

# Upper Lachlan

## Community Strategic Plan 2042

2025 Revision



## Acknowledgement of country

The Upper Lachlan Shire acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Gundungurra and Wiradjuri people and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present. We acknowledge the vital contribution that indigenous people and cultures have made and still make to the nation that we share, Australia.

## Contact Us

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# Welcome

We are delighted to share our community's vision for the next 18 years; the Upper Lachlan Shire Community Strategic Plan 2042. This Plan presents an inspiring roadmap for our shire as we move towards 2042 that captures a clear vision and compelling goals for our residents, businesses, community organisations and many partners and collaborators. It is the key strategic plan that will guide us as we work together to achieve great things for Upper Lachlan.

Since the first Community Strategic Plan (Plan) was developed over a decade ago, it has been used by Council to inform decisions and set the agenda for long-term planning of projects, infrastructure and services. Upper Lachlan Shire Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining this Plan. Its implementation draws on the continuing partnerships with all levels of government and agencies, non-government organisations, businesses and the community.

With the election of a new council in September 2024, NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation requires that this Plan be reviewed and updated to ensure it reflects the community's priorities. This updated plan builds on the 2022 Community Strategic Plan, and considers the information gathered from engagement activities that took place in 2024. Your contributions have highlighted the strengths of our region and identified the key challenges we face.

This Plan underscores the importance of nurturing a strong and sustainable economy while preserving and enhancing the natural beauty that defines

Upper Lachlan. It highlights the central role of thoughtful planning, responsible governance, and active community engagement in creating a connected and inclusive region. The Plan also responds to the community's call for improved infrastructure, better services, and a balanced approach to growth that honours the rural character and supports the wellbeing of all residents. Through collaboration and resilience, we aim to ensure that Upper Lachlan remains a great place to live, work, and thrive for generations to come.

Delivering this vision is not something we can achieve in isolation. Shared decision making and effective working partnerships with government agencies, non-government organisations, business and, of course, our community will be critical to our success.

The unique nature of this Plan is that it is a document for the whole community. If we are to succeed in creating the community we have envisioned with this Plan, we need to work together, and everyone is encouraged to play an active role in whatever way we can. This Plan is designed to encourage commitment to our future and a sense of common purpose and responsibility.

This is the Plan for our Upper Lachlan, and we are committed to working with our community to reach our goals.

# Vision

**To build and maintain sustainable communities while retaining the region's natural beauty.**

## Vision definitions

### Sustainable communities

Sustainable communities: Refers to both social, environmental and economic sustainability. Social connections, civic leadership, environmental health and economic prosperity can be maintained to meet current and future needs.

# Our plan

## About our plan

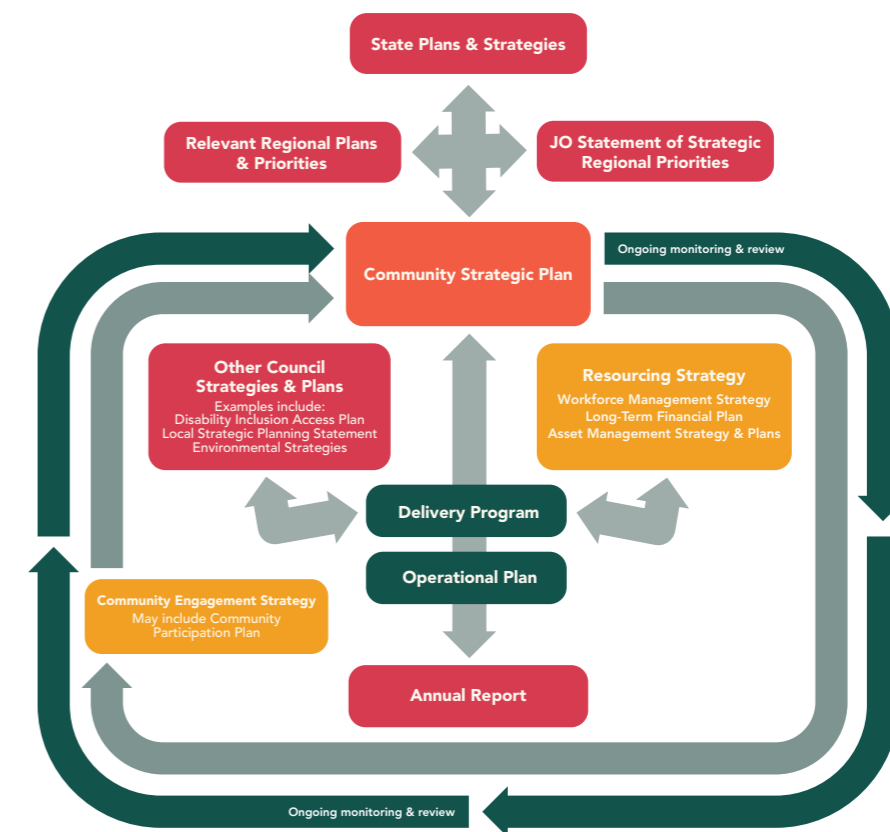
The Upper Lachlan Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is based on the aspirations and priorities of our community. Informed by community input, it sets out a long-term vision for the region to 2042 and identifies the key priorities and strategies for achieving this.

It is the community's plan for the future, not a council plan. Upper Lachlan Shire Council is the custodian of the CSP; however, many other external agencies and stakeholders also lead and support the vision and strategic priorities. Businesses, industry groups, community groups, individuals, service providers and government agencies all have a role to play in reaching our shared vision.

## Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

An integrated approach to planning and reporting is a requirement for every NSW council under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework set out in the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government General Regulation 2021*.

This framework requires that the Council develop a series of plans, strategies, and reports linked to the community vision and priorities set out in the CSP. Each of these must be based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.



# Our community

Upper Lachlan Shire is located in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, West of the Blue Mountains and about 140 kilometres from Canberra. The Shire is characterised by rich soils and a temperate climate, providing an ideal village setting. The Shire's population is estimated to be approximately 8,700, and residents primarily live in the townships of Crookwell, Gunning and Taralga. Other shire villages include Collector, Dalton, Big Hill, Binda, Tuena, Grabben Gullen, Laggan, Breadalbane, Jerrawa and Bigga.

Total population  
**8,706**

SEIFA index\*  
**1,022**

## Top industries of employment

- 1** Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- 2** Manufacturing
- 3** Health Care and Social Assistance
- 4** Retail Trader
- 5** Construction

\* Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is score that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society.

If the Upper Lachlan Shire consisted of 100 people, there would be:

**6**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

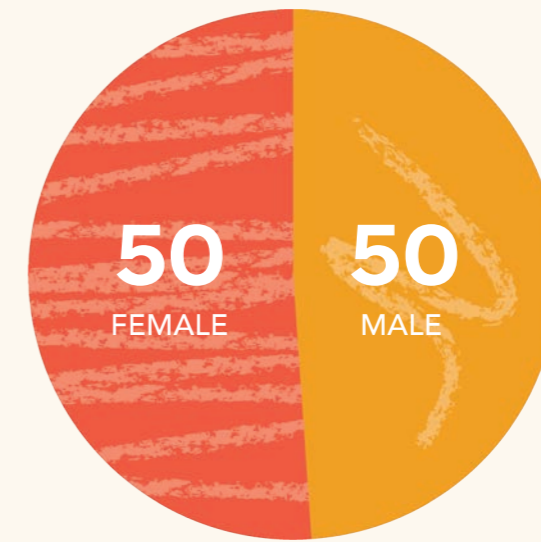
**9**  
born overseas

**4**  
speaking languages other than English at home

**24**  
with an individual income less than \$400 per week

**43**  
that completed higher education

**55**  
that did not complete year 12



**24:** 0 – 19 years    **45:** 20 – 59 years  
**31:** 60+ years



**31**  
living by themselves

**69**  
living in families

**3**  
unemployed and looking for work

**20**  
who volunteer

**31**  
working part time

**58**  
working full time



**12**  
care for someone with a disability

**6**  
have a disability



**72**  
who own, or pay a mortgage on a house

**24**  
who rent



**71**  
who drove to work

**5**  
who walked to work

Source: Profile.id. Economy.id. ABS Census. BOSCAR, NSW Health stats. NSW Population Health Survey.

# Community engagement

## What we asked

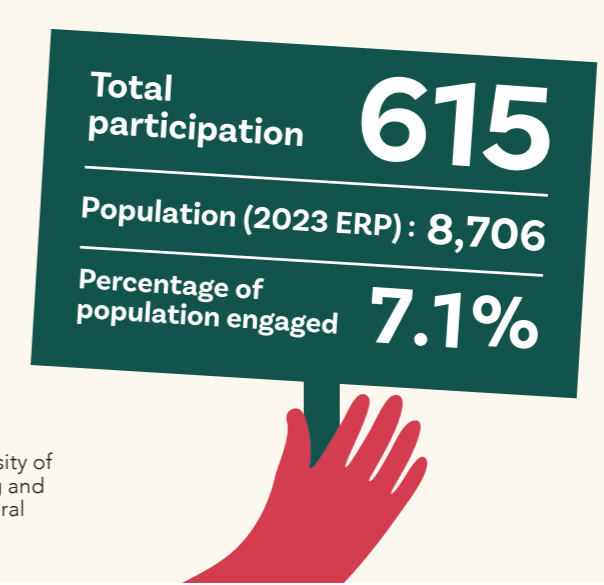
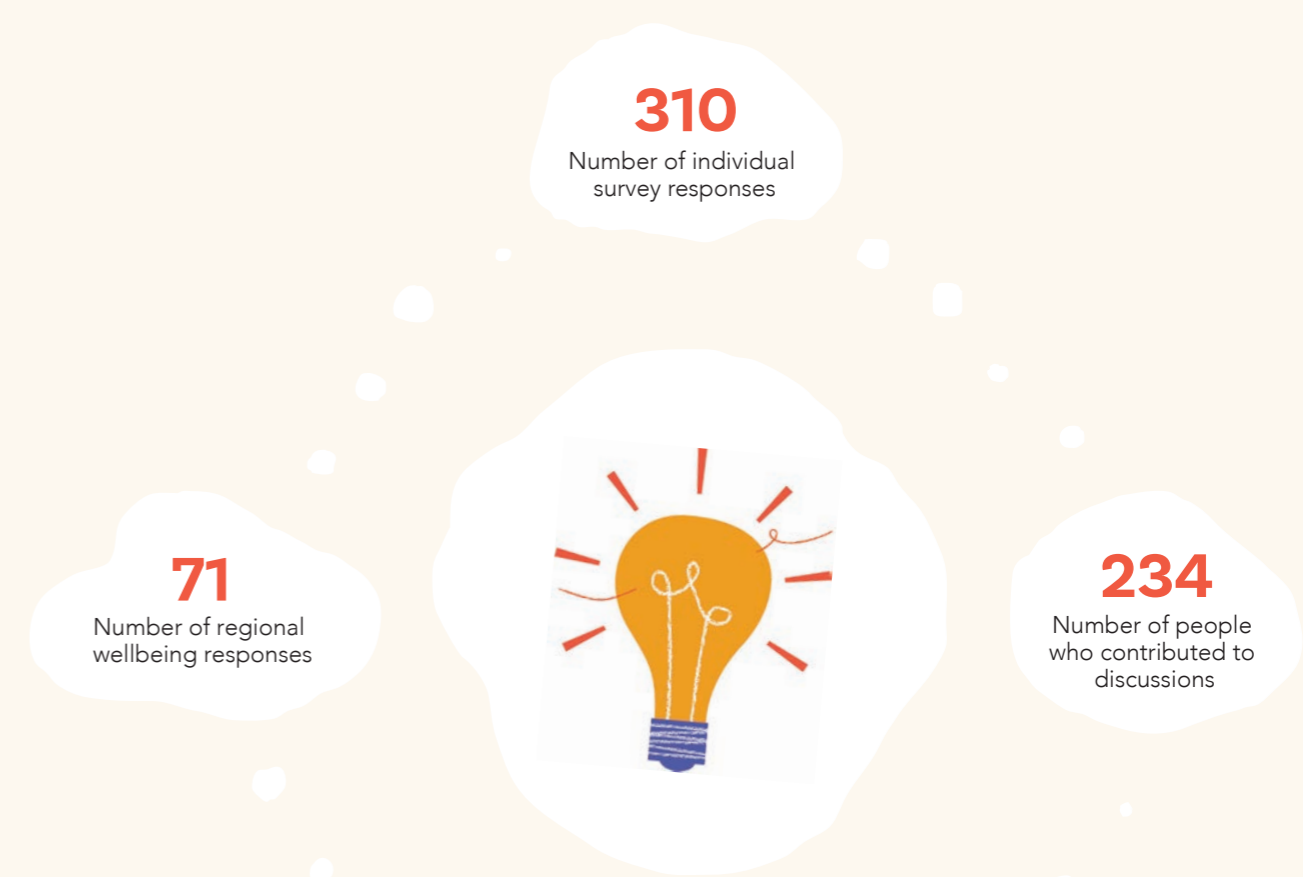
1. How do you feel about the vision in the endorsed CSP?
2. How are we tracking with the existing CSP?
3. What makes your community a great place to live?
4. What do you think are the main challenges facing your community?
5. What have you seen in another area/shire that you think would work well in your community?
6. What is one thing you would like to see achieved in your community in the next ten years?
7. What services or projects do you think Council should be prioritising or lobbying other levels of government for?

## How did you get involved

- Virtually – surveys.
- In conversation – discussion guides

## Participation

Over 600 people from the Upper Lachlan Shire participated in the Towards 2042 Stage 1 engagement from 1 February to 15 March 2024.



\* The Regional Wellbeing Survey, conducted annually by the University of Canberra, measures the wellbeing and quality of life of people living in rural and regional Australia.

# Community engagement

## What is important to you

When we asked the Upper Lachlan community what makes their area a great place to live, residents highlighted the relaxed rural lifestyle, strong sense of community, and beautiful natural environment. The area's laid-back pace of life, opportunities to engage in community groups, and the wide-open spaces with abundant birdlife were particularly valued. The peace and quiet of the region, combined with the friendly and supportive spirit of the local people, make Upper Lachlan a truly special place to live. However, since 2021, there has been a noticeable decline in the sense of community and appreciation for the natural environment, reflecting shifting community priorities.

## Main challenges

Participants identified several key challenges facing the Upper Lachlan community. Council emerged as the most significant concern, with issues around rates, the Special Rate Variation, and a perceived disconnect between council decisions and community needs leading to a lack of trust. Infrastructure was another major concern, particularly the poor condition of roads, town presentation, and inadequate mobile phone coverage. Access to services, especially health and medical care, has become a growing issue, with residents facing difficulties in accessing doctors, specialists, and in-home aged care. Additionally, the community is struggling to retain and support young people due to limited activities and employment opportunities, while the overall availability of local jobs, particularly

for professionals, remains a pressing issue. Since 2021, concerns about council governance and infrastructure have significantly increased, while environmental sustainability has decreased in priority.

## Key priorities

People who took part in the engagement indicated they prioritise:

- Improved infrastructure, including better drainage, footpaths, internet access, and road maintenance.
- The need for a better Council, focusing on efficient resource management, financial oversight, avoiding rate increases, and enhancing community engagement and leadership.
- Expanding sports and recreation facilities, such as completing projects like the pool and rail trail between Crookwell and Goulburn, improving pedestrian infrastructure, and supporting sporting groups.
- Supporting economic growth by fostering a vibrant agricultural sector, expanding retail options, developing strategic tourism initiatives, and attracting and retaining residents to ensure a thriving local economy.
- Sensible and balanced planning to maintain the community's rural character, ensure essential infrastructure, promote renewable energy adoption, and expand local amenities.



# Council's role

Council is committed to understanding the community's priorities, concerns and needs in terms of key services, facilities and programs.

Whilst Upper Lachlan Shire Council is the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, all levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community groups and individuals will share the responsibility for achieving our long-term community goals.

The Plan outlines the Council's role in the delivery of each priority, described using the following terms:

## Provide

Services, facilities, infrastructure, programs, planning, and engagement.

## Collaborate

Partner with the community, business and industry, other councils, and other tiers of government.

## Advocate

Amplify the voice of our community to get the best possible outcomes.

# Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, United Nations Member States, including Australia, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals serve as a global blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability for people and the planet, now and into the future.

As responsible global citizens, we have integrated the principles of the SDGs into the development of this Community Strategic Plan. By aligning our local strategies with these global goals, we ensure that our community not only addresses local priorities but also contributes to the broader vision of sustainable development worldwide.

These are the seventeen SDGs we have considered in the formulation of our strategies:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduce inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals



# Plan

The Upper Lachlan Shire CSP consists of five themes and strategic objectives:

## A. Our community

We are a network of close-knit and well supported communities that value our rural lifestyle.

## B. Our economy

We capitalise on the region's close proximity to Canberra and its position as a convenient location to attract industry and investment. We foster and develop diverse, adaptive, and innovative agricultural industry.

## C. Our environment

We appreciate our range of rural landscapes and habitats and are stewards of the natural environment for future generations.

## D. Our infrastructure

Infrastructure compliments our rural and historic landscapes whilst supporting healthy communities and industries.

## E. Our civic leadership

Our leaders work collaboratively to meet the needs of the community, in an ethical and strategic manner.

Each theme outlines the strategic objectives, strategies for achieving them, important partners and collaborators, and the specific role of the Council. A separate section explains the review and reporting process, and measures to track progress. The strategies in this Plan have been developed with careful consideration of the quadruple bottom line (QBL) and are grounded in Social Justice Principles.





# A. Our community

We are a network of close-knit and well supported communities that value our rural lifestyle.

Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our community's health and wellbeing is supported by access to services, facilities, and activities.	A.1 Improve access to health and community services that support physical health and mental wellbeing.	Advocate	NSW Government Australian Government Health and community services Community members Community groups
	A.2 Our sports, recreation, community and service groups are supported.	Provide Collaborate	
We have an inclusive, respectful and vibrant community life.	A.3 Our Traditional Owners and First Nations people ongoing and historic connection to Country is acknowledged.	Provide Collaborate	Traditional Owners and First Nations people Artists Tourism bodies Community groups Event organisers
	A.4 Events celebrate the identity of our towns, produce, heritage and culture.	Provide Collaborate	
	A.5 Encourage creative expression through arts and culture.	Provide Collaborate	
Our community is close-knit and safe.	A.6 Foster a strong sense of belonging through targeted community development initiatives.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups and organisations Emergency services NSW Government
	A.7 Plan for and address community safety and public health.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	
	A.8 Enhance community inclusion by identifying and eliminating participation barriers.	Provide Collaborate	
	A.9 Our communities are supported to be resilient to disasters and shocks.	Provide Collaborate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Upper Lachlan Community Participation Plan
- Upper Lachlan Social and Community Plan
- Upper Lachlan Cultural Plan

# B. Our economy

We capitalise on the region’s close proximity to Canberra and its position as a convenient location to attract industry and investment. We foster and develop diverse, adaptive, and innovative agricultural industry.

## Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council’s role	Our partners
Our businesses and industries are thriving, providing employment across the community.	B.1 Promote the region as an ideal location for businesses and industry.	Collaborate Advocate	Business and industry NSW Government Australian Government
	B.2 Support local business and industry to be resilient and successful.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	Canberra Region Joint Organisation RDA Southern NSW and ACT Tourism bodies
	B.3 Foster a diverse and resilient agricultural industry.	Collaborate Advocate	
	B.4 Develop our tourism experiences and offering to harness marketing and attraction opportunities.	Collaborate Advocate	
Our community can access local education, training and employment options.	B.5 Ensure our lifelong education offering is robust, from early childhood through to adult education.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	Education and training providers Local business and industry
	B.6 Support our young people to access education, training and employment pathways	Advocate	NSW Government Australian Government Telecommunications providers
	B.7 Enhance economic conditions to create new jobs and support the attraction of skilled employees.	Collaborate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Economic Development Plan and Strategy
- Southern Tablelands Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Tablelands Destination Development Plan
- Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan

# C. Our environment

We appreciate our range of rural landscapes and habitats and are stewards of the natural environment for future generations.

## Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our natural environment is maintained, protected and enhanced in line with community expectations.	C.1 Protect and enhance the existing natural environment, including flora and fauna native to the region.	Provide Collaborate	NSW State Government Water authorities Community groups
	C.2 Implement effective integrated weed and pest animal management.		
	C.3 Protect and rehabilitate waterways and catchments.		
Adopt environmental sustainability practices.	C.4 Investigate and implement approaches to reduce Council's carbon footprint.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups Local business and industry
	C.5 Lead climate mitigation and adaptation.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	NSW Government Canberra Region Joint Organisation
Our rural character and natural landscapes are protected and maintained.	C.6 Maintain a balance between growth, development, environmental protection and agriculture through sensible planning.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups Housing providers NSW Government
	C.7 Consider community feedback, local character and identity, economic factors and social impact in planning decisions.	Provide Collaborate	
	C.8 Encourage positive social and environmental contributions from developers.	Provide Collaborate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Biodiversity Planning Framework
- Community Heritage Study
- Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan
- Local Strategic Planning Statement
- On Site Sewerage Management System Strategy
- Community Participation Plan
- Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

# D. Our infrastructure

Infrastructure compliments our rural and historic landscapes whilst supporting healthy communities and industries.

Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Improved transport links connecting towns within the Shire and increased access to major centres.	D.1 Plan for, maintain and improve road corridor networks.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	NSW Government Australian Government
	D.2 Enhance our public, community and active transport links to make moving around our Shire easy.	Provide Advocate	
Our rural and heritage character is maintained through sensitive development and preservation.	D.3 Our local character is maintained through the protection and preservation of historic buildings.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	NSW Government Commonwealth Government Community groups Community members
	D.4 Encourage community pride through the beautification of our towns and rural areas.	Provide Collaborate	
	D.5 Develop infrastructure and attractions that emphasise the natural and heritage features of the region.	Provide Collaborate	
Our network of community infrastructure supports connected communities and meets community and visitor needs.	D.6 Our community facilities are well-managed, accessible and fosters healthy and connected living.	Provide Collaborate	Community groups Tourism bodies NSW Government Australian Government
	D.7 Enhance and maintain parks and open spaces to serve recreational and relaxation needs.	Provide Collaborate	
	D.8 Provide and maintain inclusive sports and recreation facilities for active lifestyles.	Provide Collaborate	

Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Water, waste and sewerage services meet the needs of our community.	D.9 Provide high quality reliable water supply to communities.	Provide Collaborate	Water authorities NSW Government Service providers
	D.10 Provide safe and efficient sewerage services to communities.	Provide Collaborate	
	D.11 Our recycling and waste management practices are accessible and efficient.	Provide Collaborate	
Our digital communications infrastructure is sound and reliable.	D.12 Reduce mobile telephone blackspot areas.	Advocate	Australian Government Telecommunications and internet providers
	D.13 Deliver better mobile phone coverage and faster and more reliable internet services.	Advocate	

## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Upper Lachlan Shire Infrastructure Policy
- Upper Lachlan Public Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)
- Upper Lachlan Asset Management Strategies
- Upper Lachlan Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan
- Upper Lachlan Risk Management Policy

# E. Our civic leadership

Our leaders work collaboratively to meet the needs of the community, in an ethical and strategic manner.

Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Council is an effective, responsible and innovative organisation.	E.1 Council practices and processes are well-governed, efficient, and meet legislative requirements.	Provide Advocate	Community members Canberra Region Joint Organisation RDA Southern NSW and ACT
	E.2 Council actively participates in regional bodies to identify innovations and opportunities for our region.	Collaborate	
Council is a financially sustainable organisation that can meet community needs.	E.3 Manage resources in a responsible manner that supports the ongoing viability of Council.	Provide Collaborate	Business and industry
	E.4 Seek out and pursue income generating opportunities for Council.	Advocate	
	E.5 Manage assets in a proactive way across their lifespan within resources limitations.	Provide Collaborate	
Our community is informed and engaged.	E.6 Our community is empowered to access engagement opportunities and provide input into the future direction of the region.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups
	E.7 Residents have access to timely, relevant and accurate information on matters that affect them.	Provide Collaborate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Customer Service Charter
- Workforce Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy



# Our progress

## Working together

This Community Strategic Plan outlines our collective vision for the future. We must work together to guide and implement strategies that move us towards these goals.

Council is proud to act as the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, ensuring that the aspirations and priorities of our community are meaningfully documented and elevated among our partners.

Council's commitment in responding to this plan is reflected in the Delivery Program, which translates strategic objectives into actionable plans over a four-year term, aligning with the Council election cycle.

## Review

To ensure accountability and transparency, the plan is reviewed every four years in line with the Council term. This regular review allows the plan to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging community needs.

## Reporting

Reporting on our progress is a key component of this process.

Council will prepare the State of the Shire Report in the year in which an ordinary election of councillors is held. This Report outlines the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan in achieving its objectives, and will be presented and endorsed to the second meeting of a newly elected Council.

## Measures

The following tables outline the measures for determining whether the objectives of this plan are being achieved. They are not measures of Council's performance, but a gauge for stakeholders to determine whether the community is moving closer to, or further away from, the vision.



Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
<b>Community</b>			
Personal Wellbeing Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	75.9	Stabilise
Community Wellbeing Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.5	Increase
Sense of Belonging Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.6	Stabilise or increase
Median Household Income (weekly)	ABS Census 2021	\$1471	Stabilise or increase
Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED)	ABS SEIFA 2021	\$1022	Stabilise or increase
Equity and Inclusion Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.9	Increase
Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains	Australian Early Development Census 2021	11.6%	Stabilise
Life expectancy at birth for all persons	Health Stats NSW 2020	83.9 years	Increase
Persons with a long-term health condition as a percentage of total population	ABS Census 2021	62.3%	Decrease
Persons with a mental health condition as a percentage of total population	ABS Census 2021	8.8%	Stabilise or increase
Voluntary Work for an organisation (all persons)	ABS Census 2021	21.9%	Stabilise
General Psychological Distress	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	10.2	Decrease
Crime and Safety Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.0	Increase
Mortgage costs >30% of income	Profile ID	14.6%	Decrease
Rent costs >30% of income	Profile ID	27.1%	Decrease
Access to general health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.0	Increase
Access to specialist health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.4	Increase
Access to mental health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.8	Increase

Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
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**Our Economy**

Gross regional product as a % of total State Gross Regional Product 2024	Profile ID 2024	0.06%	Increase
Total GST registered businesses 2023	Profile ID 2024	1496	
Total tourism sales as a percentage of NSW's total tourism sales 2022-23	Profile ID 2024	0.0%	Increase
Percentage of persons ages 15-64 years with a non-school qualification at Certificate III or above	ABS Census 2021	55.9%	Increase
Persons with no non-school qualifications	ABS Census 2021	39.8%	Increase
Quality of local schools	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.2	Increase
Total unemployed looking for work	ABS Small Area Labour Markets 2024	2.6%	Decrease

**Environmental**

Landscape and Aesthetics Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.7	Increase
Perceived Environmental Health Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.6	Increase
CO2e emissions per capita	Snapshot Climate - Australian Emissions Profiles 2021-22	54.7 tonnes	Decrease
Average Development Application lodgement time	NSW Planning Portal 2023-24	24 days	Decrease
Average assessment days for Development Applications	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	113 days	Decrease



Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
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**Infrastructure**

Road length per capita	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	235.2 kms	-
Quality of local roads	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	2.7	Increase
Access to public transport	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	2.5	Increase
Recycling Rate	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	38.1	Increase
Access to Telecommunications Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.5	Increase
Number of public halls	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	8	-
Number of public libraries	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	2	-
Open public space	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	92.0 ha	-
Number of public swimming pools (including tidal and rock pools)	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	2	-

**Civic leadership**

Operating Performance Ratio	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	3.8	Increase
Average residential rate	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	\$591.69	-
Infrastructure backlog ratio	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	7.1	Decrease
Community Leadership and Collaboration Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.7	Increase
Elected Female Councillors	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	56	Stabilise
Having a Say and Being Heard Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.1	Increase

# Acknowledgements

The Upper Lachlan Community Strategic Plan 2042 has been developed in partnership with the Upper Lachlan community, Upper Lachlan Shire Council, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and Projectura.

Upper Lachlan Shire Council wishes to thank the community members who gave their time and thoughts during the engagement process to inform the strategy.