



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Edward River community acknowledges the Wamba Wamba and Perrepa Perrepa peoples, who are the traditional custodians of the Edward River lands. We acknowledge their enduring connection to this land and pay our respects to their elders: past, present and emerging.



OUR COMMUNITY'S VISION

We are the centre of the Southern Riverina.

We strive to be a vibrant, connected and engaged community, driven by a diverse economy.

We will work together to lead our community, achieve our potential and embrace our future.

By 2035, the Edward River region will be active and skilled with healthy people, a connected community and a diverse growing economy.

People will live in the region, and visit, to value the beauty of the natural environment and the vibrancy of the towns and villages.

CONTENTS

Our community's vision	3	Our community plan themes	12
Introduction	5	1. Communities	14
About this Plan	6	Caring, healthy, connected, inclusive communities	
Background	6	2. Natural environments	22
State and regional influences	7	Respected and healthy natural environments	
Who is this document for?	7	3. Built environments	26
		Liveable built environments	
The Edward River region	8	4. Economy	30
Where we are now?	9	Strong, diverse and sustainable	
Where do we want to be in the future?	11	5. Leadership	35
		Accountable civic leaders	

INTRODUCTION



About this Plan

This Community Strategic Plan has been prepared by Edward River Council on behalf of the Edward River community: its residents, businesses, community groups, sporting organisations, service providers, industry bodies, state agencies and all who work, live and play across the Edward River region.

The Plan identifies our community's aspirations for its future, and addresses a broad range of challenges, including social and community, the natural and built environment, the local and regional economy, and civic leadership. The Plan is based on social justice principles of equity, access, diversity, participation and rights. Through its strategies the plan seeks to enhance outcomes for all members of our community, including children and young people, the elderly, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This Plan documents the main priorities and aspirations for the future of our area and includes strategies that could help us to achieve our community's goals. While Edward River Council is the custodian of this Plan, it will be up to all of our community and its various stakeholders to commit to and invest in delivering the Plan's strategies, so that together we can achieve the community's goals into the future. Therefore, this Plan makes suggestions about who might contribute to the delivery of suggested strategies and support the achievement of our community's goals.

Essentially, this Plan seeks to ask and answer four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in ten years and beyond?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know we're on track?

The plan has been prepared on behalf of our community and Council acknowledges that some strategies within the document may not have the full support from all sections of the community. As this plan is aspirational and doesn't commit any individual or organisation to specific actions, it is appropriate that references to these issues remain, and those who object can choose not to take action in alignment with those strategies which they do not support.

Background

The Edward River region was declared a local government area by the NSW Government in May 2016. Since then, two previous Community Strategic Plans have been developed: in 2018 and in 2022. This Community Strategic Plan seeks to build on those Plans and articulate a clear path forward for the Edward River community. This Plan will next be reviewed and updated in 2028-29.

Extensive community engagement was undertaken in 2021 to inform the 2022 Community Strategic Plan. The report of the outcomes of that community engagement *Our Region, Your Say* remains contemporary and has been used to inform this Plan's development. During 2024, Edward River Council drafted a Growth Strategy: *Edward River 2050 Fast Track for Growth* for the region that seeks to confirm with our local community and key stakeholders the desired direction for our region, particularly in relation to growing our population into the future. Implementing the Growth Strategy will be key to achieving the objectives of this Community Strategic Plan.

Other documents that informed the development of this Plan include:

- the State of the Region report, that collated data about the region's economy, environment, community and civic leadership, identifying how the community has fared over time and which identifies where we are now

- the Edward River Local Strategic Planning Statement, which sets out a twenty-year vision for land use in the local area to enable the achievement of community aspirations
- the Edward River Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Edward River Council's Advocacy Plan 2024
- the Edward River Agribusiness Masterplan

State and regional influences

In developing this Plan, consideration was also given to State and regional planning and priorities that may influence the future of Edward River. The following documents provide further information about the planning context for this Edward River Community Strategic Plan:

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 update
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) Health Needs Assessment 2022-2025
- Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-27
- Riverina & Murray Joint Organisation's Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- NSW Future Transport Strategy 2022
- NSW Waste & Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2022-2030
- Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2023
- Riverina Murray Agritourism Development Strategy 2024-2033
- South West Region Creative Strategy 2026-2029

A summary of all NSW Government plans can be found at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/engage-us/waratah-research-network/priorities-and-collaboration>.

Who is this document for?

This Community Strategic Plan is an important tool for residents and community stakeholders across the Edward River region providing an alignment of strategy with regional aspirations.

It can be used as the evidence base for seeking funding and other investments to resource activities that achieve the Edward River community's goals, including by community service providers, sporting organisations and service clubs.

It will inform business and industry about which investments will best meet local needs and contribute to the achievement of our shared vision for Edward River's future.

All three levels of government, and our local elected representatives, can use this Plan to focus their advocacy and service provision efforts on activities that will progress the Edward River community's goals, as described in this Plan.

This Plan is the Edward River community's plan... it is your plan.

We cannot deliver the plan alone and we will work collaboratively with our various stakeholders to deliver. Council will utilise this plan to develop their four (4) year Delivery Program.

Together. everyone achieves more.

THE EDWARD RIVER REGION

The Edward River region is located in southern New South Wales. It includes the main centre of Deniliquin, as well as six villages.

Boooroorban

Boooroorban, located on the Cobb Highway in the Hay plains, is the smallest community and features a campground, farm stays, a pub, and stories of the Headless Horseman.

Population: 36 (0.4% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 22 (0.6% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 24 (0.6% of Edward River)

Pretty Pine

Pretty Pine is a small close-knit community, mixing a rich colonial history with recreation grounds and modern events to appeal to all residents and visitors.

Population: 59 (0.7% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 38 (1.0% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 25 (0.7% of Edward River)

Deniliquin

Deniliquin is the heart of Edward River, with vast industrial estates, McLeans Beach, and various social services. Deniliquin is host to much of Edward River's critical infrastructure.

Population: 7,038 (85.2% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 3,030 (83.6% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 3,245 (85.8% of Edward River)

Wanganella

Wanganella, located on the Cobb Highway and the Billabong Creek, has a countryside setting, featuring the General Store and outdoor adventure activities. Wanganella is the birthplace of the Peppin merino sheep breed, the most common breed of sheep throughout Australia.

Population: 61 (0.7% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 28 (0.8% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 28 (0.7% of Edward River)

Conargo

Conargo, located on the Billabong Creek, is a passionate pastoral community, with sheep stations/merino studs, numerous landmarks, and interpretative signage to commemorate this heritage.

Population: 117 (1.4% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 61 (0.8% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 51 (1.3% of Edward River)

Mayrung

Mayrung, located within the Berriquin Irrigation Area, is a small community and recognised as the 'heart of grain county', with rice and cereal farms located around the town.

Population: 171 (2.1% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 67 (1.8% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 60 (1.6% of Edward River)

Blighty

Blighty, located on the way to Albury, is home to numerous rice and other grain farms and storage. There is strong community spirit through the school, pub, and sporting grounds. The community is young and has experienced significant population growth in the five years to 2021.

Population: 192 (2.3% of Edward River)
Employed Residents: 84 (2.3% of Edward River)
Dwellings: 81 (2.1% of Edward River)

Notes:

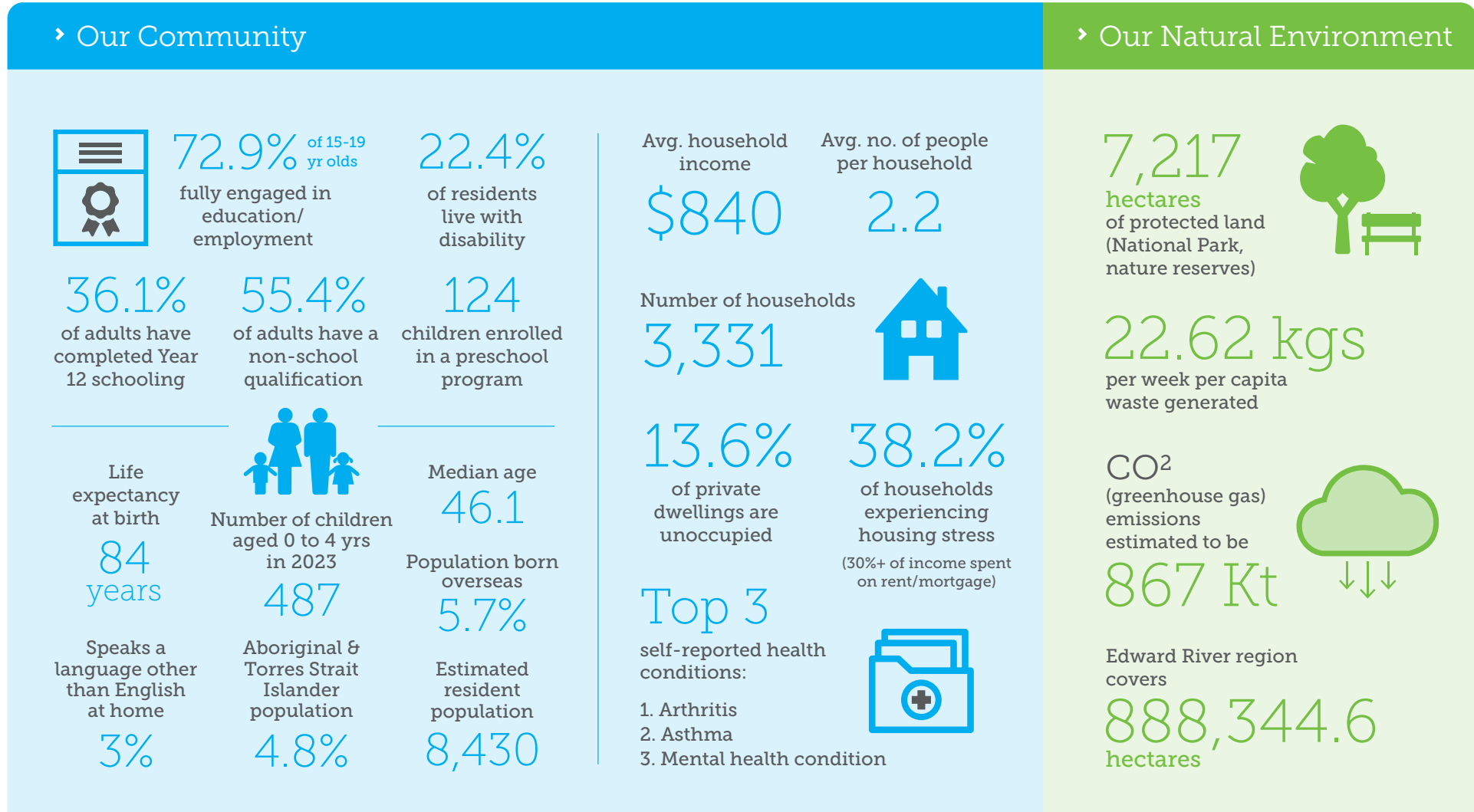
- 588 residents (7.1% of Edward River) live outside the townships and villages.
- Totals will not sum to the total residents presented later in the strategy, due to different data availability/sources.

Data sourced from: ABS (2021) Census of Population and Housing.

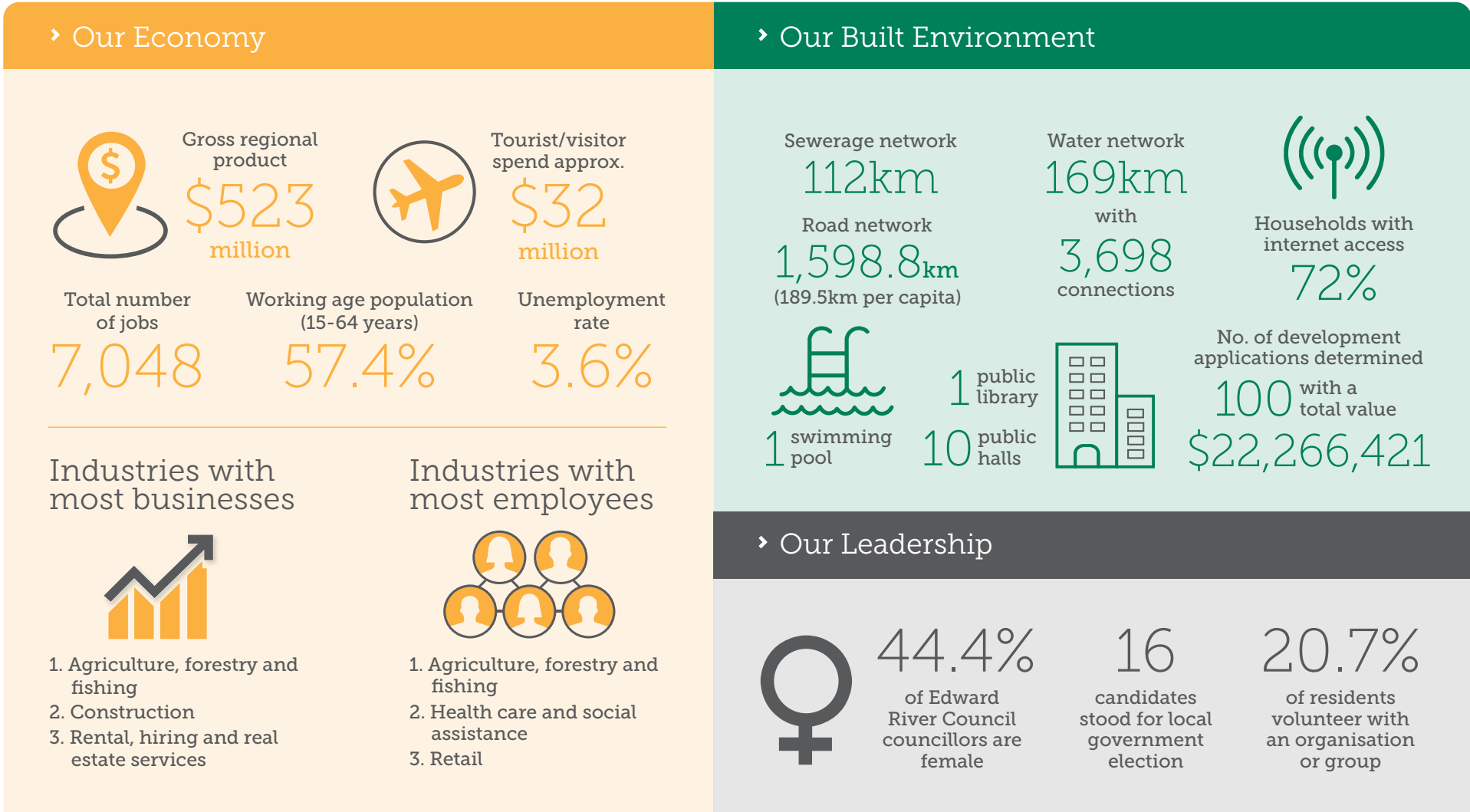


WHERE WE ARE NOW?

Edward River's State of the Region Report, 2024 provides a comprehensive report on where we are now: socially, economically, environmentally (our natural and built environment), and in relation to our community's leadership.



WHERE WE ARE NOW?



Where do we want to be in the future?

Through extensive community and stakeholder engagement conducted over the past two years, we have identified key priorities and aspirations to shape the region's future. This Plan seeks to describe how these community goals might be met, and they are summarised below:

- Have access to quality health care - Deniliquin to become a regionally significant centre for health, aged and disability care and emergency services
- Expand the agribusiness sector and become a region which generates diverse agricultural products, agribusiness and value-add production
- Establish a collocated manufacturing and intermodal hub to service South-Western NSW and connect to key destinations in NSW and Victoria
- Educational opportunities - education, training and research offerings meeting the needs of local young people and local industry
- Employment opportunities - including entry level employment, apprenticeships and traineeships
- Become the events, arts and cultural centre for the broader region, with a strong and diverse offering
- Expand residential construction services, emphasising residential pre-fabrication and other innovative housing delivery, to increase affordable housing supply
- Appropriate and high standard child care
- Recognition of First Nation contributions



OUR COMMUNITY PLAN



This Community Strategic Plan has been prepared under five key themes:

- 1. Communities**
- 2. Natural environments**
- 3. Built environments**
- 4. Economy**
- 5. Leadership**

The Plan describes the strategies that our community might deliver in order to achieve our shared goals. It identifies who in the community could take responsibility for delivering each strategy, and what we hope to achieve over the next ten years on our journey ... towards 2035.

This Plan also reflects the Draft Edward River Growth Strategy and the key community principles identified to achieve that Strategy's vision:

PROGRESSIVE

Edward River is open to new ideas, embracing change and progress, and fostering innovative ways to achieve economic, social and infrastructure development.

SUSTAINABLE

The local environment, economy and unique culture are appreciated and cared for by all throughout Edward River. On a day-to-day basis residents and businesses make a conscious effort to minimise harm and protect Edward River's environment, economy and culture for future generations, while also fostering sustainable infrastructure development. All stakeholders are working towards the transition to Net Zero emissions.

SAFE

Residents experience a sense of safety not only within their homes but also at their workplaces, within the community, and while on the roads, fostering a conducive environment for economic growth and job creation.

VIBRANT

Edward River thrives with engaged, connected, and active residents, businesses and visitors, contributing to a dynamic economy and vibrant job market. Edward River is a desirable place to live and visit, bolstered by continuous infrastructure development and economic opportunities.

INCLUSIVE

All residents and visitors, regardless of background or circumstance, feel accepted, valued, represented, and appreciated in Edward River, ensuring economic benefits and job opportunities are accessible to everyone in the community. We value our First Nations community, and encourage the sharing of their knowledge, traditions and beliefs with both residents and visitors alike.

1. Communities: Caring, healthy, connected, inclusive communities

Our strategic objectives for creating caring, healthy, connected and inclusive communities are to:

- Provide opportunities for ageing in place
- Acknowledge and celebrate First Nations culture
- Enable artistic expression and participation (events, exhibitions, installations, creative spaces)
- Promote accessibility to enable inclusion by all (people with disability, parents with prams, frail aged, young people)
- Provide educational opportunities for lifelong learning
- Encourage access to health services and activities that promote health
- Provide diversity of housing to meet current and future needs
- Address local crime to promote personal and community safety



Reference	Strategies to get there	Who might contribute
1.1	Ageing	
1.1.1	Explore and review options for the Edward River Village	Edward River Council Real Estate Agents Industry experts
1.1.2	Provide services that support ageing people to stay in their own homes safely	Home Maintenance & Modification Service Meals on Wheels Service Care providers
1.1.3	Provide activities for ageing residents to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing	University of the Third Age (U3A) Edward River Library Community and Service providers Local Health Advisory Committee (LHAC)
1.1.4	Advocate for an increase in the number of aged care places and associated workforce in the local area	Edward River Council Industry experts
1.2	First Nations	
1.2.1	Share stories to promote understanding of the First Nations cultural heritage of the Edward River region	First Nations communities Local schools Edward River Library
1.2.2	Encourage the preservation and showcasing of important First Nations cultural artefacts and enhance broader community understanding of these significant cultural heritage items	Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Edward River Council

1.2.3	Build strong collaborative partnerships with First Nations people and organisations that considers ancient practices to drive educational, cultural and tourism experiences	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council Weraï Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation Edward River Council
1.3	Arts and culture	
1.3.1	Promote participation in the arts through provision of arts activities and groups	Local Arts and Cultural Groups South West Arts
1.3.2	Deliver arts and cultural events that cater to a broad range of community interests	Local Arts and Cultural Groups South West Arts South West Music Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre
1.3.3	Preserve and share local history and heritage for future generations	Historical Society Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Deniliquin Genealogy Society Edward River Library Community groups
1.3.4	Facilitate the creation of arts spaces across the region's towns and villages, including in community and church halls	Edward River Council Regional Arts NSW Regional Arts Australia South West Arts
1.3.5	Promote known events that take in all of the region's villages, including markets, social dances, art and craft exhibitions, and sporting competitions	Edward River Council Village committees Event organisers

1.4	Accessibility and inclusion	
1.4.1	Advocate for accessible and inclusive services that promote access and inclusion for people with disability, including cultural and social opportunities and facilities	Local Health Providers
1.4.2	Promote sufficient space for children to engage in play and social interaction to promote healthy development	Early learning sector including: Playgroups, childcare, preschool, toy library
1.4.3	Provide information about events, learning opportunities, community consultations and social activities in a variety of formats, technologies and media to enable broad reach across the community	Service providers Events promoters Edward River Council
1.5	Early through to Adult Education	
1.5.1	Promote opportunities for lifelong learning – formal qualifications and informal learning – that meet the diverse needs and interests of residents across the Edward River region, including with links to industry and research that support broader community outcomes	Local schools and early learning sector Deniliquin Playgroup Association TAFE & OTEN Riverina Community College Murray Malley Training University of the Third Age (U3A) South West Arts
1.5.2	Continue to lobby for the establishment of a Country Universities Centre in Deniliquin	Edward River Council Local MPs CUC Southern Riverina Committee
1.5.3	Promote the attraction and retention of teachers locally through graduate placement programs in partnership with relevant tertiary institutions	Local primary schools Deniliquin High School La Trobe and Charles Sturt Universities

1.5.4	Advocate, support and lobby for early caring and education to support growing communities	Local Early Education providers Local MP's Edward River Council
1.5.5	Advocate for an environment where local secondary education is our communities first choice	Local Education providers
1.6	Health	
1.6.1	Deliver services that enable all residents to be proactive in their own health care	Deniliquin Community Health Centre Medical, dental and allied health service providers Breast Cancer Support Network Local Health Advisory Committee
1.6.2	Advocate for services which promote young people's mental health and support them to be engaged in their community	Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation NSW Health Local MPs Mental Health Advisory Group
1.6.3	Develop a GP succession plan and program for the region to enhance access to GPs for Edward River residents	Rural Doctors Association of Australia Local GPs Local Health Advisory Committee
1.6.4	We will advocate for health services that fully meets community needs	NSW Health Local MP's Local Health Advisory Committee Mental Health Advisory Group Profit and not for profit health care sector

1.7	Housing	
1.7.1	Advocate and encourage investment and innovation for diverse housing options available to meet the needs of our community through land releases, new housing development, higher density CBD residential development and upgrades to old housing stock	Edward River Council Developers Investors Business Chamber Building sector
1.7.2	Seek government investment into housing availability to meet the needs of health, education and other essential service workforce	Edward River Council Local MPs
1.8	Sport	
1.8.1	Facilitate all-ages participation in sport and other physical activities to promote healthy lifestyles	Sports clubs and associations Exercise groups Deniliquin Mental Health Awareness Group
1.9	Crime reduction	
1.9.1	Identify initiatives that promote awareness and reduce violence, leading to reduction of crime	Local police

Monitoring our progress

Every four years, via the State of the Region Report, an update will be provided reporting on our progress towards reaching our targets. This will assist in the revision and development of the next Community Strategic Plan for the Edward River region.

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
1.1	Ageing: Development of Edward River Village	Stage 1 Completed	Further stages scoped and reviewed	Edward River Council
1.2	First Nations: Number of annual visitors to the Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre	To be established	↑	Yarkuwa
1.3	Arts and culture: Annual participation rates (no. of visits to The Peppin Heritage Centre; no. attending Peppin gallery exhibitions)	In 2023-24, annual visits 12,000 (museum closed - only AVIC, shop and gallery) Exhibition attendance approx. 10,000	↑ Annual visits to Peppin Heritage Centre - 20,000 (post upgrade) Exhibition attendance 15,000	Edward River Council
1.4	Accessibility and inclusion: Equity and inclusion in the community	4.8*	↑	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey
1.5	Education: % of residents with a non-school qualification	55.4% in 2021	60% by 2026	ABS
1.5	Education: No of children enrolled in a pre-school program	124 in 2021	150 by 2026	ABS
1.5	Education: Increase the number of students attending local secondary school	461 in 2023	480 in 2026	School reports
1.6	Health: Determination made regarding Deniliquin Hospital's future	Concepts developed	Decision made and action underway to progress by 2028	NSW Health Murrumbidgee LHD
1.7	Housing: Proportion of unoccupied private dwellings	13.6% in 2021	Less than 10% by 2026	ABS

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
1.7	Housing: % of residents experiencing housing stress (ie spending more than 30% of their income on mortgage/rent)	38.2% in 2021	Less than 35% by 2026	ABS
1.7	Housing: Number of households	3,331 in 2021	3,900 by 2028	ABS
1.8	Sport: Sporting events at Edward River facilities promoted through community engagement channels	To be established	10 per year	Communication channels
1.9	Crime reduction: No. of domestic violence related assaults	73 in 2023-24	Zero Less than 55 in 2027-28	BOCSAR
1.9	Crime reduction: No. of thefts from dwellings	47 in 2023-24	Less than 20 in 2027-28	BOCSAR

* Rated on 7 point scale; 'strongly disagree' (1), 'strongly agree' (7)

2. Natural environments: Respected and healthy natural environments

Our strategic objectives for achieving respected and healthy natural environments are to:

- Achieve sensible water policy – balance between environmental health and economic activity
- Prevent environmental damage caused by pests and weeds
- Respond to climate change with a move towards clean, renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions
- Take action to mitigate the risks of natural disasters
- Reduce waste generation and recover (re-use, recycle) more from waste streams
- Acknowledge and protect our natural environment, vegetation, habitats and biodiversity within the region



Reference	Strategies to get there	Who might contribute
2.1	Water policy	
2.1.1	Advocate for water policy collaboratively with key stakeholders	Edward River Council Local MPs Murray Irrigation Murray Regional Strategy Group Speak Up 4 Water Ricegrowers Australia Local irrigator groups
2.2	Pests and weeds	
2.2.1	Promote and support the eradication of noxious weeds and management of other weed species	Murray Local Land Services Edward River Council Landholders Neighbouring Councils National Parks Local Pest Contractors Lagoon and Habitat Groups Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council Maritime
2.2.2	Promote and support actions to reduce numbers and impact of key vertebrate pests including: European foxes, feral cats, feral pigs and wild rabbits	Landholders Murray Local Land Services Edward River Council

2.2.3	Support initiatives that result in healthy, sustainable water ways	Lagoon and Habitat Groups Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council Maritime
2.3	Climate change response	
2.3.1	Pursue opportunities for carbon offset investment and trading	Agricultural sector
2.3.2	Identify and invest in business and industry practices that mitigate risks of climate change (such as more frequent and severe weather events and droughts)	Local businesses and industries National Parks Landcare Groups Murray Irrigation First Nations community
2.4	Disaster risk reduction	
2.4.1	Promote emergency preparedness and prevention through engagement with local residents and businesses	Emergency Services Edward River Council Residents and businesses
2.5	Waste management	
2.5.1	Promote the reduction and re-use of waste across Edward River region	Edward River Council Not for Profit Community Groups Residents and visitors Businesses, industries and organisations

Monitoring our progress

Every four years, via the State of the Region Report, an update will be provided reporting on our progress towards reaching our targets. This will assist in the revision and development of the next Community Strategic Plan for the Edward River region.

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
2.1	Water policy: Number of advocacy actions	Not established		Edward River Council
2.2	Pests and weeds: Impact of invasive weeds and feral animals	2.9*	↓	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey
2.3	Climate change response: Local greenhouse gas emissions	866.7 Kt in 2021	<575 Kt in 2028	seed.nsw.gov.au
2.4	Disaster risk reduction: Formal levees certified for 1% AEP events	Not measured	↑	Edward River Council
2.5	Waste management: Amount of waste generated per capita	22.62 kgs per person per week in 2023-24	Reduction of 10% per person by 2030	NSW EPA

* Rated on 7 point scale; 'not a problem' (1), 'very big problem' (7)

3. Built environments: Liveable built environments

Our strategic objectives for achieving liveable built environments are to have:

- Sustainable, quality infrastructure
- Expanded footpath network with street lighting
- Pleasant public spaces with quality community facilities
- A road network that enables safe and effective transport of people and products
- Preserved heritage
- Enhanced digital connectivity, mobile phone coverage and internet access/speeds



Reference	Strategies to get there	Who might contribute
3.1	Infrastructure	
3.1.1	Plan to invest in infrastructure improvements to future-proof Edward River's water and sewer needs	Edward River Council
3.1.2	Advocate for investment of renewable energy and energy transmission into the Edward River region	Edward River Council Local MPs TransGrid EnergyCo Renewable Energy Providers
3.1.3	Plan and review existing Agricultural Infrastructure assets	Edward River Council Agribusiness groups
3.2	Road network, and footpaths and cycleways (active transport)	
3.2.1	Maintain and enhance the region's road, footpath and cycleways network to enable residents, visitors and freight to move safely within and through the region	Edward River Council Transport for NSW
3.3	Public space and community facilities (including sports)	
3.3.1	Plan to enhance the River front precinct to provide facilities catering for recreational activities that meet the diverse needs of the whole community	Edward River Council NSW Government Private investment/community philanthropy
3.3.2	Advocate for a youth centre or PCYC in Deniliquin CBD, utilising a vacant building	NSW Police & Community Youth Clubs CBD landlords
3.3.3	Plan and maintain quality sporting facilities that meet needs of community now and into future	Edward River Council Sporting and Community Groups

3.3.4	Plan to maintain and enhance the network of parks and reserves across the region to provide pleasant open space for residents and visitors to participate in active and passive recreation	National Parks and Wildlife Service Edward River Council Crown Lands Friends of the Cemetery
3.4	Heritage	
3.4.1	Value and preserve our local built heritage, utilising available grant opportunities to refurbish street frontages and other key heritage items	Property owners
3.5	Digital connectivity	
3.5.1	Advocate for enhanced digital connectivity, mobile phone coverage and internet	Local MPs Edward River Council Commonwealth Government Telcos

Monitoring our progress

Every four years, via the State of the Region Report, an update will be provided reporting on our progress towards reaching our targets. This will assist in the revision and development of the next Community Strategic Plan for the Edward River region.

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
3.1	Infrastructure: Number of boil water alerts	0		Edward River Council
3.2	Road networks: Access to roads and public transport	3.0*	↑	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey
3.2	Road network: No of motor vehicle crashes in the LGA; No of vehicle crash fatalities; No injured in vehicle crashes	Crashes in 2022 = 11 Fatalities in 2022 = 0 Injured in 2022 = 12	↓	Transport for NSW Road Safety crash stats
3.3	Public space and community facilities: I like the environment and surrounds I live in	6.3**	↑	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey
3.4	Heritage: Grant funding for Heritage projects	\$25,000 per year	↑	Edward River Council
3.5	Digital connectivity: Access to telecommunications	3.8*	↑	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey

* Rated on 7 point scale; 'very poor' (1), 'very good' (7)

** Rated on 7 point scale; 'strongly disagree' (1), 'strongly agree' (7)

4. Economy: Strong, diverse and sustainable

Our strategic objectives for ensuring a strong, diverse and sustainable economies are to have:

- A strong, diverse agricultural sector
- Value-adding industry development – processing, manufacturing, transportation, agri-tourism
- A skilled and motivated workforce with an increased number of job opportunities
- Business development, promotion and entrepreneurial opportunities
- An activated CBD with vibrant revitalisation
- Land use planning that enables variety of employment precincts
- A strong and sustainable tourism sector
- Improved transport options
- A strong and vibrant arts and culture sector
- Recognise First Nations contributions to the local economy



Reference	Strategies to get there	Who might contribute
4.1	Agriculture and industry value-add sector development	
4.1.1	Continue to enhance agricultural economic outcomes	Agricultural businesses Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development Not-for-profit farming system groups
4.1.2	To support regional jobs growth and investment, identify and pursue strategic alliance opportunities for regional agriculture	Local agricultural enterprises Local freight providers Other local providers in the supply chain
4.1.3	Pursue opportunities to diversify the agricultural sector to ensure its long term sustainability	Agricultural businesses Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development Private Investors
4.2	Workforce and jobs	
4.2.1	Advocate to education providers to ensure curriculum options address local workforce and skills gaps	Edward River Council Local MPs Tertiary education providers Local Education and Training providers

4.3	Business development, promotion and entrepreneurship	
4.3.1	Plan, prepare and develop Business Investment strategies for the Edward River region	Regional Development Australia Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development Business Chamber Business investors Edward River Council
4.4	Activated CBD	
4.4.1	Plan and pursue opportunities to revitalise Deniliquin CBD and river frontage	Edward River Council Deniliquin Business Chamber Business owners and operators
4.4.2	Engage and partner with key stakeholders to grow the economy	Edward River Council Deniliquin Business Chamber Business owners and operators Murray Irrigation Sunrice Local agriculture extension groups Deniliquin Business Chambers

4.5	Land use planning	
4.5.1	Review and update long-term land-use planning strategies and legal instruments to ensure they continue to plan for and enable land use that supports achievement of the Edward River community's goals	Edward River Council Planning NSW Local Industries
4.5.2	Provide for adequate, well-serviced industrial land and employment precincts to facilitate the expansion of local enterprise that value-adds to the local economy	Edward River Council Planning NSW Developers Local Industries
4.6	Tourism and visitor economy	
4.6.1	Engage and partner with relevant tourism bodies to grow Edward River region	Local Tourism providers Local accommodation providers Local event organisers
4.6.2	Encourage overnight visitation through provision of parking and rest areas for long-haul drivers and caravans	Edward River Council Transport for NSW
4.6.3	Advocate and promote tourism products and experiences that celebrate our local region	Event organisers
4.7	Transport networks	
4.7.1	Enhance and upgrade Deniliquin Airport to attract more regional flights and private aviation	Edward River Council
4.7.2	Plan and promote the region as a key transport hub with links to Port of Melbourne, Adelaide-Sydney, Melbourne-Brisbane freight routes and the inland Rail hub	Edward River Council Transport for NSW Private investors

Monitoring our progress

Every four years, via the State of the Region Report, an update will be provided reporting on our progress towards reaching our targets. This will assist in the revision and development of the next Community Strategic Plan for the Edward River region.

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
4.1	Agriculture: Gross value of agricultural production	\$326.3 million in 2020-21 FY	\$350 million by 2028	ABS
4.2	Workforce and jobs: % of 15-19 year olds fully engaged in education and/or employment	72.9% in 2021	More than 75% by 2028	ABS
4.2	Workforce and jobs: Unemployment rate (15+ years)	3.6% in 2021	Not greater than regional average in 2028	ABS
4.2	Workforce and jobs: Median personal weekly income	\$701 in 2021	Not less than regional average in 2028	ABS
4.3	Business development: Total number of businesses	1,023 in 2023	1,130 by 2028	ABS
4.4	Activated CBD – Percentage of vacant CBD shops (Deniliquin)	To be established	↓	Edward River Council
4.5	Land use planning: Value of Development Applications	\$22.2 million (2024)	↑	Edward River Council
4.6	Tourism: Visitor spend	Approx \$32 million in 2023-24 FY	Approx \$45 million by 2027-28 FY	Commbank iQ
4.7	Transport networks: Development of Deniliquin Airport	Stage 2 runway project yet to commence	Stage 2 runway project completed	Edward River Council

5. Leadership: Accountable civic leaders

Our strategic objectives for promoting accountable civic leadership are to:

- Have a shared vision for the Edward River region
- Embrace diversity to hear all voices in decision-making
- Achieve strong collaboration across all levels of government advocating for the region
- Support and grow current, new and emerging leaders
- Ensure effective communication and engagement with community stakeholders
- Encourage good corporate governance and lead by example



Reference	Strategies to get there	Who might contribute
5.1	Shared vision	
5.1.1	Promote and use this Community Strategic Plan across the Edward River region so that it becomes the vehicle through which the community shares its aspirations for the future and works to achieve them	Edward River Council Local MPs Business Chamber Sports and social clubs Other community leaders
5.1.2	Use this Community Strategic Plan as the evidence base for seeking funding and other investments to resource activities that achieve the Edward River community's goals	Community groups Sports organisations Funded service providers Edward River Council
5.1.3	Update and deliver the Edward River Advocacy Plan to support our elected leaders to speak with one voice on behalf of our community	Edward River Council Local MPs
5.1.4	Equitably use public revenue to support enhancement and provision of community facilities across the region	Elected representatives Interested community members Media outlets
5.2	Diversity of leadership	
5.2.1	Create ways to hear diverse voices in decision-making processes	Local MPs Edward River Council Business Chamber Sports organisations Funded community service providers First Nation community

5.3	Inter-governmental collaboration	
5.3.1	Ensure the aspirations of the Edward River community are heard in decision-making across all levels of government	Edward River Council Local MPs RAMJO Regulatory bodies LG Association State Advocacy
5.4	Grow our own leaders	
5.4.1	Identify, collaborate and facilitate opportunities for current, aspiring and emerging leaders and volunteers within the Edward River region	Deniliquin High School Edward River Council Service Clubs Sporting organisations
5.5	Communication and engagement	
5.5.1	Plan and foster community engagement strategies for the whole of Edward River community	Edward River Council Local MPs
5.6	Good corporate governance	
5.6.1	Encourage businesses, community groups, government organisations, clubs and sporting organisations to implement practices that promote good governance, ethical decision-making, risk management, and financial sustainability	Edward River Council Local businesses Community Groups Sporting organisations

Monitoring our progress

Every four years, via the State of the Region Report, an update will be provided reporting on our progress towards reaching our targets. This will assist in the revision and development of the next Community Strategic Plan for the Edward River region.

Ref	Measure	Baseline	Target	Data source
5.1	Shared vision: Community Strategic Plan	Adopted in 2025	Updated in 2029	Edward River Council
5.1	Towards 2035: Growth Population Targets	8,430 in 2023	Support growth 9,050 by 2028 Deliver growth 9,650 by 2028	ABS
5.2	Diversity of leadership: How often do you feel left out?	2.1*	↓	University of Canberra Regional Wellbeing Survey
5.3	Inter-governmental collaboration: Number of engagements with stakeholders	Not established	6 per year	Edward River Council
5.4	Grow our own leaders: % of residents who volunteer for an organisation or group	20.7% in 2021	More than 25% in 2026	ABS
5.5	Communication and engagement: Engagement with community	6 consultations per year	↑	Edward River Council
5.6	Good corporate governance: Operating performance ration	0	0	Edward River Council

* Rated on 5 point scale; 'Never' (1), 'All of the time' (5)

Document Control

Plan # PLA-COR-001		Title: Community Strategic Plan	
Policy Owner	Acting Director Corporate Services		
Document Type	Plan	Approval Type	Council

Version Control

Version Number	Modified by (position)	Modifications made	Approval Type	Minute Number and Date	Status
3	Acting Director Corporate Services	2024 Council review and update. Towards 2035	Endorsed	18/02/2025	Endorsed



EDWARD RIVER: TOWARDS 2035
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

This Community Strategic Plan was prepared on behalf of the Edward River community by Edward River Council with the assistance of Karen Legge Consulting

Endorsed by Council: 18 February 2025

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