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| for immediate release – 22 May 2024 |

**TIME FOR COMMUNITY TO COMMENT ON DRAFT GROWTH STRATEGY**

The draft Edward River Growth Strategy is open for community comment following a resolution at the Council meeting on Tuesday 21 May.

Edward River Council resolved to place the draft to go on public exhibition until 18 June and is calling for the community to read the document and provide feedback. The exhibition period will be supported by a series of engagement activities to ensure the final plan reflects the wishes of the community, including a presentation at the Deniliquin Town Hall, community meetings, direct engagement with stakeholders, and notifications on social media, newspapers, and Council's website.

Mayor Cr Peta Betts said the draft strategy will form the centrepiece of Council’s work for the next 25-plus years.

“This plan will be a guiding document for us, expressing the community’s hopes and dreams for the future of our region, and how we grow and prosper into the future.

"It will be a transformative journey, and we certainly recognise the challenges ahead. However, we have seen the energy and goodwill demonstrated by the community and business volunteers on the advisory committee who led this process. If we can generate that level of enthusiasm and commitment amongst all sectors of our community, as well as public and private sector partners, we are confident in reaching the growth vision for our region."

In speaking for the motion to endorse, Cr Harold Clapham, who chaired the Advisory Committee, acknowledged the work of the committee in leading the planning process.

“I’d like to publicly thank the Advisory Committee and all the hard work of this volunteer group. Whilst this is a draft strategy, it is not static, it is a living document. We hope that by going on public display it will encourage the community to contribute with further proposals that can be considered by future Councils.”

Cr Shannon Sampson, who also served on the Advisory Committee, said he was pleased to see the draft Plan go on display.

“It’s great to see the strategy in the form of this document that everyone can read now. There has been months and months of hard work done by the Committee on this plan, so I’m pleased to see it moving forward. I know the population projection might be a bit hard to imagine for some, but we just want everyone to take a look at the plan, make their own minds up and send in their comments.”

At the conclusion of the exhibition period, feedback will be reviewed for possible incorporation into the strategy. Council will receive a summary of the feedback and an updated Edward River Growth Strategy 2050 to review at the Councillor briefing scheduled for 2 July, with formal adoption by the Council to be considered at its 16 July meeting.

**Have your say:**

Comments on the draft plan are open until 5 pm on 18 June. For more information and to download the draft, visit www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au.

Paper copies of the plan will be available at the Customer Service Centre and Edward River Library.

Residents are invited to attend a presentation of the draft strategy on Tuesday 4 June, 5.30 PM at Deniliquin Town Hall.

Residents can email their thoughts to haveyoursay@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au, or write to the Interim Chief Executive Officer, Edward River Council, PO Box 270, Deniliquin NSW 2710.

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