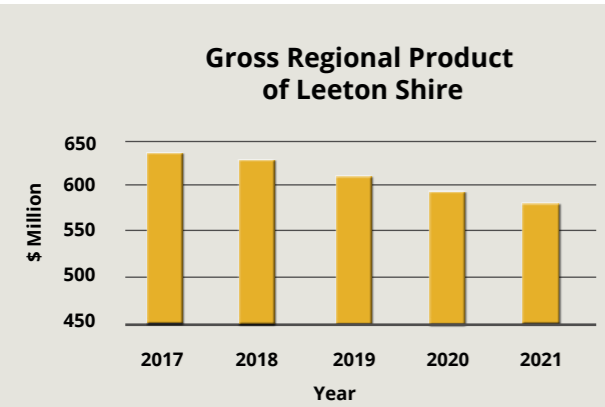


Outcome Sc4. We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members

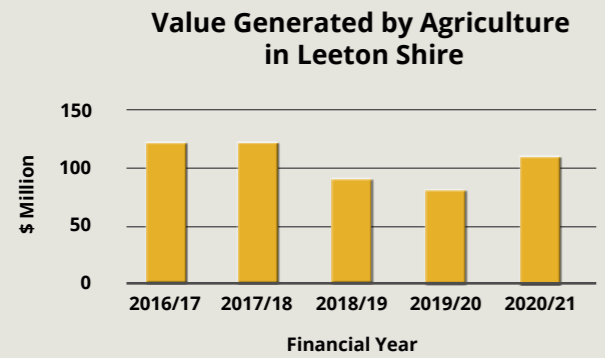


FOCUS AREA 3. A thriving regional economy (Ec)

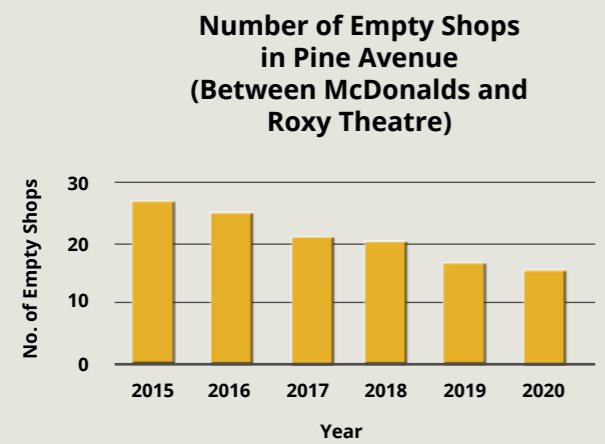
Outcome Ec1. Local businesses are prospering – Indicators of success



Source: NIEIR 2021 in economy.id by .id (informed decisions)

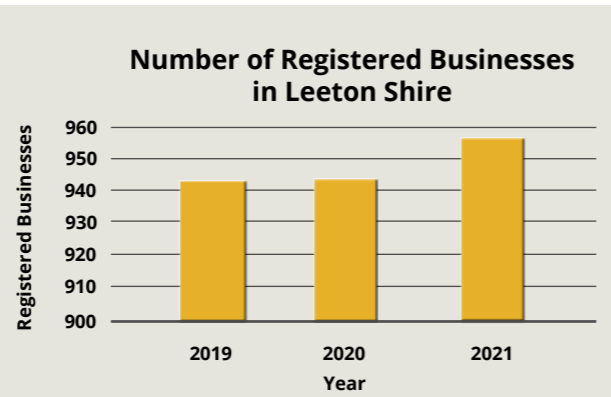


Source: NIEIR 2021 in economy.id by .id

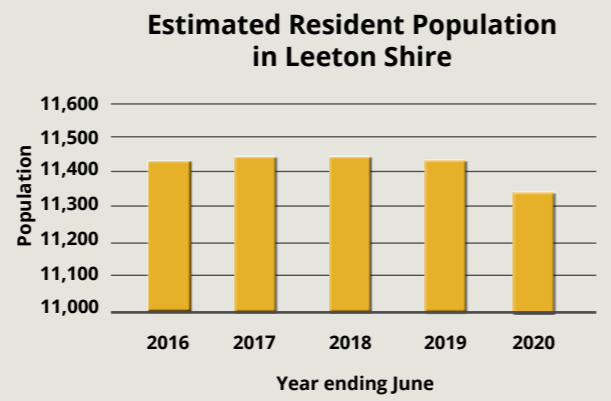


Source: Leeton Shire Council

Outcome Ec2. We attract and retain new businesses and residents, and our population is growing – Indicators of success

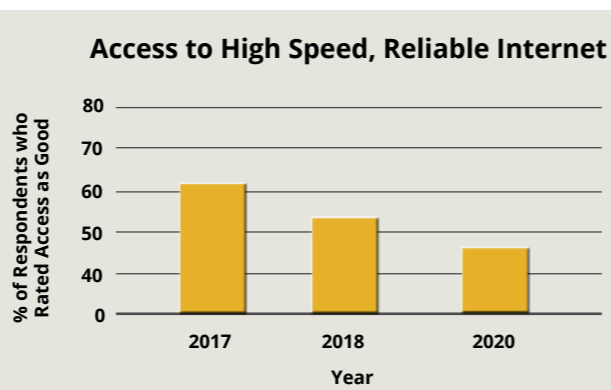


Source: ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses in economy.id by .id



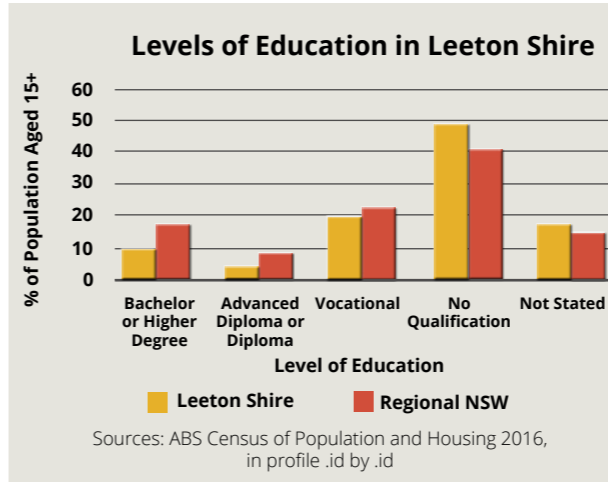
Source: ABS, Regional Population Growth in economy.id by .id

Outcome Ec3. We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy – Indicators of success



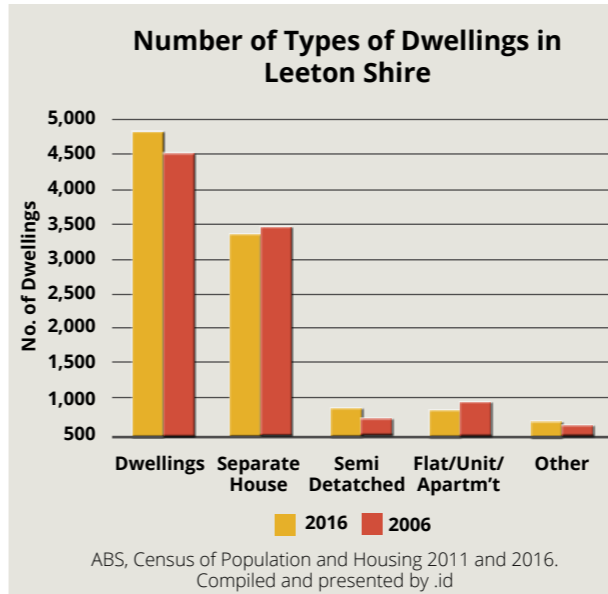
Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Outcome Ec4. We have the skills and knowledge required to undertake the work available – Indicators of success

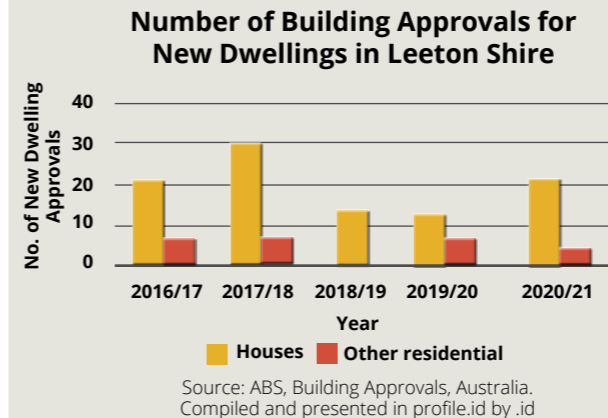


Sources: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, in profile .id by .id

Outcome Ec5. We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of residents – Indicators of success

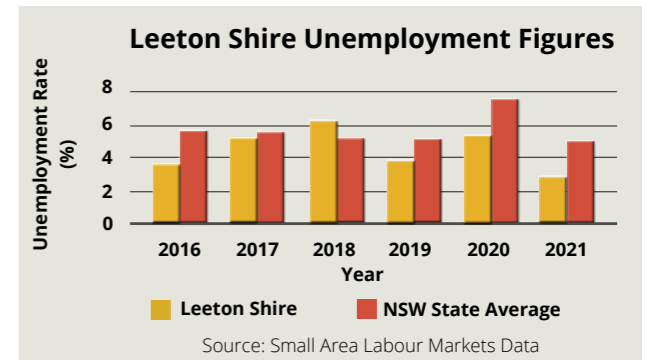


ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented by .id



Source: ABS, Building Approvals, Australia. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id

Outcome Ec6. We have diverse employment opportunities

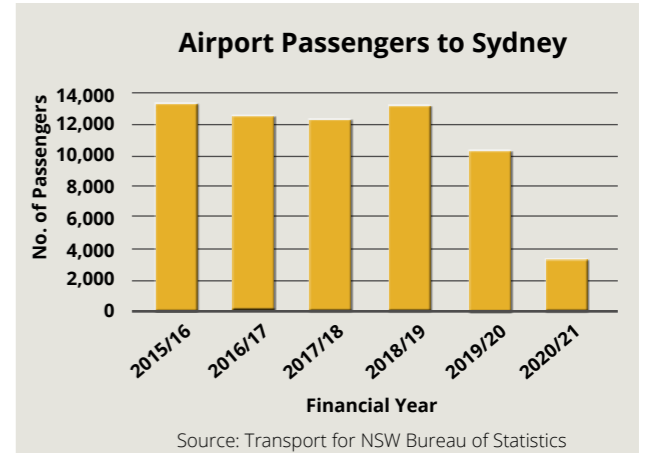


Source: Small Area Labour Markets Data

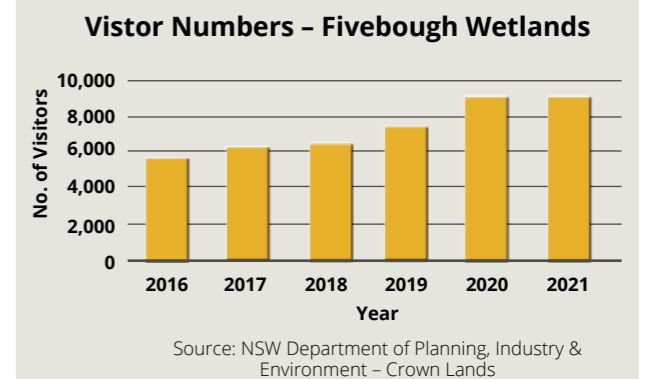


Source: NIEIR 2021 in economy.id by .id

Outcome Ec7. We are a popular tourist destination



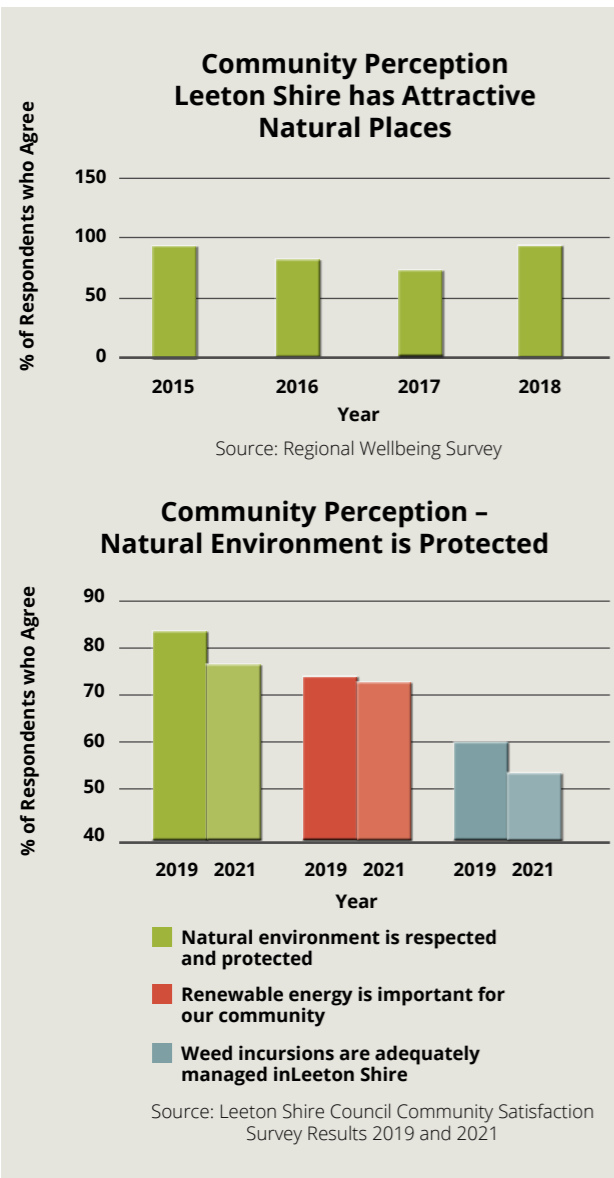
Source: Transport for NSW Bureau of Statistics



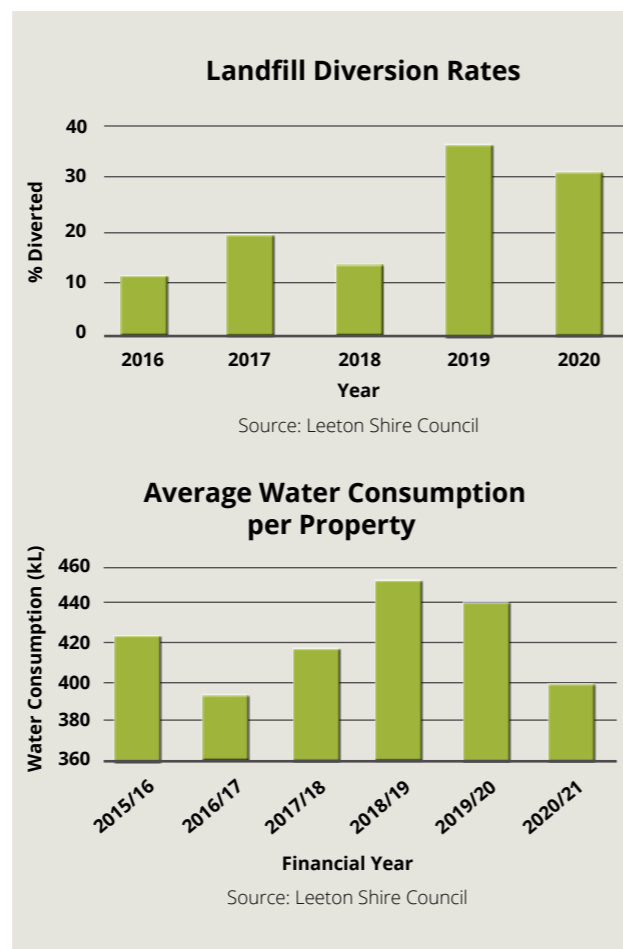
Source: NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment – Crown Lands

FOCUS AREA 4. A quality environment (En)

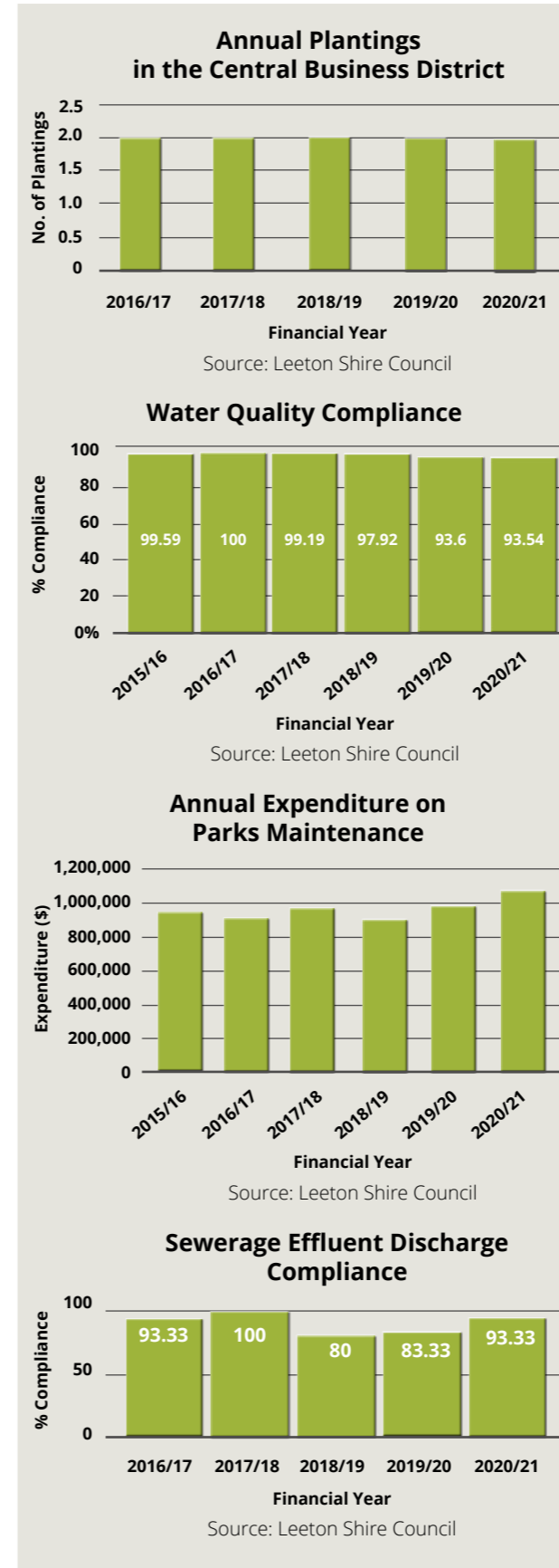
Outcome En1.
We enjoy a protected natural environment and agricultural land



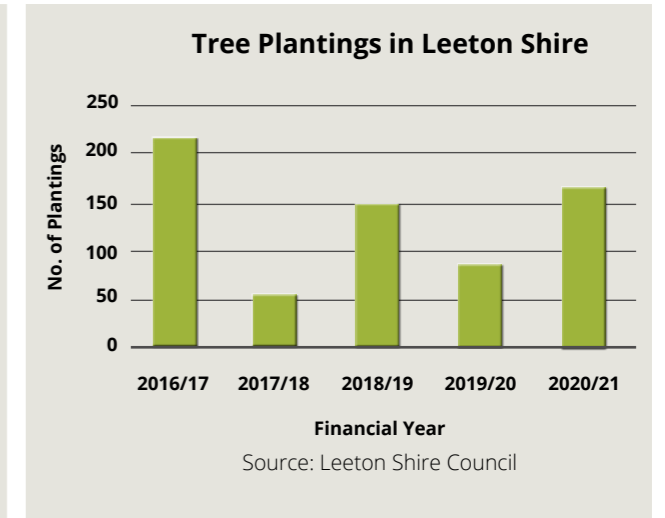
Outcome En2.
We live sustainably and use our resources responsibly



Outcome En3.
Our built environment is attractive and serviceable



Outcome En4.
We balance the needs of our natural and built environments

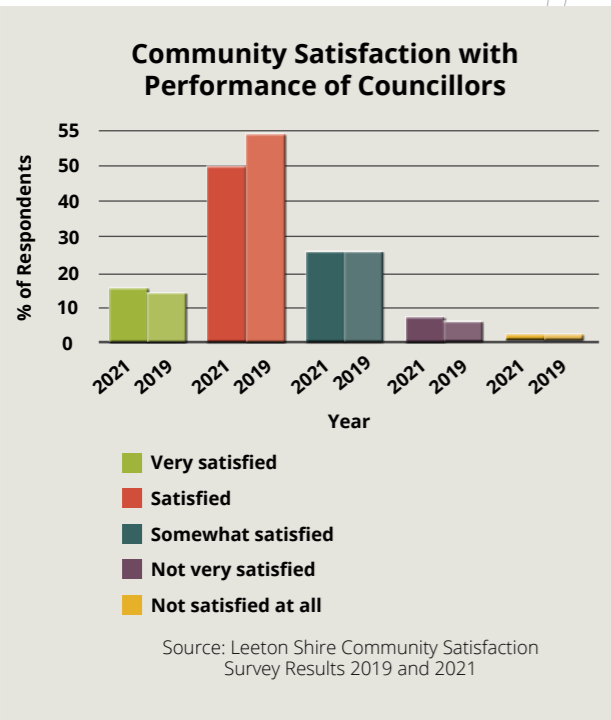


FOCUS AREA 5. Strong leadership and civic participation (L)

Outcome L1.
We are well informed and engaged in decision-making



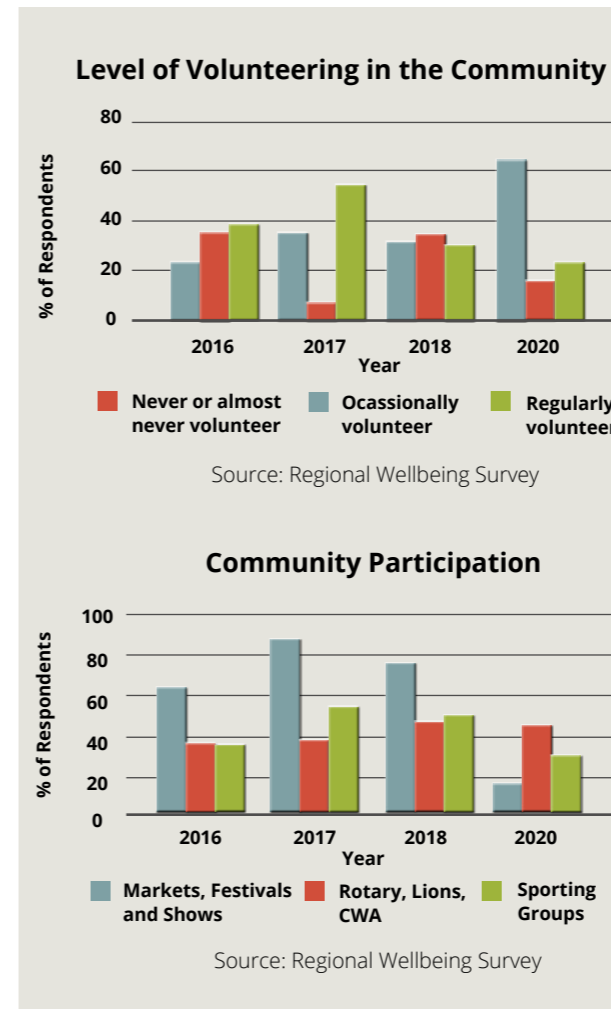
Outcome L2.
Our leaders speak out for the good of our community



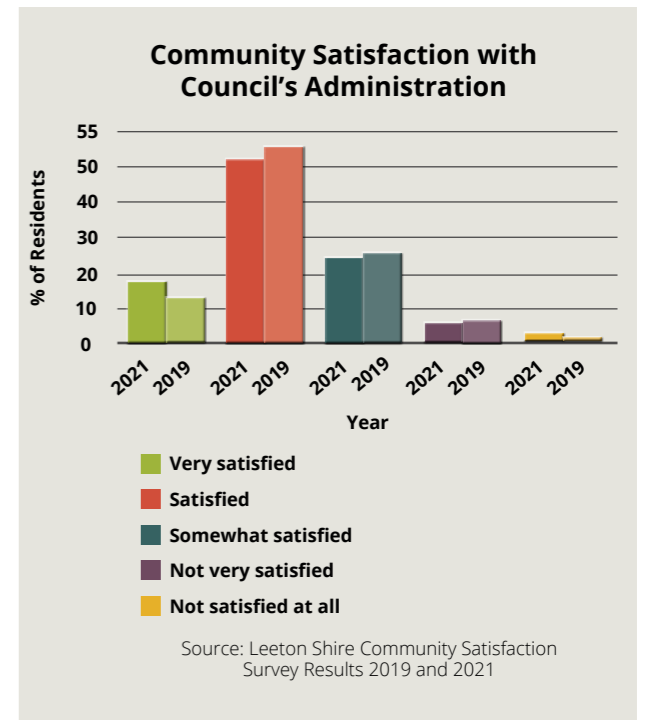
Outcome L3.
We work together to achieve our goals



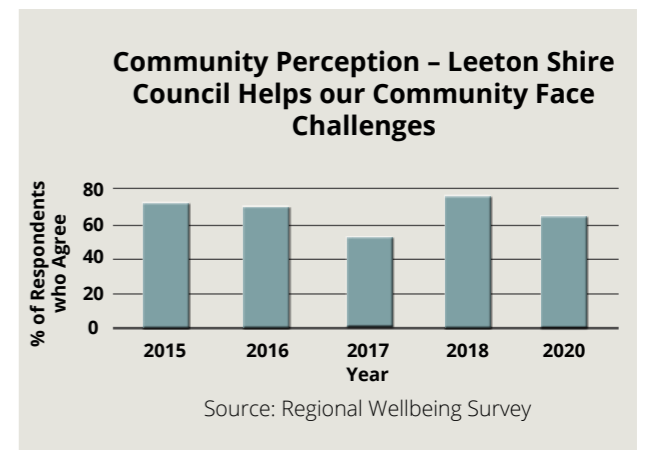
Outcome L4.
We are active community members who recognise we all have a role to play



Outcome L5.
Our Council operates efficiently and effectively within a framework of good governance



Outcome L6.
We demonstrate leadership in the face of disaster



6 State and Regional plans

This Plan was prepared taking into account the broader State and regional plans and priorities that influence what happens locally. In particular, the following documents were considered in the development of this plan:

State

NSW Premier's Priorities

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities>

A Twenty-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/a-20-year-economic-vision-for-regional-nsw-refresh>
and

https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/202102/20%20Year%20Vision%20for%20RNSW_0.pdf

Draft State Significant Agricultural Land Map

<https://nswdpi.mysocialpinpoint.com/ssal/map#/>

NSW Primary Industries Climate Change Research Strategy

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1319386/pi-ccr-strategy.pdf

NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021

https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/385683/NSW-Waste-and-Sustainable-Materials-Strategy-2041.pdf

NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/rural-and-remote-education-strategy-2021-24>
and

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/rural-and-remote-education-strategy-2021-24/about-the-strategy#Download1>

NSW Police Force Statement of Strategic Intent

https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/628460/Statement_of_Strategic_Intent.pdf

Regional

Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/riverina-murray-regional-plan-2017.pdf>

Western Riverina Economic Development Strategy

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/Western%20Riverina%20REDS%C2%A0.pdf>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018–2022

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-RAMJO-STATEMENT-OF-STRATEGIC-REGIONAL-PRIORITIES-17.12.2018-min.pdf>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Water Position Paper June 2020

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Riverina-And-Murray-Joint-Organisation-Water-Position-Paper.pdf>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation 'Improving Transport Connectivity' Regional Freight Transport Plan November 2020

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020.11.12-RAMJO-Regional-Freight-Transport-Plan-min.pdf>

Masterplan for the Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct: Inland Rail

https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/000-Wagga/Final/Wagga_FinalMasterplan_WEB.pdf

Murrumbidgee Local Health District – Health Atlas 2019

<https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/getattachment/7ff4ae2f-8848-4193-947f-65e31124a7a4/mlhd-health-atlas-2019.pdf.aspx?lang=en-au&ext=.pdf>

7 References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing 2016

https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA14750?opendocument

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016, compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)

<https://profile.id.com.au/leeton>

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits 2017–2021

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), My School

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Leeton Shire Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2021

<https://www.leeton.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/Reports/Community-Satisfaction-Survey-2021-Results.pdf>

National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) data, compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions)

<https://economy.id.com.au/leeton>

National Skills Commission, Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) data, September quarter 2021

<https://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/Downloads/SmallAreaLabourMarketsSALM>

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR)

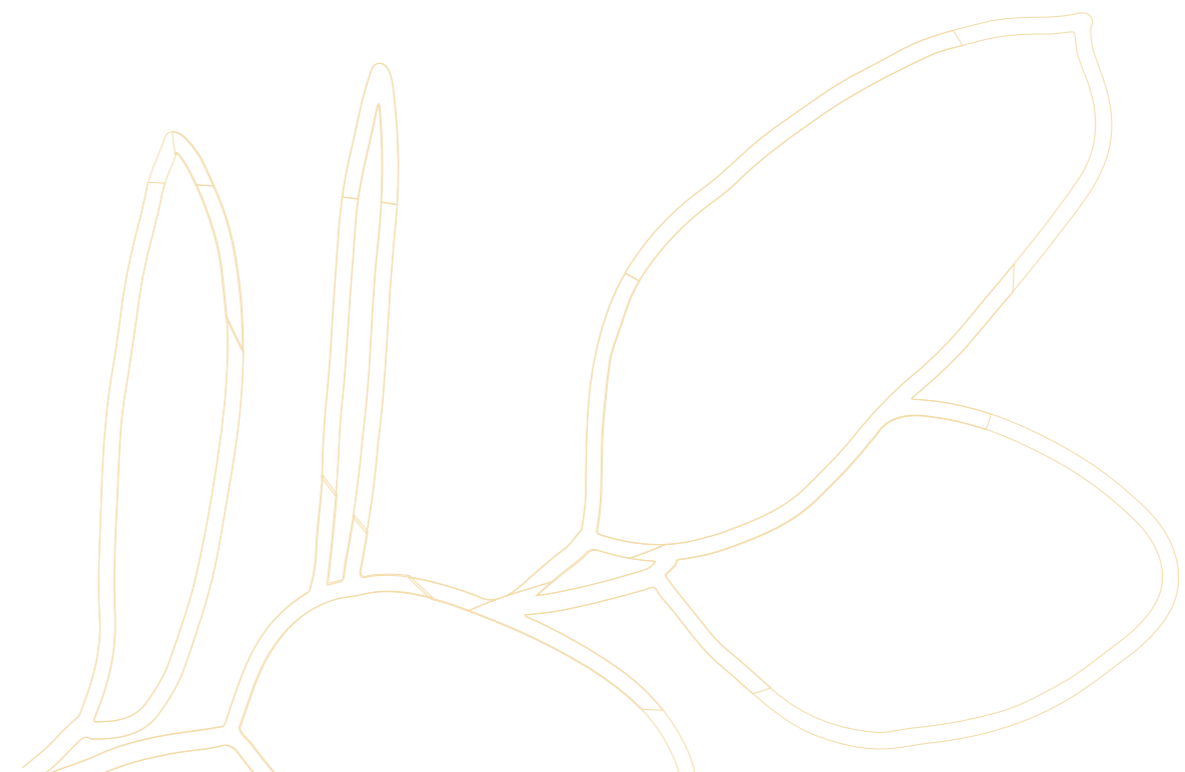
https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

NSW Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Government 2019 Population Projections

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections/Projections#:~:text=The%202019%20population%20projections%20show,10.6%20million%20people%20by%202041.>

University of Canberra, Regional Wellbeing Survey

<https://www.regionalwellbeing.org.au>



8 List of Acronyms

ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ARIC	Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
BEC	Business Enterprise Centre
BOCSAR	Bureau Of Crime Statistics and Research
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CUC	Country Universities Centre
DCP	Development Control Plan
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FOGO	Food Organics and Garden Organics
FRRR	Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
GP	General Practitioner
GRP	Gross Regional Product
LASI	Leeton Art Society Inc
L&DLALC	Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council
LELC	Leeton Early Learning Centre
LEP	Local Environment Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LHAC	Leeton Health Advisory Committee
LMAG	Leeton Museum and Art Gallery
LOOSC	Leeton Out of School Care
MDA	Murray Darling Association
MI	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited
MIA	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area
MLHD	Murrumbidgee Local Health District
MPHN	Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NBN	National Broadband Network
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Arts
RAMJO	Riverina and Murray Joint Organization
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RDA	Regional Development Australia
REX	Regional Air Express
RIPA	Roxy Institute of Performing Arts
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TfNSW	Transport for NSW
U3A	University of the Third Age
VFFF	Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
VIC	Visitor information Centre
WRA	Western Riverina Arts



