

# ENVISAGE 2024

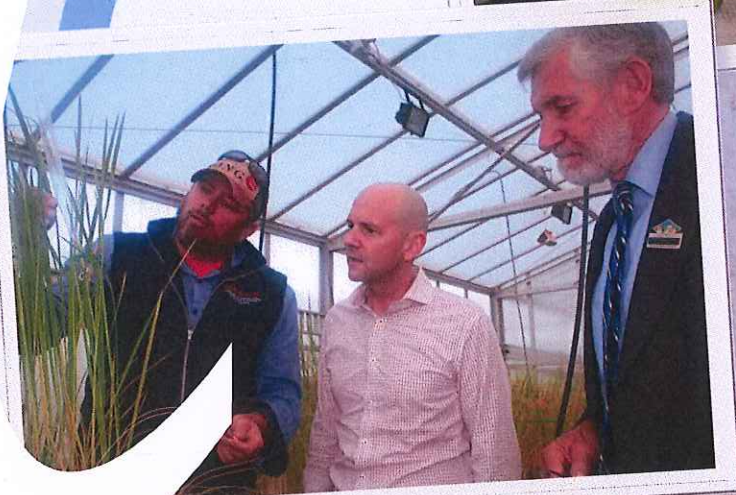


Going for Growth

Leeton Shire Council

Economic Development, Tourism and Events

Strategic Plan





## Front Cover:

Leeton Farmers Market, photo courtesy Riverina Regional Tourism.

Yanco Agricultural Institute, Dr Peter Snell, Minister for Agriculture Lands and Water Niall Blair and Leeton Shire Council Mayor Paul Maytom, photo courtesy Bernadette York.

Southern Cotton, Kate O'Callaghan courtesy Marie's Photographics.



Council's Message	3	Knowledge & Workforce Economy	12-13
How the plan aligns	4	Liveability	14-15
What our community has told us	5	Enabling Infrastructure	16-17
Snapshot of Leeton's Population	6-7	Environmentally Sustainable Economy	18-19
Snapshot of Leeton's Economy	8	Visitor Economy	20-21
Strategic Themes	9	Back Cover	22
Business Growth & Attraction	10-11		



# COUNCIL'S

## MESSAGE

*Leeton offers a competitive edge for business with world-class services and an enviable lifestyle.* ”

Inspired by recent industry growth, the level of diversity in the local economy and our ability to connect globally—we are excited for Leeton’s future! As a Council with a strong leadership agenda, we are committed to remaining proactive about growing and nurturing business opportunity and job creation in our Shire.

Council is pleased to present a refreshed blueprint to further develop the Leeton economy. ENVISAGE 2024—Going for Growth is Leeton Shire Council’s Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan with the aim to support continued economic growth, foster local employment opportunities and position Leeton as a leader in innovation. Envisage 2024 will also ensure that Leeton is promoted as a vibrant and diverse place for business and visitor experiences.

Council has worked closely with the business and industrial sector to identify six key themes which underpin ENVISAGE 2024; as promoting Leeton as a vibrant and diverse place of business and visitor experiences.

**Theme 1: Business Growth & Attraction**

**Theme 2: Knowledge & Workforce Economy**

**Theme 3: Liveability**

**Theme 4: Enabling Infrastructure**

**Theme 5: Environmentally Sustainable Economy**

**Theme 6: Visitor Economy**

Cr Paul Maytom

Mayor

Cr Tracey Valenzisi

Chair: Tourism & Economic Development Committee



# HOW THE PLAN ALIGNS

In developing ENVISAGE 2024, Council has given genuine consideration to Leeton community aspirations which were identified and developed in 2014 in the Leeton Living Towards 2024 Community Strategic Plan.

Under the Community Strategic Plan theme **“Caring for our Health and Wellbeing”**, the community aspires to lifelong learning and access to education that will deliver employment outcomes. This is reflected in ENVISAGE 2024 in the Knowledge & Workforce Economy 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4.

Under the Community Strategic Plan theme **“Enhancing and Preserving our Natural Assets,”** the community aspires to ensuring that the impacts of climate change and the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBA) on local productivity are understood and addressed. The community also wishes to see alternative energy and energy efficiency promoted and supported. The community has identified the importance of promoting our natural assets to visitors, along with Leeton’s food and wine industries. These are reflected in ENVISAGE 2024 in the Environmentally Sustainable Economy 5.1, 5.3 and Visitor Economy 6.1 and 6.2.

Under the Community Strategic Plan theme **“Building our Businesses and Local Jobs”**, the community aspires to enjoy a revitalised CBD, to live in a Shire that is renowned for being “open for business”, and to have greater access to and participation in an improved digital economy. Important to the community is seeing local businesses supported to thrive, attracting investment to support business growth and advocating against centralisation of government services. Advocating for and facilitating improved transport networks is deemed essential. The community wishes to see a growth in the availability of skilled labour through better alignment between educational opportunities and business need. This is reflected in ENVISAGE 2024 in the Business Growth & Attraction 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, Knowledge & Workforce Economy 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4, Liveability 3.1 and Enabling Infrastructure 4.1 and 4.3.

Under the Community Strategic Plan theme **“Develop our Built Environment”**, the community aspires to an improved quality of tourist infrastructure in our national parks, including roads. The community has highlighted the importance of developing and promoting destinational events as well as valuing the iconic Roxy Theatre. These are reflected in ENVISAGE 2024 in the Visitor Economy 6.1, 6.2 and 6.7.



# WHAT OUR COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

Envisage 2024 provides impetus and inspiration for Council and local community action.

Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders was sought to provide detailed feedback in relation to some of the **key drivers** and **key challenges** for Leeton and how Council can play a key role in shaping the future of the Leeton economy.

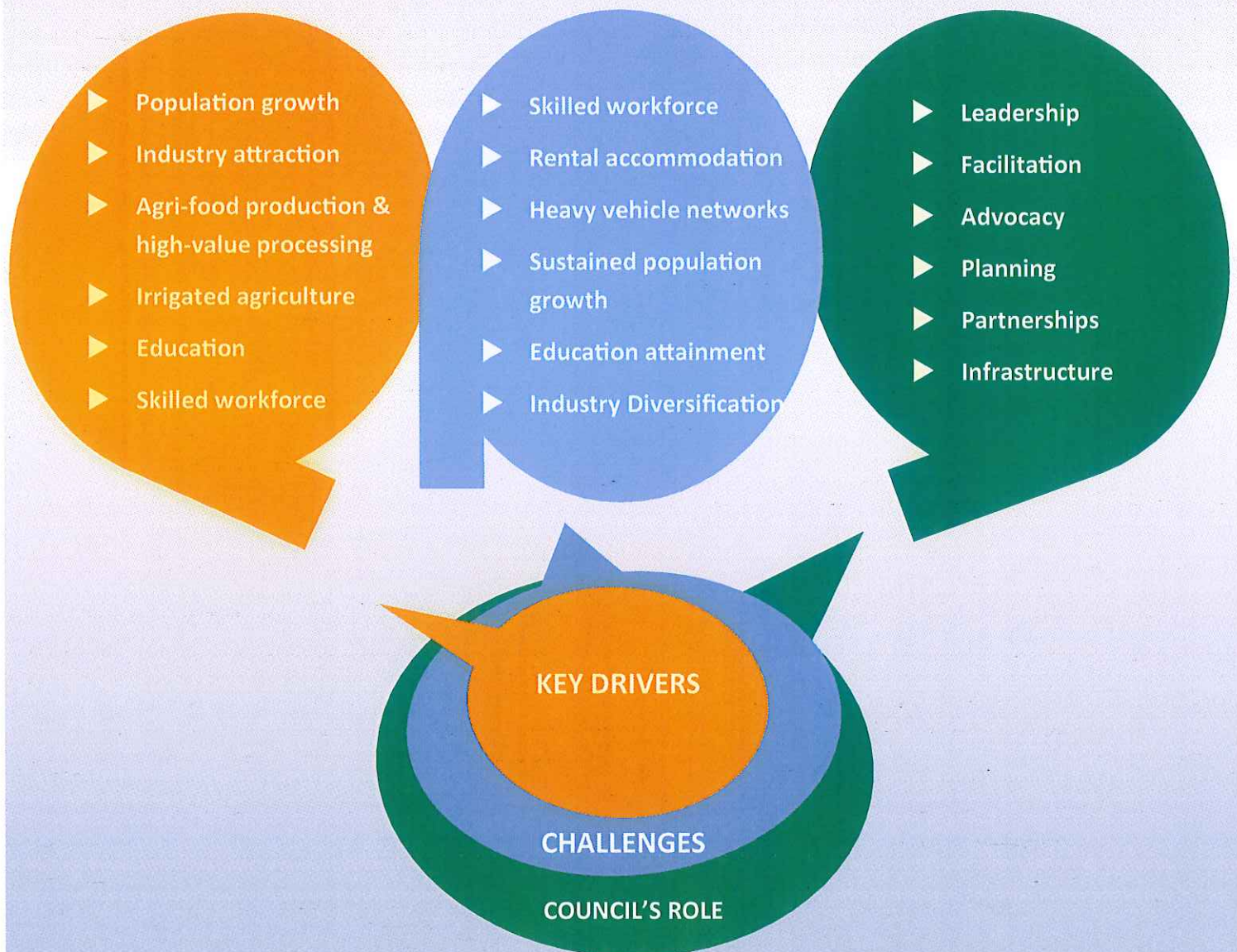
The **key drivers** identified by stakeholders include; population growth and industry attraction, agri-food production and high-value processing, irrigated agriculture, education and skilled workforce.

**Key challenges** centre around skilled workers to assist drive business growth, rental accommodation to house

growing workforces, sustained population growth, educational attainment and connectivity in heavy vehicle networks.

Council alone will not be able to achieve growth in these key areas. Community leaders, State and Federal agencies all play an important role in working together to drive the Leeton economy forward and to tackle challenges head-on through innovation and the strength and resilience that the local community has fostered.

Council's main role will be directional support, facilitation and planning with each term of Council determining what actions will be included in it's 4 year Delivery Program.





# Snapshot of Leeton's population

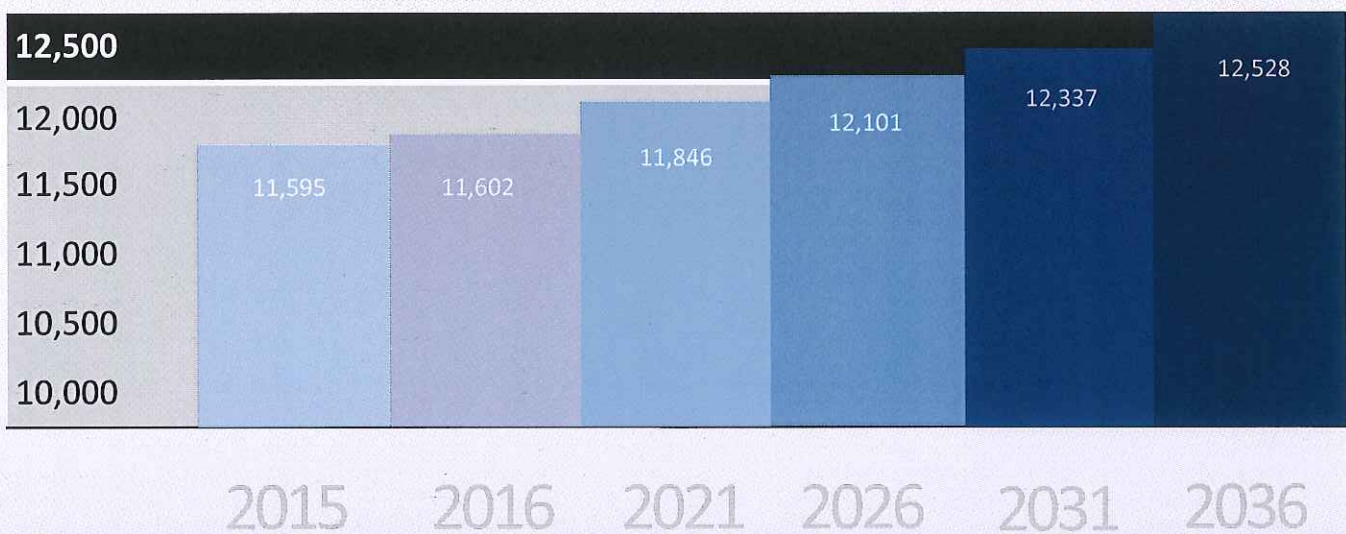
Leeton is 1,167 square kilometres in size and includes the villages of Yanco, Wamoon, Whitton and Murrumbidgee. Leeton is the second largest regional centre in the Western Riverina region outside of Griffith and plays an integral role in value-added agricultural processing, agriculture, education and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

In the 2013-14 years the population rose by 0.5% to 11,595 with the Leeton and Yanco townships at 8,085. Through "Envisage 2024", Council will endeavour to maintain an upwards trend of positive population growth.

Throughout the life of the "Envisage 2024" Plan the Leeton area will change in the following areas; residential housing and building construction market, transport and logistics, agricultural and manufacturing practices, education training and research, health and aged care sectors.

The ageing population will place greater emphasis on planning, attracting aged care support structures and a variety of services.

## Population Forecast



Source: id 2011

## AGE STRUCTURE

Source: id 2011

Between 2011-2026 the age-structure for Leeton as indicated by informed decisions (id) will see a;

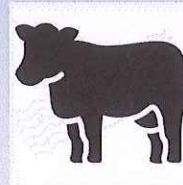
- 11.7% increase in population under the working age
- 26.3% increase in population retirement age
- 0.7% decline in population working age
- The greatest increase in persons will be 0-4 years



# SNAPSHOT OF LEETON'S ECONOMY

## LEETON'S ECONOMY

- ▶ Gross Regional Product worth \$527m. *(Source: id 2016)*
- ▶ 959 businesses registered in Leeton. *(Source: id 2016)*
- ▶ There are 5,796 local jobs in Leeton with the largest employment sectors being manufacturing (20%), agriculture (largest number of businesses 345, but only employs 10% of the workforce), retail trade (10%, 79 stores) Construction (employs 5.2% with 142 businesses), education, health care and social assistance. *(Source: December 2015 SALM)*
- ▶ The majority of Leeton's businesses are micro or small business employing less than 5 staff. *(Source: KPMG 2011)*
- ▶ 132 businesses with 5 or more staff. *(Source: KPMG 2011)*
- ▶ 13 businesses employ more than 50 staff. *(Source: KPMG 2011)*
- ▶ Unemployment in Leeton is 4.8% *(Source: December 2015 SALM)*
- ▶ The breakdown of workers in Leeton's workforce is Labourers at 18.5%, Managers at 16.1%, Trades at 14.5% and Professionals at 13.4%. *(Source: 2011 ABS)*
- ▶ Leeton has an export agenda with over 18,000 containers leaving Leeton every year. *(Source: POM 2015)*
- ▶ Over 25,000 visitors come to Leeton each year. *(Source: 2015 NSW)*



2016 JBS RIVERINA

40,000

Head of cattle at JBS Riverina feedlot with 400 processed daily at the abattoir



2015 WALNUTS AUSTRALIA

4,000 t

Walnuts are processed in Leeton annually.



2014 ABARES

\$148m

Rice contributes to the regional economy

## MAJOR INDUSTRIES

### EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Yanco Agricultural High School  
 St Francis de Sales Regional College  
 Leeton High School  
 NSW TAFE Riverina Institute –Leeton Campus  
 Tocal College Yanco  
 NSW DPI Yanco Agricultural Research Facility

### FOOD, FIBRE & BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING

Freedom Foods  
 Lillypilly Estate  
 Pacific Fresh  
 Southern Cotton  
 Sunrice  
 The Daily Drinks Co  
 Toorak Wines  
 Webster Limited  
 Weilin Trade  
 UWE—United World Enterprises









# STRATEGIC THEMES

**Theme 1:** Business Growth & Attraction

**Theme 2:** Knowledge & Workforce Economy

**Theme 3:** Liveability

**Theme 4:** Enabling Infrastructure

**Theme 5:** Environmentally Sustainable Economy

**Theme 6:** Visitor Economy



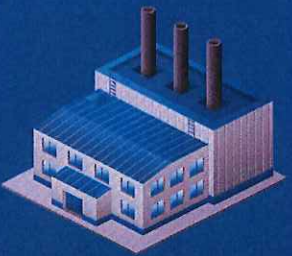
# THEME 1: Business Growth & Attraction



**959**  
Businesses



**65%**  
Micro-business  
1-5 people



**13 large**  
businesses  
Employ over 50  
people

Leeton's local economy is highly dependant on irrigation with 65% of business entities which do not employ staff and 28% of micro-business employing 5 people or less.

The agricultural sector is diversified with a range of financial institutions and professional services within the region directly linked to manufacturing and agricultural services. 36% of Leeton's economic value add and 44% of employment is directly related to food and fibre production.

Business support is offered through a range of services, including Council's Economic Development unit, Riverina BEC (Business Enterprise Centre), Riverina Regional Tourism and Leeton Chamber of Commerce and Industry through "buy local" programs , educational forums, advocacy and networking.

Leeton has experienced recent growth in freight and logistics at WRIFT—the Western Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics hub with new industries such as oaten hay and cotton seed exports. Other industries with increased growth is walnuts and cotton.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- Attract non-water based industry to improve sustainability and diversification.
- Foster business innovation and encourage investment in industries.
- Increased enabling infrastructure including faster broadband (NBN National Broadband Network) and heavy vehicle freight routes.
- Attract business and trade globally.
- Understand business needs and current status of industry.
- Rise to the challenge of living with less water - Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBA).

## Proposed Actions

- Promote Leeton as an innovation hub.
- Develop a Business Attraction Prospectus.
- Host strategic networking opportunities.
- Communicate new State and Federal programs to local business.
- Advocate for pertinent policies, growth and opportunities under the MDBA Plan.
- Assist business in becoming export ready and entering new markets (new trade agreements)
- Implement Business Capability Study to foster local business growth.





# GOALS

## Business Growth & Attraction

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

---

- 1.1 A resilient business community offering a diverse range of local employment opportunities.

---

- 1.2 An affordable and attractive area to invest and conduct business.

---

- 1.3 A pro-development and globally competitive Local Government Area, with strong industrial and commercial growth with the capability to adapt to future challenges.

---

- 1.4 A productive hub for accessing State and Federal economic development assistance.

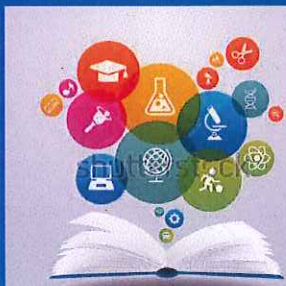
---



# THEME 2: Knowledge & Workforce Economy



**\$30M**  
Scientific  
Research  
programs



**1,114**  
Students board  
in Leeton each  
year



**\$15M**  
School boarders  
contribute to the  
economy

Leeton has a strong education presence from early childhood, to primary, secondary and tertiary. Leeton is home to three high schools, two of which are boarding schools. Leeton offers a range of accredited courses through the local TAFE campus and at the Tocal Yanco campus.

NSW DPI Yanco Agricultural Research Facility is an important dynamic in Leeton's economy, investing millions in research programs in a range of important programs to improve cropping yields, investigate pest management systems among others.

Informed Decisions (id) anticipates that between 2011 and 2026 the age structure for Leeton will change. A rapidly ageing workforce combined with a decline in working aged population will place pressure on business looking to expand.

## Challenges & Opportunities

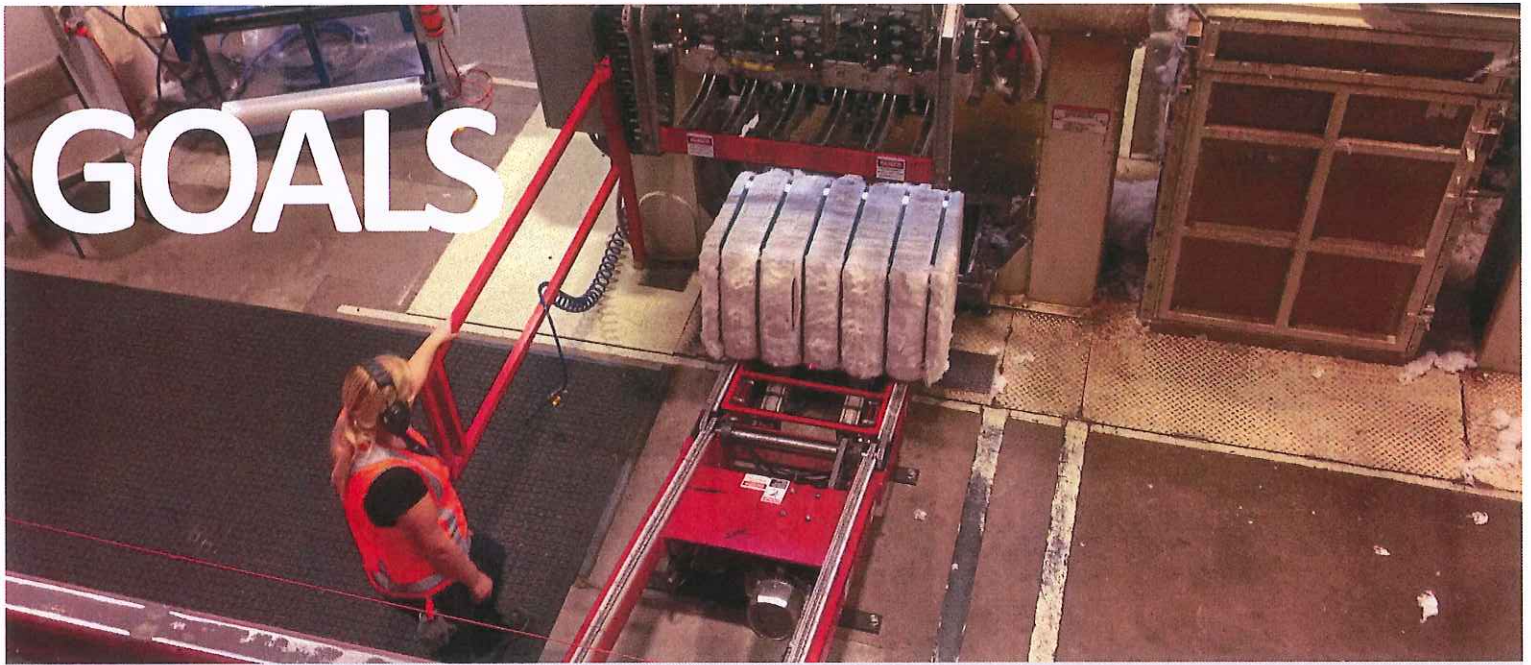
- NBN faster broadband will improve access for flexible learning and delivery of programs.
- Increase training and educational attainment through partnerships such as NSW TAFE Riverina Institute –Leeton Campus and other tertiary providers with the 'Grow Our Own' program.
- Increasing diversified and skilled workforce to keep pace with business needs.
- Leeton provides opportunity for the visa holiday market (back packers) and grey nomads for labour.

## Proposed Actions

- Attract high calibre skilled professionals and skilled labour.
- Understand the skills gaps and broker support and skills development opportunities.
- Highlight Leeton's educational assets in attracting new business and residents.
- Continue to work with tertiary education providers and stakeholders in Grow Our Own project which addresses retention, attraction and growing our own skills.
- Continue to work with registered training providers to ensure there are a broad range of educational options.
- Advocate for traineeships and apprenticeships and on-line tertiary options to entice school leavers to work and study locally.



# GOALS



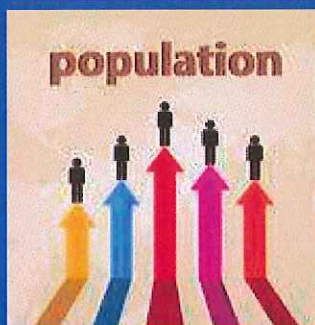
## Knowledge & Workforce Economy

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

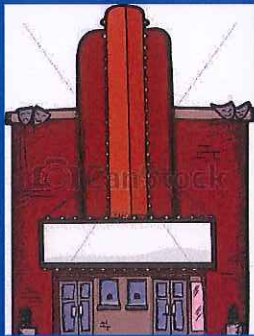
- 
- 2.1 A community dedicated to skills attraction, retention, building strong workforces and growing young people through local jobs and training pathways.
- 
- 2.2 A community with an integrated approach to promotion of local career pathways.
- 
- 2.3 A community which facilitates accessible and affordable cloud-based on-line tertiary pathways.
- 
- 2.4 A business community with access to research partners to drive innovation practices.
-



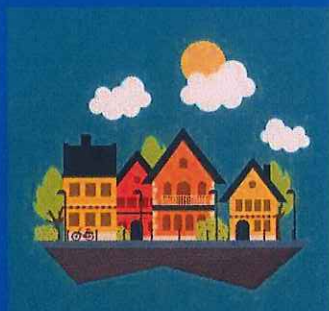
# THEME 3: Liveability



**0.5%**  
Increase



**16,000**  
Patrons enjoyed  
a show at the  
Roxy in 2015



**754**  
Extra Dwellings  
by 2036

Leeton is a vibrant community supported by strong industry, good facilities and services. Quality schooling, good childcare, sporting organisations and a cohesive connected community has made Leeton a great place to raise a family. The level and standard of medical and professional services is high.

Leeton enjoys excellent sporting amenity representing almost every sport. Living in Australia's food bowl has its advantages with a range of restaurants in Leeton winning prestigious awards.

Culture and live theatre is also part of the extensive annual entertainment program at the Roxy Community Theatre, a 1930 art deco building which Council manages.

Belonging to a connected, friendly and safe community is attractive to new families and residents.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- Ensuring housing stock, green field residential developments allow for a variety of rental accommodation.
- Ensure that Council infrastructure continues to grow at the same pace as residential population growth.
- Attract new residents and skilled professionals.

## Proposed Actions

- Housing availability— Understand the constraints and work with developers in accordance with the Local Environment Plan (LEP).
- Continue to advocate for new services and to retain existing medical and educational services.
- Highlight Leeton's liveability benefits—develop a New Residents Kit.
- Progress a CBD Enhancement program.





# GOALS

## Liveability

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

---

3.1 A proactive community in planning and preparing for the future growth needs of residents.

---

3.2 A shire that plans for the housing and recreational needs of its residents.

---

3.3 A community with well serviced medical and education options.

---

3.4 A shire with a strong local food influence, and dining experiences.

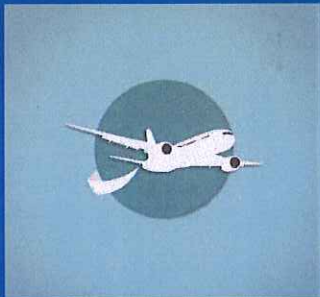
---

3.5 A welcoming and friendly place to live.

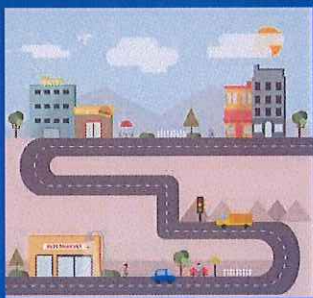
---



# THEME 4: Enabling Infrastructure



**12,000**  
Passengers p/a



**50%**  
Increase in freight  
by 2031



**3,100**  
Expected  
number of  
connected  
premises in  
Leeton under  
fixed line roll-out

Leeton has well developed infrastructure such as telecommunications, transport roads network, power and gas. Households and businesses have good coverage of mobile phone networks. Leeton's villages have welcomed NBN fixed wireless broadband and is anticipating fibre to the node by 2017.

Leeton businesses have good central access to markets, supported by solid transport infrastructure with connectivity to major highways, rail corridors and regional airports.

Road freight demand is expected to double by 2031 (NSW Ports Strategy) with Councils under increasing pressure to ensure road and rail freight corridors are keeping pace with industry and transport operators.

Enabling infrastructure is critically important in ensuring industry growth is uninhibited, contributing to jobs growth and investment.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- Increased road freight demand is placing pressure on Council's road budgets, particularly higher mass vehicles, in gaining greater efficiencies.
- The high cost of aviation fuel and other commercial impacts on air-services may place pressure on regional airline operators.
- Making sure that Leeton is continually engaged in discussions relating to infrastructure investment such as communications, rail and road.
- Ensuring electricity infrastructure meets industry growth needs.
- Changing markets, Government legislation and new industry trends will largely dictate the evolving world of critical enabling infrastructure.

## Proposed Actions

- Continue to advocate for black spot mobile funding
- Respond to collaborative investment opportunities.
- Continue to support Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal (WRIFT)
- Advocate for improved rail.
- Future proofing available industrial land and relevant infrastructure for Leeton.
- Advocate for new infrastructure such as increase in power capacity and NBN at Vance Estate.



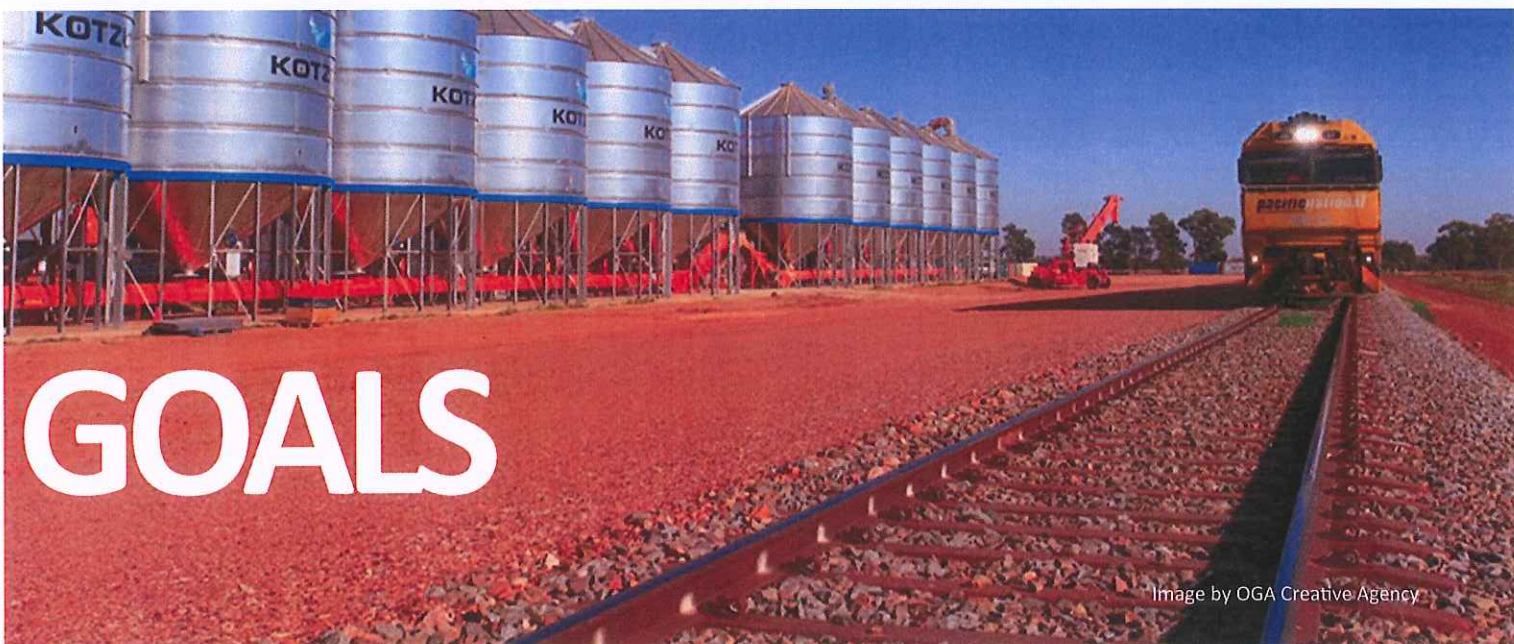


Image by OGA Creative Agency

## Enabling Infrastructure

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

- 4.1 An interconnected community with good access to heavy vehicle routes and rail corridors to allow for greater productivity and efficiencies for local industries.
- 4.2 A community with high speed broadband through the NBN Fixed Wireless Broadband and Fibre to the Node.
- 4.3 Proactive in industrial land development, ensuring that infrastructure is maintained and meeting industry needs.



# THEME 5: Environmentally Sustainable Economy



**307**

Sunny days



**4th**

Largest user of  
power in the  
Riverina—Leeton  
businesses



**132,500**

Tons of organic  
waste

Leeton is strategically located in the centre of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, making it an ideal place to attract investment in organic waste recovery, recycling, raw water reticulation and renewable energy projects.

There is great opportunity for organic compost, recycling and higher value-added product in the Leeton area generated from agricultural processes.

Leeton Businesses have been rated the fourth largest users of power in the Riverina region (Source OEH 2015.). This creates an opportunity to reduce reliance on traditional fossil fuel power supplies reducing energy costs for residents, business and industry.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- To partner with Industry and private renewable investors to facilitate and attract projects to Leeton in relation to power and gas usage.
- An opportunity exists for Council to consider raw water as a new product offering to local industry and to implement a raw water reticulated service.
- Funding opportunities for investment in renewable projects.

## Proposed Actions

- Council to take a lead in Energy Sustainability (ie Facilitate an Energy Audit of Council facilities, Solar project of a facility, waste recovery program at landfill).
- Attract investment and business partners in the renewable space with strong business environmental ethics, eg solar farm, waste recovery project.
- Facilitate forum opportunities in partnership with The Office of Environment and Heritage.
- Build on Council assets to further value-add to organic waste streams.
- Investigate solutions to build capacity in raw water and relieve supply and demand pressure.



# GOALS



## Environmentally Sustainable Economy

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

---

5.1 A sustainable community backed by a local government with a commitment to environmental stewardship.

---

5.2 A community encouraging renewable investment in research projects and opportunities.

---

5.3 An area of innovation in co-generation and tri-generation.

---

5.4 An area of innovation in waste recovery and water utilisation.

---

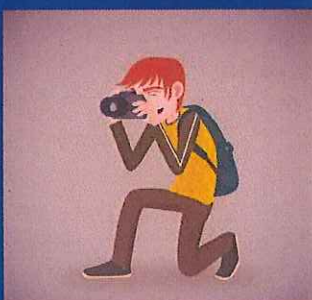


# THEME 6: Visitor Economy



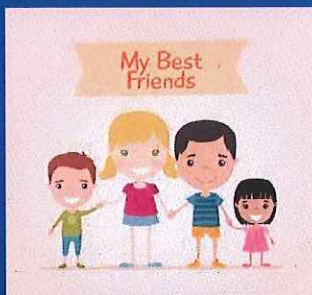
**\$11m**

Value of Leeton  
visitor economy



**25,000**

Visitors annually



**35%**

Family & Friends

Every year over 25,000 visitors make their way to Leeton. Key annual events and facilities such as the Roxy Community Theatre play a large role in attracting visitors.

The majority of visitation derives from the VFR (Visiting Friends and Relative market). Leeton also has market segments in business tourism, events based tourism, sports tourism and nature based tourism.

The majority of visitors will travel to Leeton by road transport (76%) and stay three nights. Visitor spend per night on average is \$143 per visit, spend per visitor is \$371, however sports tourism spend per night is \$243 (source Destination NSW 2015).

Leeton Shire Council needs to take an active lead in understanding the sophisticated nature of visitors and the most prevalent demographic to promote Leeton as a place to visit. The visitor economy and visitor spend, has a multiplier effect of 1:7 throughout the community. With a value of \$11 million dollars per year, it is an Industry which can be grown.

## Challenges & Opportunity

- Scope to develop iconic, destinational events.
- Ramsar Listed Wetlands, Fivebough & Tuckerbill.
- Optimise heritage potential (ie. Henry Lawson Cottage., refurbish the old WCIC Building now the Leeton Visitor Information Centre and the Roxy Community Theatre.
- Increasing collaboration with strategic partners including Narrandera and Griffith Councils.
- Improving industry engagement, networking and cohesiveness.
- Improving signage consistency (promotional and directional)

## Proposed Actions

- Develop strategic networking opportunities.
- Develop a clear and strategic view of visitor services and events including strategic alliances with neighbouring Councils.
- Review and support local events to become more sustainable and accountable.
- Facilitate new tourism and event experiences (including eco-tourism and agri-tourism).
- Undertake a tourism signage review.
- Undertake a scope of works at the Roxy Community Theatre to attract funding.





## Visitor Economy

BY 2024 LEETON WILL BE RECOGNISED AS BEING;

- 
- 6.1 A community offering an authentic agri-tourism experience.
- 
- 6.2 A community offering renown nature-based tourism experiences.
- 
- 6.3 A community which encourages locals and visitors to participate in events, unique to our location.
- 
- 6.4 A community that works collaboratively with neighbouring shires to leverage marketing opportunities.
- 
- 6.5 A community that is proactive in introducing local networking opportunities and professional development for local industry stakeholders.
- 
- 6.6 A shire which supports community groups in seeking funding opportunities for infrastructure and events to increase visitor stays (NSW Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan).
- 
- 6.7 A shire that celebrates its heritage, increasing its cultural offering including the renowned heritage listed Roxy Community Theatre.



Leeton Shire Council would like to acknowledge key partners, individuals and organisations involved in the consultation process during the scoping of the ENVISAGE 2024 Economic Development Tourism Strategic Plan; NSW Department of Industry, RDA-Riverina, local businesses, local industry, the Industry Capability Network, Australia Rail Track Corporation ARTC, Port of Melbourne, Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal WRIFT, Leeton Chamber of Commerce and Industry, NSW Business Chamber, the Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Department of Primary Industries DPI.

Special thanks must go to the members of the Leeton Tourism and Economic Development Committee for their guidance driving the development of ENVISAGE 2024



For more information contact Leeton Shire Council 02 69 530 911

[www.leeton.nsw.gov.au](http://www.leeton.nsw.gov.au)