



Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2035

Connected Sustainable Creative

The Gumbaynggirr Community Vision





A place where there is genuine respect for the land and the original people of this country.

A place where the ancestors' way of holding country is recognised.

A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for Elders and the children of the future.

A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life.

The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that's not separating.

Contents

Our Community Vision	6
Message from the Mayor & General Manager	8
The Big Picture	10
Our Shire	12
Where it all fits	16
How to read this document	18
Resilient Economy	20
Community Wellbeing	22
Places for People	24
Our Living Environment	26
Civic Leadership	28

Version	Date
1.0	May 2012
2.0	June 2013
3.0	June 2017
4.0	June 2022



Bellingen Shire Council
PO Box 117
Bellingen NSW 2454
council@bellingen.nsw.gov.au

For the purposes of the OLG's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, this is our Community Strategic Plan.

Our Community Vision



Connected

We are a community that is inclusive, connected to each other in our shire, and with connections beyond - regionally, nationally, and globally.



Sustainable

We strive to live sustainably to ensure that we have enough for all, forever.



Creative

We are a community that is creatively and culturally dynamic. We are ingenious and inventive in finding innovative solutions to problems and challenges.

Our vision for the future must encompass all aspects of living and working in our shire, as well as ways in which we are connected beyond our borders - regionally, nationally and globally.

Our vision is about protecting the pristine natural beauty of our environment and enhancing our prosperous and safe community where inclusiveness and sustainable living are embraced, so that creativity and cultural activity can flourish.

The Community Vision is about creating a sustainable future together for the good of all. The values that we strive towards are:



Respect & Understanding
Fairness & Equity
Stewardship
Responsible Decision-making
Co-operative Partnerships
Pride in Our Community

SPACE

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The foreground shows clear, turquoise water with gentle ripples. A sandy beach curves along the shore, bordered by a dense, lush green forest. In the distance, the ocean extends to a hazy horizon under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A white-bordered rectangular box is superimposed over the middle of the image, containing the text 'Message from The Mayor & General Manager' in a white, bold, serif font.

**Message from
The Mayor
& General
Manager**

We are proud to present our Shire's reimagined Community Vision 2035. This strategic plan is built on a foundation of community consultation and collaboration since its inception in 2012, and captures the ideas, priorities and aspirations of our community that will guide us as we work to achieve significant outcomes with and for our community well into the future.

Achieving success of the identified aspirations will rely on successful collaboration and partnerships with various groups and agencies with our community, State and Federal Government, other organisations and agencies and our business community.

A key objective of Council is to maintain transparency and an effective manner of communication with all relevant agencies and importantly our community. A major part of this process is about creating links with individuals, community groups, and our business community to establish a platform to work collaboratively. It is about creating a sustainable future together for the good of all.

A key challenge we face is to ensure that our water is clean and secure, that we mitigate impacts from disaster events and can ensure our biodiversity is protected for future generations.

Our Vision emphasises the importance of affordable housing solutions, and a strong local economy while protecting and enhancing our natural environment. It highlights the need to actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage and connection to place, and to remain an inclusive community that is resilient and brave. It also responds to calls for increased mobility and accessibility – for improving how we get around our Shire and gain access to quality services, vibrant places and inclusive events that contribute to our connectedness and sense of wellbeing.

Five key themes form our community vision and over the next 10 years they will guide us to invest in the right services and assets for our community and support the right kinds of development and sustainable solutions to protect and enhance our natural environment. As custodians of this Vision, Council will use an integrated approach to planning and reporting, to enable the community and our partners in government and business to track our progress and see our achievements, year-to-year, for each of these themes. This transparent strategic approach means that with every performance measure we meet, we move closer to our community's long-term vision.

The Community Vision is prepared by Council, but it is not Council's plan alone and therefore 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.

As we move forward in implementing our Community Vision, we will continue to work closely with our community about the actions, policies and services we need to put in place to achieve excellent outcomes for our Shire. We look forward to working with you all in bringing this vision to life.

Steve Allan
Mayor

Liz Jeremy
General Manager

The Big Picture

Think Global Act Local

This proceeds from the idea that each of us has a part to play in both the well-being of our communities and of the larger world that we all share. This begins with living a more sustainable lifestyle, one that is simultaneously more economically savvy and more environmentally conscious.



Global issues that affect our planet, our people and our future

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Glasgow Climate Pact
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Paris Agreement

National needs: defence, immigration, taxation, communications, trade

- Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Regional Development Australia
- Social Inclusion Agenda
- National Cultural Policy
- Australia's Biodiversity and Conservation Strategy
- National Digital Economy Strategy
- National Road Safety Strategy
- Renewable Energy Target Scheme
- NDIS - National Disability
- National Education Reform

State needs: health and hospitals, education, police, transportation, child care, community services, employment, development (>\$5m)

- NSW State Plan
- NSW Housing Affordability Strategy
- Creative Industries Action Plan for NSW
- NSW Biodiversity Strategy
- Future Transport Strategy 2056
- NSW Digital Economy Industry Action Plan
- State Infrastructure Strategy
- NSW State Health Plan
- Smart and Skilled Program
- NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint
- The NSW Child Safe Standards



Regional needs: catchment management, regional planning, Disaster response and Resilience

- North Coast Regional Plan 2036
- Mid North Coast Joint Organisation – Statement of Strategic Priorities
- District Plans
- Regional Development Australia
- Catchment Management Plans
- Local Health District Strategic Plans
- Local Area Command Strategic Plans
- State Emergency Service Plans for the Region
- Resilience NSW

Local needs: waste collection, local roads, parks, leisure and aquatics, libraries, local events, development

- 10-year Long Term Financial Plan
- Council's 10-year Asset Management Plan
- Council's Delivery Program
- Council's Operational Plan
- Corporate & Community Carbon Plans

Our Shire



Bellingen Shire is located on the Mid North Coast of NSW halfway between Sydney and Brisbane and just south of Coffs Harbour. It is home to 13,248 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2020), who come from many different countries and are involved in diverse occupational, cultural, and social activities and has a total area of 1,605 square kilometres with a coastline of approximately 10km.

Our Shire has three distinct geographical areas – ocean, river, and mountains incorporating the communities of Mylestom, Repton, and Urunga on the coast, Bellingen nestled in the river valley, and Dorrigo on the plateau. Each is a vibrant and rich community with its own characteristics.

Bellingen Shire has enormous ecological diversity. Some 57% of our Shire is State Forest, National Parks and Crown land. This and our cultural attractions have created a thriving tourism industry with 210,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$58.9 million. Numerous festivals, ranging from jazz, classical and world music, to environmental, food and wine events, attract distinct audiences enhancing the social and economic fabric of the region.

Shire Area:

1,602km²

Council Area Not Rateable

57%

Population:

13,141

Our Homes



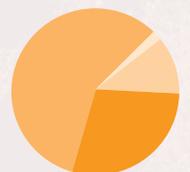
We live in 6,056 dwellings, 88% of dwellings are houses

33.1% of households have children.

68% of residents own / or are purchasing their home

Land Use

- Primary Production
- Parkland
- Residential
- Other



Economy

Gross Regional Product \$0.45 Billion

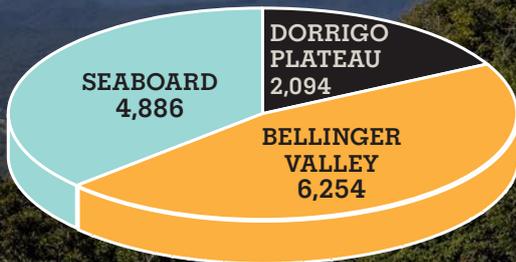
as of the 30th June 2021.

Gross Regional Product is the amount of the nation's wealth which is generated by businesses, organisations and individuals working in the area.

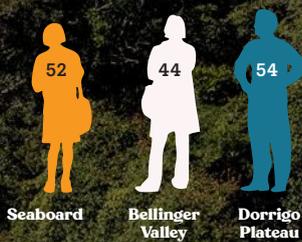
Education



2,918 residents have a tertiary qualification



Median Age



Employment



Source: ABS census 2016

264,000
Annual Visitors 

\$454M
Gross Regional Product

23%

Aged 19 Years & Younger

49

Median Age

32%

Aged 65 & Over

5.9%

People Living With Disability

Community Facilities



53

Sport & Rec Fields



9

Halls



3

Libraries



Surf Clubs



Saleyard



3

Swimming Pools



1

Helipad

13,248
Population 

448 (3.5%) **11.8%**
Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander People People Born Overseas

Transport

 **29**
Shared Paths

 **577**
Roads

 **135**
Bridges

 **3**
Carparks

Services

 **3**
Waste Management Centres

 **39**
Stormwater Drains

 **5**
Treatment Plants

10
Reservoirs 

170
Water Mains 

101
Wastewater Mains 

Where It All Fits

The Bellingen Shire Community Vision is a plan for our community that describes how we can achieve our Shire's vision. This Plan is based on the aspirations, knowledge and values expressed by our residents who provided feedback through online, telephone and face-to-face community surveys and forums. It is a people's plan and responsibility for achieving our long-term goals rests with everyone.

When the Plan refers to "we" and "our," it refers to the collective Bellingen Shire community including Council, other levels of government, businesses, other organisations as well as our residents. Our plan will be enabled in a range of ways which are described below:



Deliver

Council delivers a wide range of programs and services including waste collection, libraries, maintenance of local roads and public spaces, recreation facilities and programs, community care, special events and regulatory functions.



Partner

Council builds strategic partnerships with Federal and State Government agencies, the private sector and a range of other stakeholders whose work will contribute to delivering the long term goals outlined in this Community Vision.



Advocate

When not in direct control or partnership, Council gives voice to the needs and aspirations of the community by advocating for changes in policy and action at relevant levels of government and industry to bring about the best outcomes for our community.

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.

The Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2035 has been prepared with regard to the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights, and addresses social, environmental, economic and governance matters. This Plan sits at the top of Council's planning hierarchy and relates to other plans as shown in the diagram below. This diagram also shows how community input along with monitoring and reporting fit into the process.



Figure one: The Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for councils.

How to read this document

1

Theme area

The Theme areas are a way to structure the Community Vision. The theme areas are the same as the community values that were adopted by Council in November 2016 following extensive community engagement.

2

Aspirations

Where do we want to be?

These are the community's long-term priorities and aspirations for the Shire. They contribute to achieving the vision. Council has a custodial role in working towards realising these outcomes; however, it is not wholly responsible for achieving them. Other partners, such as individuals, state agencies and community groups have an important role to play in delivering them.

3

Strategic Objectives

How will we get there?

These are the four-year activities and plans that Council will undertake that contribute to achieving the long-term objectives, and ultimately the Shire's vision.

4

Performance measures

How will we know we've arrived?

The performance measures will help us track our progress towards the long-term aspirations. The performance measures draw on data sources such as Community Surveying, Australian Bureau of Statistics or other reliable statistics that can be used to quantify progress.

1



Re
Ec

2

The Bellingen Shire of 20... and our community has a... remains local and is susta... healthy and fresh food. V... attracts visitors that refle...

3

How will we get there?

1.1.1	Create a supportive environment for invest and grow
1.1.2	Facilitate and support sustainable dev our business community
1.1.3	Promote and encourage our creative including craftspeople, writers and m
1.2.1	Develop opportunities to revitalise ex create new visitor experiences
1.2.2	Encourage tourism providers to strive sustainable operations
1.3.1	Support and promote Local food grow and education initiatives
1.3.2	Ensure land use strategies identify, pr manage and reinforces rural activities agribusiness

Silient Economy



2035 is a place filled with vibrant businesses that provide access to meaningful work. Our farming sector is sustainable, and provides our community with... We have balanced, sustainable tourism that respects our values and protects our natural assets.

<p>business to</p> <p>development of</p> <p>communities</p> <p>professionals</p> <p>existing or</p> <p>for</p> <p>ing, sharing</p> <p>protect,</p> <p>industry and</p>	<p>4 How will we measure success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities and partnerships formed with creative and cultural sectors is increasing • Number of activities initiated that attract audiences is increasing • Number of businesses in the Shire that employ one or more persons is increasing • The Shire's employment growth matches workforce growth • Number of visitors (day tripper and overnight stays) is increasing • The Shire's Gross Regional Product is increasing • The proportion of people that live and work within the Shire is increasing • Number of activities initiated that attract audiences is increasing 	<p>5 Key Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Federal Government • Industry groups • Research and development organisations • Chambers of commerce and business community • Regional Partners • Regional Tourism Bodies • Local Tourism Groups • Event Organisers • Artists <p>6 What You Can Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue tertiary education or take a local education course • Access advice on starting your own business • Help newcomers to be part of the Shire's economy • Attend a community festival • Support local creativity – attend events or buy a local work of art • Be friendly to visitors and tourists
--	--	--

5

Key Partners

Who can help?

These are the local and state government agencies, other organisations and community groups that have an important role in delivering the long-term aspirations. It will be important for strong partnerships to exist between these groups, if we are to achieve the objectives.

6

What you can do

Who can help?

These are ideas on how you as a member of the community can participate in lifestyle choices and activities that play a part in working towards realising the Community Vision.



Resilient Economy



The Bellingen Shire of 2035 is a place filled with vibrant businesses and our community has access to meaningful work. Our farming sector remains local and is sustainable, and provides our community with healthy and fresh food. We have balanced, sustainable tourism that attracts visitors that reflect our values and protects our natural assets.

How will we get there?	How will we measure success?
1.1 Create a supportive environment for business to invest and grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities and partnerships formed with creative and cultural sectors is increasing • Number of activities initiated that attract audiences is increasing • Number of businesses in the Shire that employ one or more persons is increasing • Our Shire's employment growth matches workforce growth • Number of visitors (day tripper and overnight stays) is increasing • Our Shire's Gross Regional Product is increasing • The proportion of people that live and work within the Shire is increasing
1.2 Facilitate and support sustainable development of our business community	
1.3 Promote and encourage our creative communities including craftspeople, writers and musicians	
2.1 Develop opportunities to revitalise existing or create new visitor experiences	
2.2 Encourage tourism providers to strive for sustainable operations	
3.1 Support and promote Local food growing, sharing and education initiatives	
3.2 Ensure land use strategies identify, protect, manage and reinforces rural activities, industry and agribusiness	



Key Partners

- State and Federal Government
- Industry groups
- Research and development organisations
- Chambers of commerce and business community
- Regional Partners
- Regional Tourism Bodies
- Local Tourism Groups
- Event Organisers
- Artists

What You Can Do

- Pursue tertiary education or take a local education course
- Access advice on starting your own business
- Help newcomers to be part of our Shire's economy
- Attend a community festival
- Support local creativity – attend events or buy a local work of art
- Be friendly to our visitors and tourists
- Sponsor a local sports team
- Buy local and employ locally
- Organise events in local areas



Community Wellbeing



The Bellingen Shire of 2035 actively acknowledges our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage, valuing and honouring the community's rich connection to place. Everyone in our community is involved and supported and we are connected, safe and resilient with a strong sense of community.

How will we get there?	How will we measure success?
1.1 Enhance community capacity by supporting & creating partnerships to deliver targeted social & cultural programs and activities for community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer participation is increasing• Satisfaction with supporting our Shire's arts, heritage and culture is increasing• Number of opportunities and partnerships formed with creative and cultural sectors is increasing• Number of cultural groups in the Shire is increasing• Employment and economic output in non-traditional industries such as the creative sector and knowledge sector is increasing• Increased active library membership• Our Shire's regional wellbeing index is increasing
1.2 Work to enhance the accessing of information and services	
2.1 Actively engage with and include the perspectives and knowledge of our Gumbaynggirr community	
2.2 Enable meaningful creative learning and cultural experiences	
3.1 Promote meaningful and inclusive opportunities for volunteering	
3.2 Provide funding to community groups for local projects	
3.3 Collaborate with Emergency Response Organisations, local health services and police to enhance our response to emergency events and enable community resilience, health and wellbeing.	



Key Partners

- State and Federal Government
- Community groups
- Indigenous and nonindigenous cultural groups
- Chambers of commerce and business community
- Education and training providers
- Community service providers
- Telecommunications providers
- Creative industries and groups
- Emergency Services
- Resilience NSW

What You Can Do

- Volunteer
- Have a good work/life balance
- Enjoy your local community
- Participate in local activities
- Access Gumbaynggirr language classes
- Get to know your neighbours
- Show mutual respect and acceptance of others
- Report illegal behaviour and anti-social behaviour
- Become a mentor to a young person
- Take the dog for a walk
- Join a local sporting team or coach one
- Take a dip in the local pool
- Become a library member
- Take the kids to the playground
- Join the RFS and/or SES



Place for People



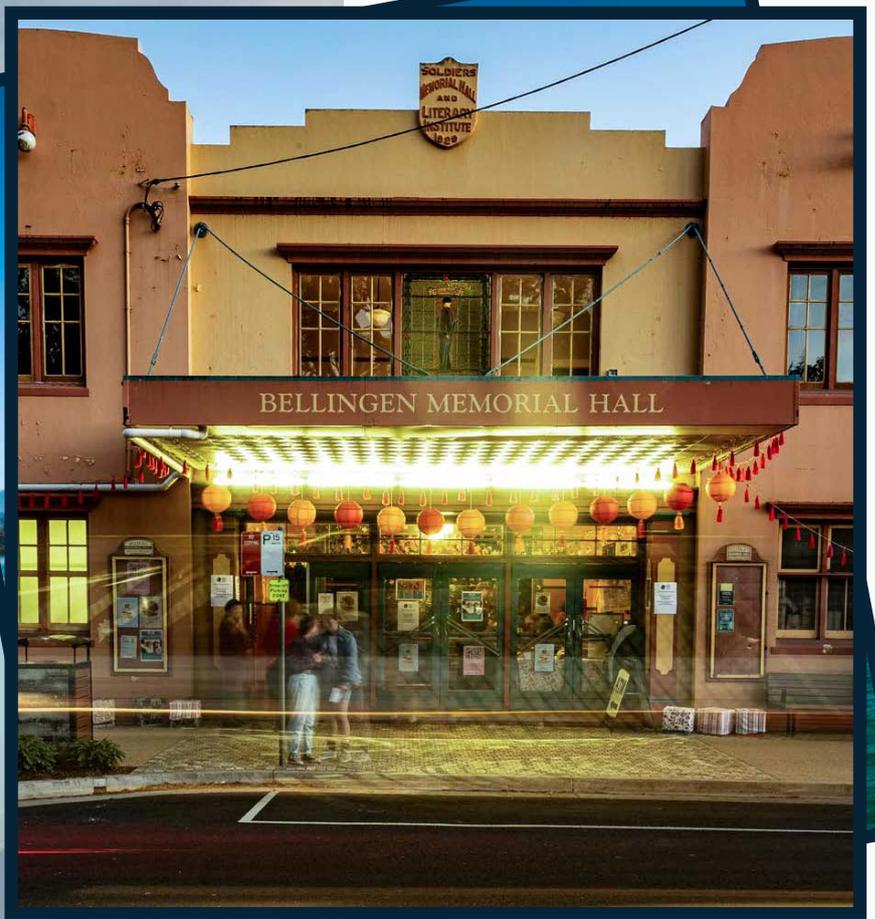
The Bellingen Shire of 2035 has a diversity of beautiful spaces and the facilities and services needed to foster community happiness and wellbeing. We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way, and have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community.

How will we get there?

- 1.1 Manage developer contributions for improved public infrastructure
- 1.2 Ensure sport & recreation facilities are available to support healthy communities
- 1.3 Advocate for our schools, hospitals and sport and recreation services and facilities
- 1.4 Recognise and ensure our heritage is valued and conserved
- 1.5 Ensure our open space areas and community buildings meet the needs of our community and are enhanced with urban and public art, place making and place activation
- 2.1 Manage local planning to encourage and support affordable and diverse housing options
- 2.2 Investigate and advocate around opportunities for social housing
- 3.1 Ensure roads, bridges, drainage and associated infrastructure meets community needs and service levels
- 3.2 Ensure active transportation infrastructure meets community needs and service levels
- 3.3 Plan and advocate for the provision of public transport facilities and services that meets community needs and service levels
- 3.4 Plan for local infrastructure to support electric vehicles and non-motorised forms of transport
- 3.5 Promote and undertake road safety initiatives

How will we measure success?

- The number of accessibility upgrades at Council facilities is increasing
- Percentage of trips undertaken on public transport is increasing
- Length of new cycleways and footpaths being provided is increasing
- Number of non-petrol/diesel vehicle registrations in the Shire is increasing
- The Pavement Condition Index (PCI is an indicator that rates the surface condition of a road.) remains above the target PCI of 3



Key Partners

- NSW and Federal Government
- Public and private transport providers
- Development industry
- Community groups
- Residents
- Funding bodies
- Indigenous and nonindigenous cultural groups
- Dept Housing, Housing Co-ops, Community housing
- Business community
- Department of Planning and Environment

What You Can Do

- Ride a bike for transport fun and health
- Walk or cycle those short journeys - don't drive
- Try out the many local walking trails
- Car pool or car share
- Use local transport options where available
- Think safe, travel safe - pedestrians, cyclists and drivers
- Visit local parks often
- Talk to Council before you build and/or renovate
- Comment on local planning issues and participate in public forums
- Keep our public spaces clean

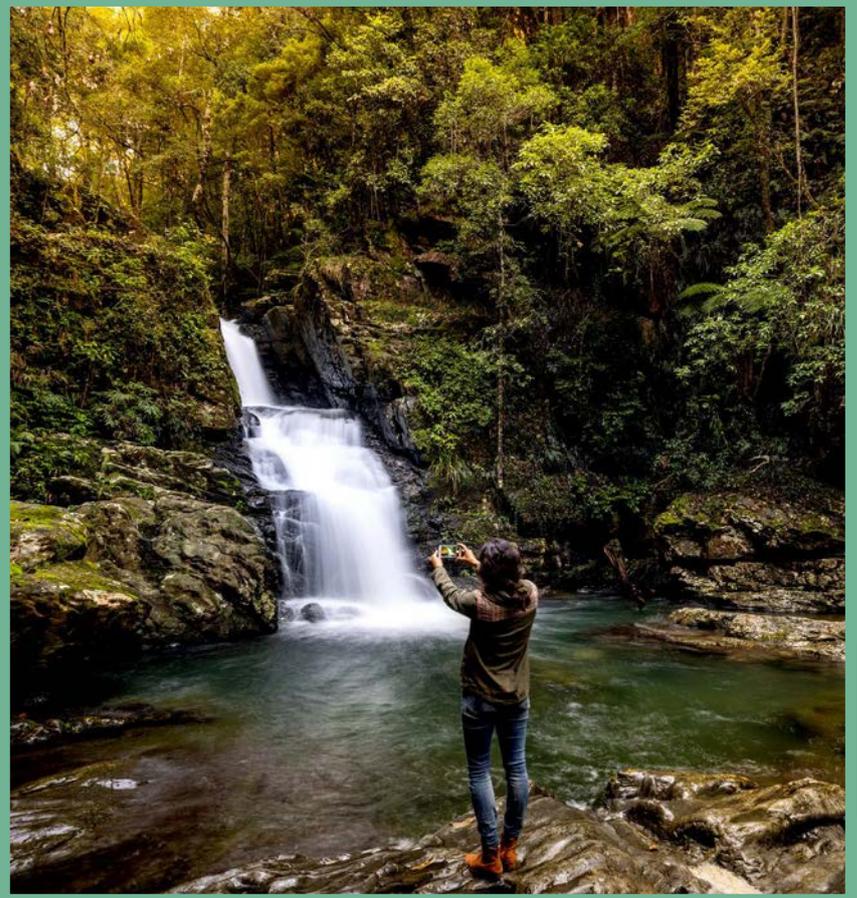


Our Living Environment



The Bellingen Shire of 2035 has clean water which is protected. We live sustainably, reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change as we work together to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment.

How will we get there?	How will we measure success?
1.1 Protect water catchments to sustain high quality and dependable water supplies across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Shire's energy and water consumption is decreasing• The Shire's greenhouse gas emissions are decreasing• Percentage waste to landfill is reduced• Return and earn usage increase
1.2 Develop and maintain a sustainable network of water, sewer and storm water systems to meet community needs and health and safety standards	
2.1 Inform and enable our community to act to reduce our ecological footprint	
2.2 Provide a mix of facilities to manage the local waste stream underpinned by the circular economy	
2.3 Embrace alternative forms of energy	
3.1 Protect and enhance bushland biodiversity and identify and mitigate threats with guidance of the custodial people	
3.2 Support, promote and celebrate community groups and organisations that work to save and protect our natural resources	
3.3 Engage with our community to develop understanding of water quality, weed biosecurity and biodiversity	
3.4 Optimise land use to meet the social, environmental and economic needs of the Shire	



Key Partners

- Traditional Owners
- NSW and Federal Government
- National Parks and Wildlife Services
- Business Community
- RFS
- Indigenous and nonindigenous cultural groups
- Schools
- Community
- Landcare groups
- Department of Planning and Environment

What You Can Do

- Buy green, grow food, and plant natives
- Invest in a water tank and go solar
- Join a bushcare group
- Recycle right, compost and avoid excess packaging
- Plant a tree
- Walk, cycle or use public transport
- Feed birds with native plants - not bread or unwanted food
- Use bins or take your rubbish with you
- Report people polluting, dumping or littering

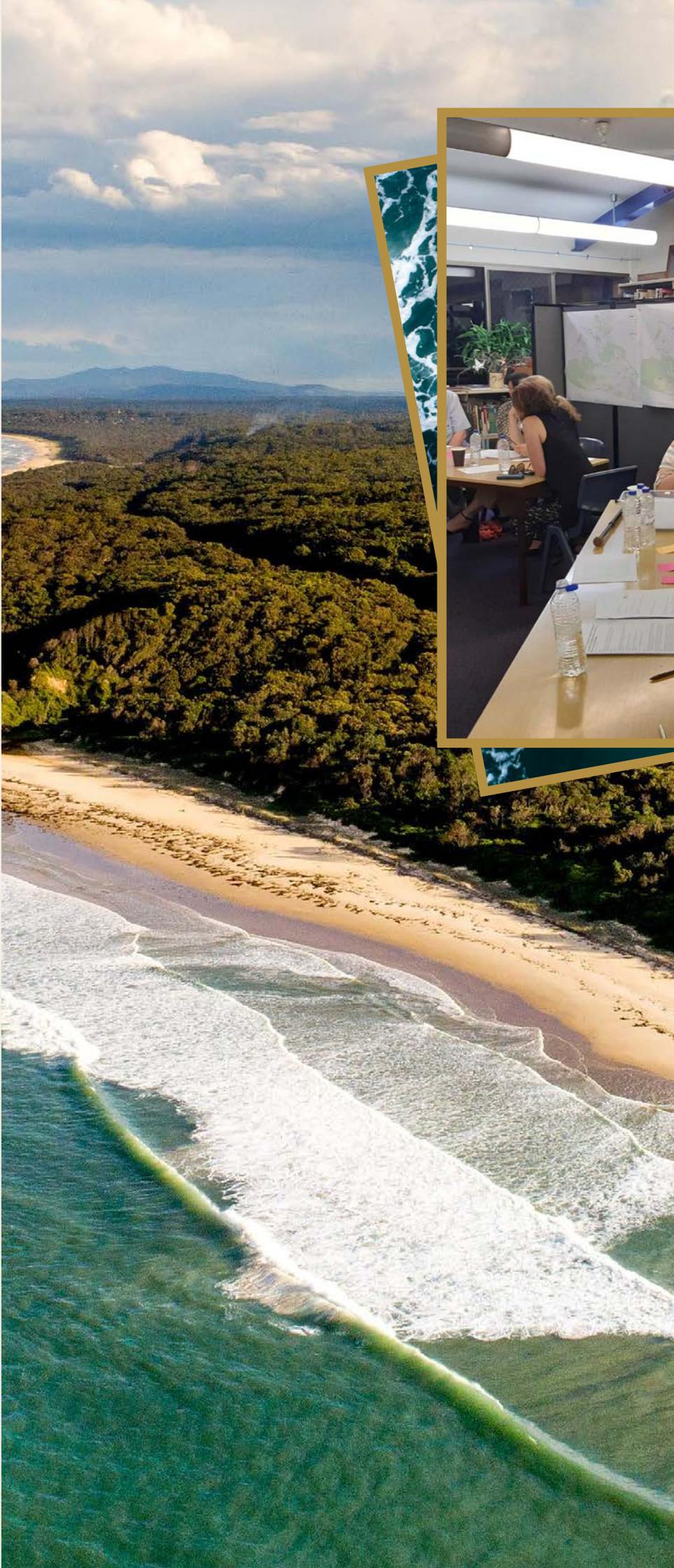


Civic Leadership



The Bellingen Shire of 2035 is a community that is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership. The Council is well governed, future focused and responsible in its service delivery and proactive in representing the needs of our community.

How will we get there?	How will we measure success?
1.1 Deliver cost effective solutions and service that meet the needs of our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of registrations to Council's Newsletter is increasing
1.2 Influence decisions that impact our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of unique users, page views and time spent on Council's website is increasing
1.3 Implement governance frameworks to ensure community confidence and accountability for council as a trusted leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people following Council on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn is increasing
2.1 Facilitate inclusive community consultation and stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service satisfaction is increasing
2.2 Provide clear, accessible and relevant information to the community through traditional and contemporary media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of online customer transactions is increasing
3.1 Develop and maintain a network of key agencies, organisations, peak bodies and community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased satisfaction with 'opportunities to participate in decision making'
3.2 Enhance community access through digital technologies which broaden participation and support inclusion	
3.3 The principles of social justice underpin our activities and decision making processes	



Key Partners

- NSW and Federal Government
- Community groups
- Residents
- Business community
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- Community groups
- Regional partners
- Peak bodies

What You Can Do

- Volunteer
- Get involved – take an interest in civic affairs
- Exercise your right to vote
- Attend a Council meeting-
- Attend or comment on public consultations
- Become an Australian Citizen
- Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn



WE ARE THE
SPIRIT OF THE
PLATEAU, THE
ANCIENT MYSTERY
OF THE *DORRIGO*
AND WHERE OUR
GREAT RIVER
RUSHES TO MEET
THE *PACIFIC*.



COUNCIL@BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU
33 HYDE ST BELLINGEN NSW 2454 | 02 6655 7300

BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU