

# Local Strategic Planning Statement 2019 -2039



*Coolamon*  
Shire Council

*Big enough to serve, small enough to care*



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The Coolamon Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement establishes a 20 - year vision for land use planning in Coolamon, outlining how growth and change will be managed to maintain the high levels of environmental amenity, livability and landscape quality that characterises the Coolamon Shire.

The Statement identifies the special characteristics that contribute to the local identity of the towns and villages within the Shire and recognises the shared community values to be maintained and enhanced.

This Statement identifies Council's vision for the Coolamon Shire, along with actions and the means for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the actions.

To achieve our vision in relation to land use planning, we must overcome a number of complex social, environmental, economic and leadership issues and challenges. As a Community our challenge is to actively address the issues identified during the consultation that was undertaken in the development of this statement so that the future of our towns and villages can be assured.

## Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
ABOUT THIS STATEMENT.....	6
PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT.....	6
POLICY CONTEXT.....	7
CONSULTATION.....	7
CONTEXT.....	9
OUR PLACE IN THE RIVERINA.....	10
OUR COMMUNITY.....	12
OUR ENVIRONMENT.....	13
OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES.....	17
Ardlethan.....	18
Beckom.....	19
Coolamon.....	20
Ganmain.....	22
Marrar.....	23
Matong.....	24
OUR CHALLENGES.....	25
OUR VISION.....	27
ACHIEVING OUR VISION.....	29
PLANNING PRIORITIES.....	30
IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING.....	30
A Growing and Diverse Economy.....	31
A Healthy Environment with Pristine Waterways.....	34
Efficient transport and infrastructure networks.....	35
Strong, Connected and Healthy Communities.....	36
REFERENCES.....	41



## **INTRODUCTION**

- **ABOUT THIS STATEMENT**
- **PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT**
- **POLICY CONTEXT**
- **CONSULTATION**

## ABOUT THIS STATEMENT

This Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is about the future of our whole community. It sets out the 20-year vision for land use planning in the Coolamon Shire, outlining how growth and change will be managed to maintain the high levels of environmental amenity, liveability and landscape quality that characterises Coolamon. It identifies the special characteristics that contribute to the local identity of the towns and villages within the Shire and recognises the shared community values to be maintained and enhanced.

This Statement identifies 10 Planning Priorities to achieve the Council's vision for the Shire, along with actions and the means for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of these actions.

The Statement is consistent with the NSW Government's strategies and directions for land use planning contained in the Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036, released by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in 2017 and is aligned with Council's Community Strategic Plan.

## PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT

The Coolamon Local Government Areas estimated projected population is forecasted to grow from 4342 people to 5,644 persons by 2039. To manage this growth and change, the Riverina Murray Regional Plan establishes a vision and 20 year plan integrating land use, transport and infrastructure planning.

All councils within NSW are required to prepare a local strategic planning statement to act as a link between the strategic priorities identified at a regional or district level, and the finer-grained planning at a local level expressed in council's local environmental plan and development control plans, to ensure consistency in strategic planning approaches. See Figure 1.

The link or line-of-sight between Council's 10 Planning Priorities and the Riverina Murray Regional Plan is illustrated in Table 1.



Figure 1: Role of the Local Strategic Planning Statement: Strategic-led planning framework  
Source: Department of Planning and Environment, 2018, LSPS Guideline for Councils

## POLICY CONTEXT

This Statement has been prepared in accordance with section 3.9 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act) which requires that it include or identify the following:

- a. the basis for strategic planning in the area, having regard to economic, social and environmental matters,
- b. the planning priorities for the area that are consistent with any strategic plan applying to the area and (subject to any such strategic plan) any applicable community strategic plan under section 402 of the Local Government Act 1993,
- c. the actions required for achieving those planning priorities,
- d. the basis on which the council is to monitor and report on the implementation of those actions.

## CONSULTATION

Council prepared this Statement by building upon the results of extensive engagement undertaken in developing the Community Strategic Plan, during 2017-2018, including community feedback regarding what residents most like and dislike about Coolamon Shire Local Government Area, and what residents would like to see retained and changed.

The Draft LSPS was presented to Council in late 2019 to confirm the values and planning direction for the Coolamon Local Government Area as articulated in Council's current strategic plans. The final LSPS was shaped from all community feedback received during the exhibition of the LSPS.

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and other relevant State Government agencies were also consulted with as part of a series of technical working group meetings and other workshops held throughout 2019.

## Goal 1

## A growing and diverse economy

- Direction 1**  
Protect the region's diverse and productive agricultural land
- Direction 2**  
Promote and grow the agribusiness sector
- Direction 3**  
Expand advanced and value-added manufacturing
- Direction 4**  
Promote business activities in industrial and commercial areas
- Direction 5**  
Support the growth of the health and aged care sectors
- Direction 6**  
Promote the expansion of education and training opportunities
- Direction 7**  
Promote tourism opportunities
- Direction 11**  
Promote the diversification of energy supplies through renewable energy generation

- Planning Priority 1**  
Promote the protection of agricultural land.
- Planning Priority 2**  
Support agricultural research & development opportunities via a flexible and responsive Local Land Use Planning Framework.
- Planning Priority 3**  
Protect Environmental Heritage Assets.
- Planning Priority 4**  
Promote opportunities for local employment.

## Goal 2

## A healthy environment with pristine waterways

- Direction 15**  
Protect and manage the region's many environmental assets
- Direction 16**  
Increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change

- Planning Priority 5**  
Adapt to the impacts and hazards of climate change.

## Goal 3

## Efficient transport and infrastructure networks

- Direction 18**  
Enhance road and rail freight links
- Direction 20**  
Identify and protect future transport corridors

- Planning Priority 6**  
Improve access to, from and within the Coolamon Shire, and encourage active transport.

## Goal 4

## Strong, connected and healthy communities

- Direction 22**  
Promote the growth of regional cities and local centres
- Direction 23**  
Build resilience in towns and villages
- Direction 25**  
Build housing capacity to meet demand
- Direction 26**  
Provide greater housing choice
- Direction 27**  
Manage rural residential development
- Direction 28**  
Deliver healthy built environments and improved urban design

- Planning Priority 7**  
Advocate to State and Federal Governments for development to be supported by Infrastructure funding.
- Planning Priority 8**  
Investigate opportunities for residential and rural residential land rezoning
- Planning Priority 9**  
Ensure that building design and construction is of high quality, and maintains resident amenity and promotes sense of place.
- Planning Priority 10**  
Provide diverse housing choices and opportunities to meet changing demographics and population needs, with housing growth in the right locations.





## **CONTEXT**

- **OUR PLACE IN THE RIVERINA**
- **OUR COMMUNITY**
- **OUR ENVIRONMENT**
- **OUR GREAT PLACES**
- **OUR CHALLENGES**
- **OUR VISION**

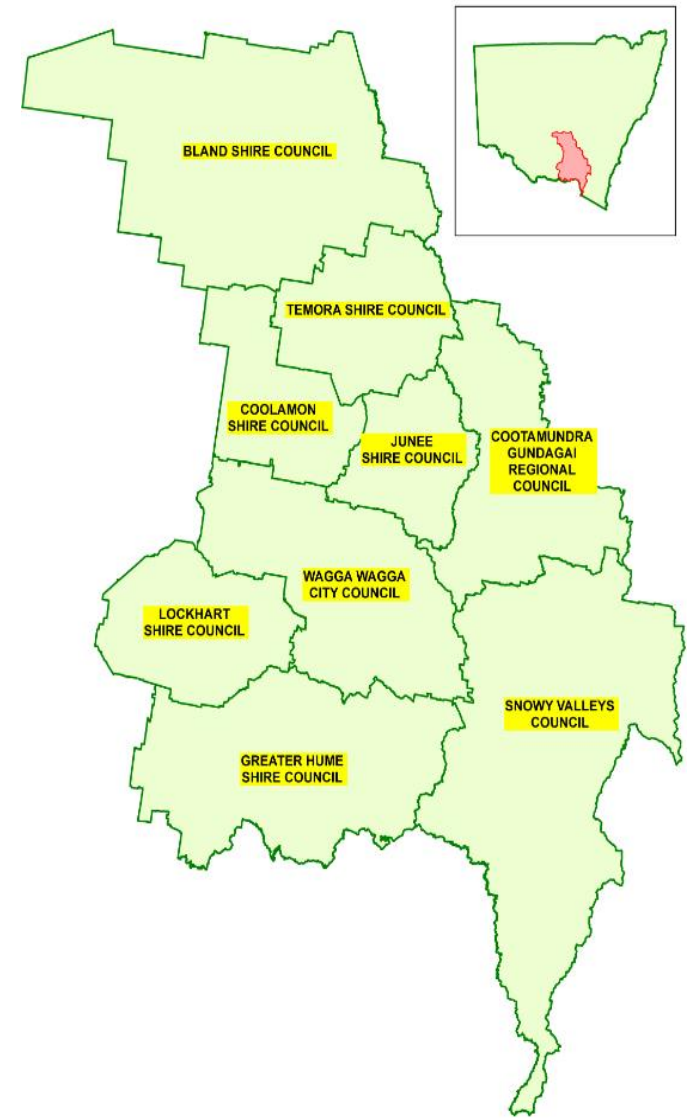
## OUR PLACE IN THE RIVERINA

The Coolamon Shire has an area of approximately 2,494 square kilometres and a population of 4,342 in 2019, comprising the three larger towns of Coolamon, Ganmain and Ardlethan and the smaller villages of Marrar, Matong and Beckom. Whilst the area has grown since its establishment, the value of past effort is nevertheless appreciated with many heritage buildings and items receiving protection and being maintained under Council's Local Environmental Plan. Chief amongst these is the Up-to-Date Store – incorporating the Mavis Furner Collection and Garth Jones Agricultural Collection, which are of State Heritage value.

The Coolamon Shire is one of the richest agricultural and pastoral districts in the Riverina. Surrounded by Bland, Narrandera, Junee and Temora Shires and the City of Wagga Wagga. The district is renowned for its production of wheat, canola, barley, oats and other cereal crops, as well as hay and chaff. Wool, lamb and beef are also important products from the area, with emerging agricultural enterprises. The shire contributed an estimated \$124 million to the region's gross regional product in 2013.

Being located within easy driving distance from Wagga many residents choose to live here as a lifestyle choice, many retiring into Coolamon from the farm, being afforded most of the essential services of a city with greater housing affordability especially for first home buyers. Residents are within easy commuting distance of nearby Wagga and its greater employment opportunities.

There are employment opportunities in the service areas of health, aged care, Local Government and in rural based small business. Coolamon Shire's proximity to Wagga Wagga and advances in information technology, broadband and satellite communication systems have established positive opportunities for home-based business, business support and consultancies.



## COOLAMON SHIRE IN 2019



**4,342**  
Population



**23.4%**  
Population  
aged 65  
and over



**42 Years**  
Median age



**40.6%**  
Couples  
with  
children  
households



**44.8%**  
Couples  
without  
children  
households



**12.6%**  
Lone  
(single)  
person  
household



**2.5**  
People per  
household



**1827**  
workers



**38.3%**  
Have  
occupation  
of  
professiona  
l or  
manager



**26.3%**  
Households  
earn a high  
income



**10.2%**  
Residents  
aged 15  
years and  
over with a  
Bachelor or  
High  
Degree

## COOLAMON SHIRE IN 2039



**5644**  
Population



**30.4%**  
Population  
aged 65  
and over



**7%**  
Population  
growth  
since 2001

## OUR COMMUNITY



The Coolamon Shire is home to 4,342, with equal number of male and female (50% and 50%). The median age of residents within the Shire is 44. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 20.6% of the population, by comparison the state average is 18.5 % and people aged 65 years and over made up 23.4% of the population, in comparison to 16.2% within the State.

There are 1103 families with an average of 2.1 children per family. Of the families in the LGA, 40.6% were couple families with children, 44.8% were couple families without children and 12.6% were one parent families.

The Coolamon Shire is an educated community, having financial mobility, with residents having achieved higher levels of qualifications, more likely to be employed as professionals, managers, technicians and trades earning significantly higher incomes. In the Coolamon LGA 84.8% of people were born in Australia. The most common countries of birth were England 1.4%, New Zealand 0.4%, Netherlands 0.2%, Germany 0.2% and India 0.2%. A small proportion of residents require help due to a disability.

The Coolamon LGA has experienced relatively consistent population growth in recent years. The LGA has grown by 7% since 2001. This trend is expected to continue, with a projected population of 5,644 by 2039. The most significant demographic shifts are likely to be in the population's age structure as the proportion of residents aged 60 years and over (and particularly those aged 70 years and over) continues to grow.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Coolamon Shire Area comprises Village, Primary Production, Rural Small Holdings, Infrastructure, Forestry and Public Recreation zones.

Coolamon LGA is predominately an agricultural area, with 2,280 square kilometres of its total land area being utilised for agriculture and the remaining 214 square kilometres being used for forestry, recreation and village/residential land uses (Forestry 54 km<sup>2</sup>, Recreation 0.5 Km<sup>2</sup>, Residential 61 Km<sup>2</sup>).

The Agricultural land area of the Shires comprises about 80% of total land area which is under cropping, with about 14% either fallow or used as pasture. A further 8% comprised open savannah woodland which is probably being grazed. The balance consists of ungrazed Eucalyptus woodland or dense cypress forest (possibly with interspersed Eucalyptus).

### COOLAMON SHIRE ENVIRONMENT



**2,280**  
square kilometres is  
Agriculture



**54**  
square kilometres is  
Forestry



**0.5**  
square kilometres is  
Recreation

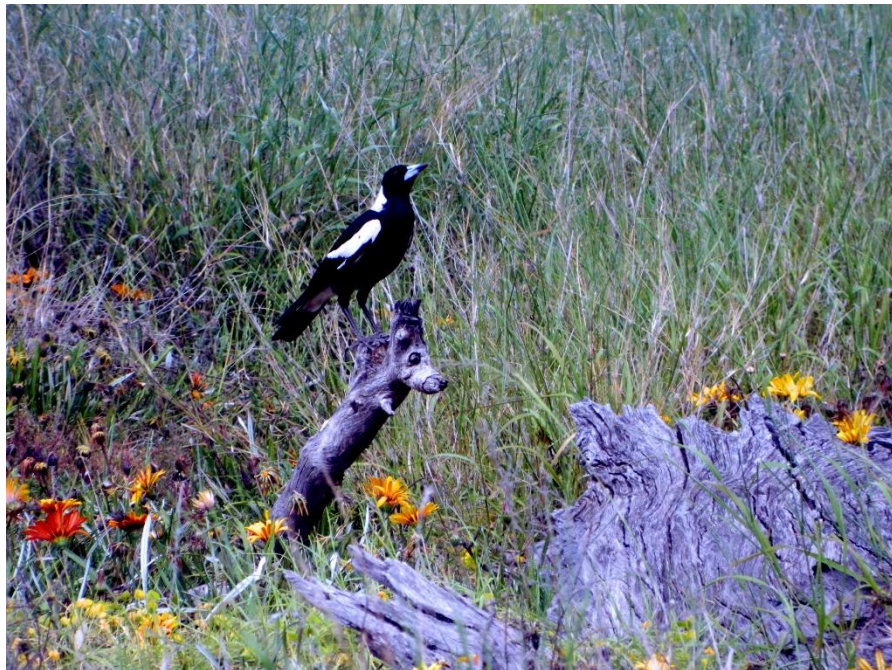


**61**  
square kilometres is  
Residential

The environment which makes up the Coolamon Shire is diverse and plays an integral role in the economic, social and natural environment makeup of the council area.

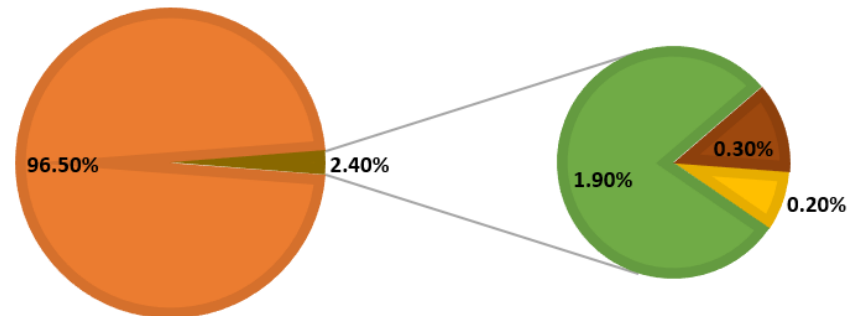
Like that of much of the Riverina, the landscape of the Shire is gentle rather than spectacular. There are no mountainous areas; there is no large river; no gorges or peaks. Scenically, the interest springs from subtleties in the ground cover and terrain, and in the contrast between the areas of remnant native bushland and cultivated fields. Forested areas are small and scattered. There are no large water features or storages.

According to Mitchell Resource Intelligence Pty Ltd (February 2002) about 72% of the land area of the Shire is under cropping, with about 14% either fallow or used as pasture. A further 8% comprised open savannah woodland which is probably being grazed. The balance consists of



**PERCENTAGE OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS**

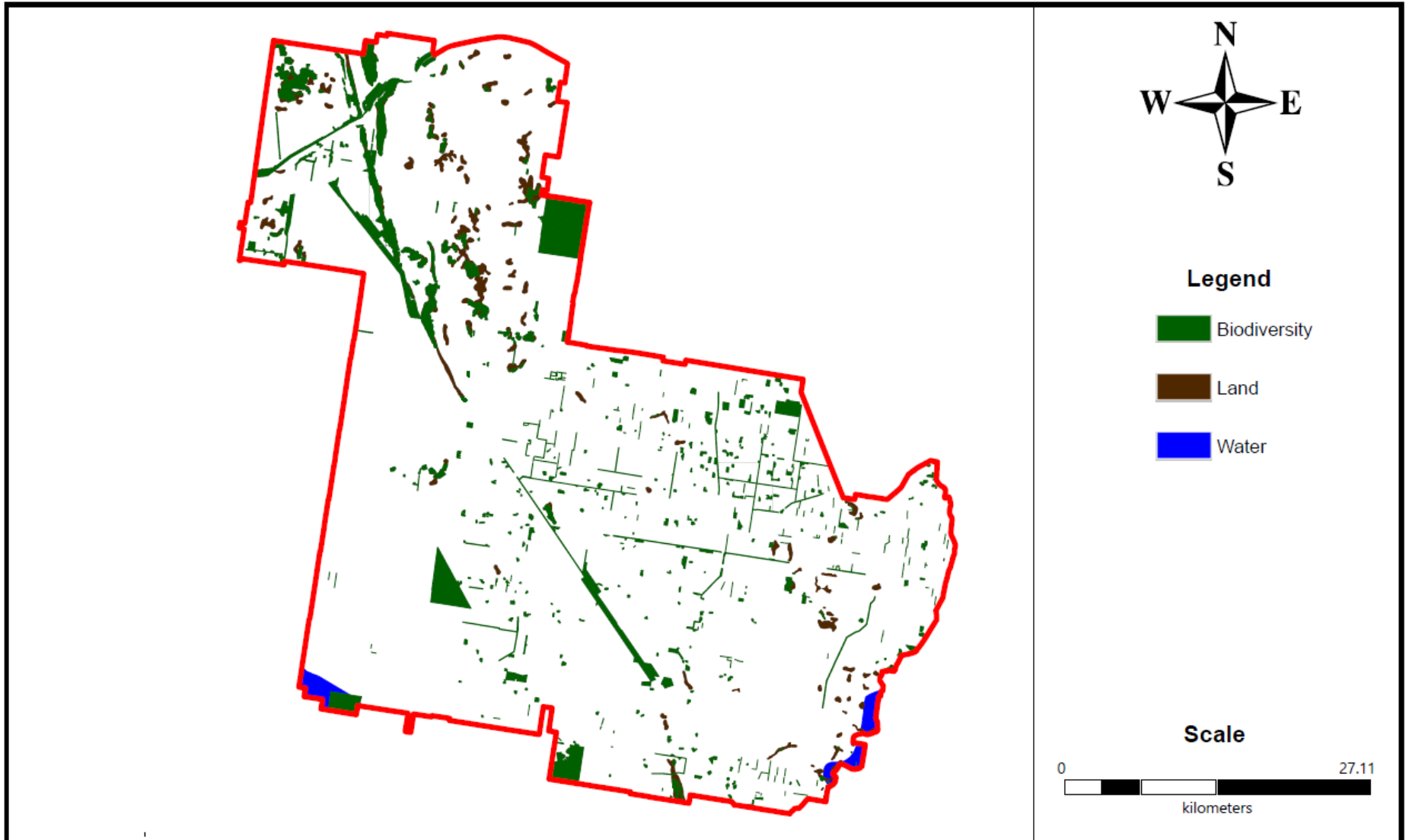
■ Separate Houses ■ Semi-Detached ■ Flats/Apartments ■ Other



ungrazed Eucalyptus woodland or dense cypress forest (possibly with interspersed Eucalyptus).

Throughout the Shire, native woodland and vegetation communities survive within the network of roadside reserves and travelling stock routes: in these settings, the continuity of the vegetation corridors makes a vital contribution to their survival as ecological communities and habitats for fauna. Outside the corridors, paddock trees remain an important ecological resource.

Core species which are found across the whole Shire are white cypress pine, grey box, yellow box, white box, kurrajong, currawang, western silver wattle and lightwood. Some species found in the central and northern areas (such as Mallee Wattle, Bimble Box) are not found in the east. Around Ardlethan there are area specific species such as Fern Leaf Hop bush, Rusty Spider Flower, and Mugga Ironbark.



**COOLAMON SHIRE COUNCIL  
NATURAL RESOURCES - ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT LAND**



## OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The Coolamon Local Government Area comprises the three larger towns of Coolamon, Ganmain and Ardlethan and the smaller villages of Marrar, Matong and Beckom.



### COOLAMON TOWNS AND VILLAGES



**45.1%**  
Households without a mortgage

**31.1%**  
Households with a mortgage

**18.6%**  
Households renting



**\$292,000**  
Median house price



**70+**  
Heritage Items

## Ardlethan

### History

Ardlethan is a rural service town located at the northern gateway to the Shire. Originally known as Rosebank, Ardlethan was proclaimed a village in 1908. Ardlethan is the birthplace of the Australian kelpie.

### Existing Character

Ardlethan is located at the junction of the Burley Griffin Way and the Newell highway. The Temora – Griffith rail corridor runs east west through the village.

The town centre is located in Aria Street between Mirrool and Yithan Streets with grain silos opposite on the rail line. The existing character of Ardlethan is best described as a rural village.

### Desired Future Character

Ardlethan is to remain a rural town but its strategic location at the northern gateway to the Shire provides an opportunity for highway orientated development (e.g. fuel and food stop, motel) at the new entrance from the Newell Highway. Whilst the proximity of this infrastructure junction is positive, the fact that the main commercial precinct is located off the highway remains a challenge.

The town centre will continue to focus on Aria Street with the streetscape and heritage elements to be retained. Any new development is to 'fit in' and be sympathetic to these heritage elements. Housing will be consolidated in existing residential areas however its expansion is limited by flooding and bushfire constraints, as well as a lack of road and stormwater infrastructure. In 2019, Council commenced major projects works to install a reticulated sewerage network that will service the township, with works scheduled to be completed in June 2020. Rural residential development is limited to the west of the town.



## Beckom

### History

Beckom is a village situated approximately 5 kms north-east of Ardlethan. The village is located on the bank of the Mirrool Creek and off the Newell Highway.

Beckom was proclaimed a village in 1909 following the arrival of the rail line.

### Existing Character

Beckom is a small rural village. It provides a focal point for community activity via its school, churches and community hall.

The Temora – Griffith rail corridor runs through the village where the village previously played a role as a rail head for grain harvesting. The intermittently used grain silos remain the tallest built structures in the landscape.

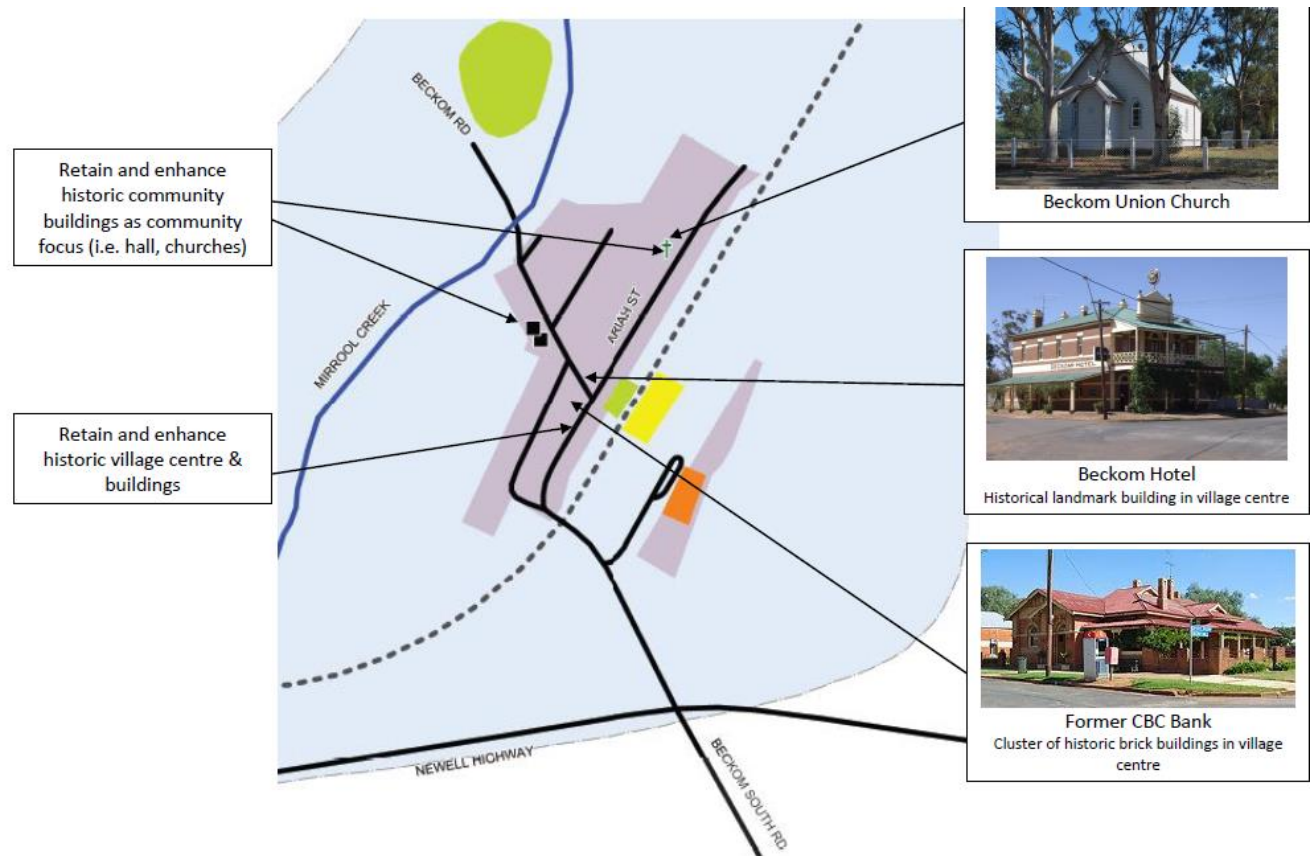
The village centre is located in Aria Street between Moore and Deakin Streets, with the village park located opposite a feature used by travellers of the Newell Highway.

### Desired Future Character

Beckom is to remain a rural village and community focal point.

Heritage buildings and the village centre streetscape are to be retained. Any new development is to 'fit in' and be sympathetic to these heritage elements.

Housing will be consolidated in exiting residential areas.



## Coolamon

### History

Coolamon was first settled by Europeans in the 1870's as the area opened up to agricultural expansion into the Riverina. Following the arrival of the railway in February 1881 Coolamon was gazetted as a town in October 1881. The Shire Council was established in 1906 as the town grew into a rural service centre.

### Existing Character

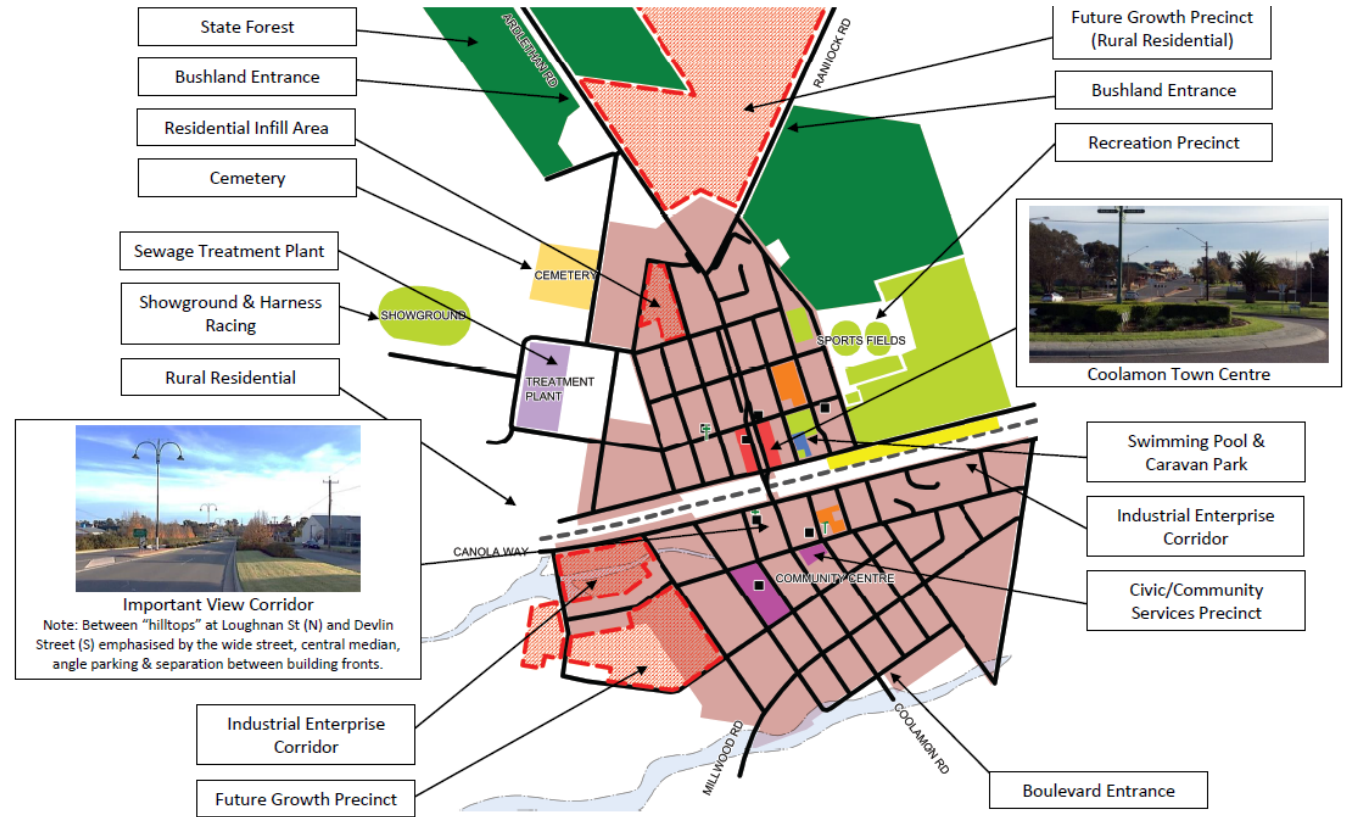
Coolamon is a rural service centre for the surrounding agricultural community and smaller villages. It is the principal centre for higher order urban services and facilities within the Shire including health services, schools and sporting facilities.

The town is at the junction of the Canola Way and both the Coolamon and Ardlethan Roads. The former links Wagga and the Newell Highway at Ardlethan, whilst the Canola Way links Junee to the east with the Newell Highway at Grong Grong to the west.

The Junee – Griffith rail corridor runs through the town. The town plays a role as a rail head for grain harvesting. The town business centre is focused on Cowabbie Street between Stinson and Loughnan Streets. This area combines a heritage precinct on a sloping main street providing a unique and attractive view corridor from the southern approach.

### Desired Future Character

Coolamon is to remain as the principal town settlement in the Shire, promoted as a rural living alternative to the nearby city of Wagga Wagga.





Residential development is primarily to be consolidated within the town area with additional rural residential areas to the north east and south west. Consideration will be given to additional RU5 (Village) zoning on existing urban fringe if future demand warrants.

Local industry will be focused along Canola Way and the rail corridor.

The town centre and business precinct is located in Cowabbie Street North and is to remain as the principal retail and commercial focus for both the town itself and the Shire as a whole.

The Cowabbie Street area south of the rail line is to be a civic precinct reflective of the community facilities already located in this area. Health care facilities including residential aged care and retirement housing needs are to be strengthened and expanded in this precinct.

A site for future multi-purpose civic centre is to be identified.

Heritage buildings and streetscape (especially Cowabbie Street) are to be retained throughout the town and any new development is to 'fit in' and be sympathetic to these heritage assets.

A green corridor around the urban boundary will provide a visual delineation between the town itself and the surrounding agricultural activities.

## Ganmain

### History

Ganmain was first known as Boggy Creek and settled in the 1880's. Its status as a village was proclaimed in 1894.

Ganmain is regarded as a centre for sheaf hay and chaff production for the race horse industry.

### Existing Character

Ganmain is located on the main east west road link (Canola Way) and straddles both the Junee- Griffith rail line and Boggy Creek. The main entrance from the east brings visitors through the Ganmain State Forest.

Ganmain remains a rural town to the surrounding agricultural community providing a focal point for community activity via its school, churches and community hall.

Importantly the town is home to the rural transaction centre allowing local people to do banking, search the internet and obtain counselling services the Centre is also a Medicare and Centrelink outlet and has a small meeting room.

The grain silos dominate the town landscape reflective of its role as a rail head for grain harvesting.

The town centre is located in Ford Street between Langham and Lakes Streets.

### Desired Future Character

Ganmain is to remain a rural town and community focal point. Housing is to be consolidated in the existing village zone commensurate with sewer availability. Additional rural residential allotments are to be located to the south and east of the town.



Landscaping beautification will be focused on the Boggy Creek environs / main streets and town entry ways.

## Marrar

### History

Marrar is a small village located to the east of Coolamon on the Canola Way. The village is on the southern side of the Junee – Griffith rail line Marrar was proclaimed a village in 1904 following the arrival of the rail line.

### Existing Character

Marrar is a small rural village and provides a focal point for social and community activity via its school, churches and sports ground.

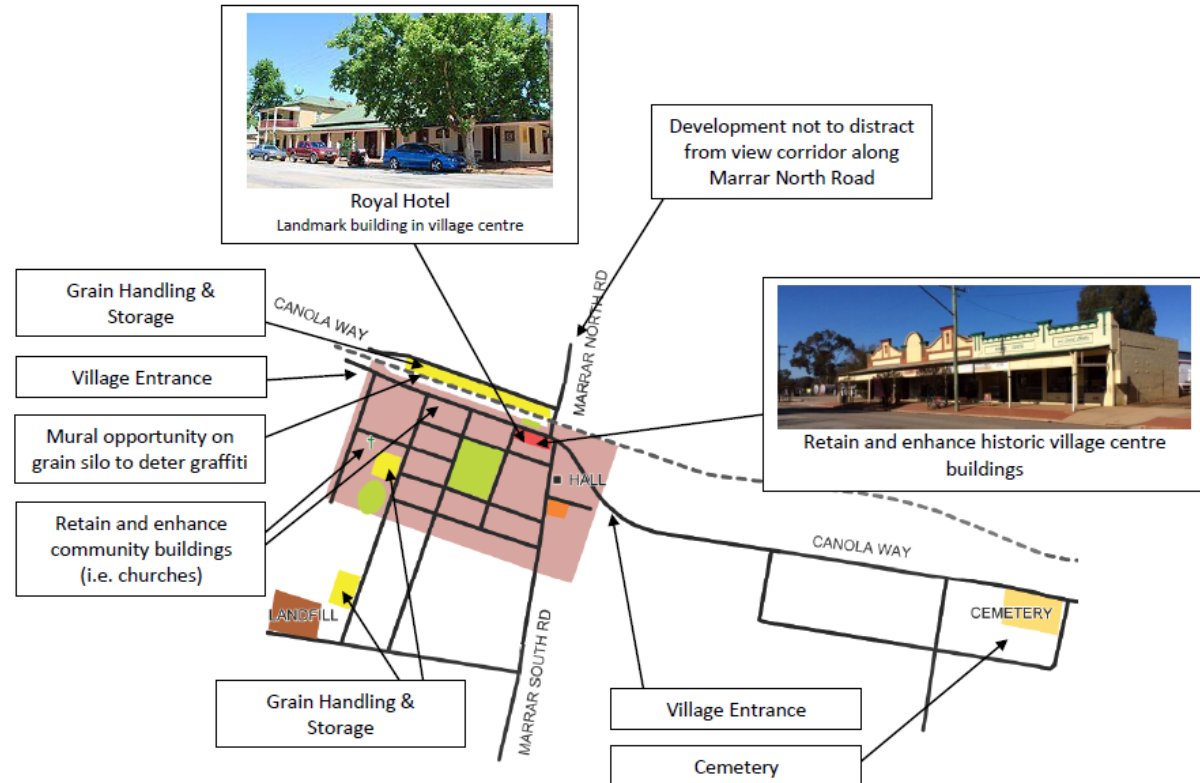
The Junee – Griffith rail corridor provides the northern boundary of the settlement. Like other villages in the Shire, Marrar is a rail head for grain harvesting. Of significance to Marrar however is the local bulk grain export industry which relies on rail access to enable efficient movement of grain to seaports along the eastern seaboard.

The village centre is located in York Street between See and Wood Streets.

### Desired Future Character

Marrar is to remain a rural village and community focal point.

Remaining heritage buildings and the village centre streetscape are to be retained. Any new development is to ‘fit in’ and be sympathetic to these heritage elements.



## Matong

### History

Matong is a small village located to the west of Ganmain. The village is on the southern side of the Junee – Griffith rail line, Matong was proclaimed a village in 1904 following the arrival of the rail line.

### Existing Character

Matong is a small rural village and provides a focal point for social and community activity via its Village Park, school, churches and sports ground.

The Junee – Griffith rail corridor provides the northern boundary of the settlement and like other villages in the Shire is a rail head for grain harvesting.

The village centre is located in Matong Street between Olive and Wood Streets.

### Desired Future Character

Matong is to remain a rural village and community focal point.

Remaining heritage buildings and the village centre streetscape are to be retained and enhanced. Any new development is to 'fit in' and be sympathetic to these heritage elements.

Housing will be consolidated in existing residential areas.





The Coolamon Shire has a significant role in supporting the Riverina's agricultural productivity, as previously identified, Coolamon Shire is one of the richest agricultural and pastoral areas of the region, comprising and is renowned for its production of wheat, canola, oats and other cereal crops, as well as wool, lamb and beef products. The shire contributed an estimated \$124 million to the region's gross regional product in 2013.

The shire's close proximity to Wagga Wagga and advances in IT and its improved internet connectivity are supporting the emergence of home-based business and e-commerce opportunities, in addition to the agricultural dominated economy.

The local Centre of Coolamon is also well known for its picturesque rural heritage and character.

The LGA provides affordable lifestyle opportunities in comparison to the City of Wagga, with many recognising the significantly lower cost of either building a new residence or purchasing existing housing stock at affordable prices so close to a major service centre.

## OUR CHALLENGES

The most significant challenges in land use planning facing Council and the Community include protecting agricultural land, meeting future housing demands whilst preserving the Shires distinctive character and special sense of place, as well as ensuring an adequate capacity of infrastructure to support the growth in population, particularly the flow on from regional population growth and the road network.

The protection of Agricultural land in the Shires needs to consider the following economic challenges and opportunities:

- The cost-price squeeze
- Local food production, distribution and consumption
- Diversifying the rural economy
- Infrastructure and services

Rural land is used for many purposes, from various forms of agriculture to mining, tourism, rural living, recreation and conservation. Often, many of these activities are undertaken on the same property. However, in some parts of NSW, there are conflicts between land uses, such as between farming and mining activities. A productive rural community should aim to provide for a diverse range of activities, all operating in harmony with each other.

The challenge for the Coolamon Shire is to facilitate growth in key agricultural industries while at the same time providing for growth in a range of agricultural enterprises, from increased processing capacity, to other value-adding activities and to niche cottage industries.

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan identifies that the region will need 7,650 new homes over the next 20 years to meet the demands of a growing and ageing population. This figure reflects demand for new dwellings, replacement dwellings and greater housing choice. Coolamon has witnessed strong

residential growth in recent years in both its urban areas and from a rural residential urban housing perspective.

Maintaining this rate of housing supply is reasonable and supported for the following reasons:

The supply of residential land in and around existing centres serves to protect rural land for rural purposes and promote the future viability of the Shires towns and villages. The Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011 does not currently identify the location of future urban and rural – residential land, which should reflect urban containment principles to protect valued agricultural land within the Shire. A key action item in this LSPS will be to investigate alternative urban and rural settlement opportunities.

The Coolamon Shire has over 70 Heritage Items and 7 Heritage Conservation Areas recognised as important to be retained for future generations, which define the stages of European settlement from the earliest days of the colony in the 1800s to the beginning of the twentieth century. The importance that the protection and promotion of both European and Aboriginal cultural heritage items within the Shire has on retaining the Shires distinctive character and special sense of place cannot be understated. The ability to continue to identify, protect and promote items of cultural heritage will continue to provide a challenge to the shire, the community has identified that cultural heritage values are most valued and contribute significantly the Shire's sense of identity and visual amenity.

Infrastructure development and regional connectivity is integral to the economic development of the Shire. An efficient transport and freight system is a basic precondition for improving the competitiveness of rural communities and regions and for underpinning a polycentric spatial framework. A lack of basic infrastructure, transport connections and communications technologies will restrict economic development in regional and rural areas. Opportunities should be investigated to not only to identify appropriate funding opportunities that will support any future urban land development within the Shire but also for the augmentation existing infrastructure. Required infrastructure to support expansion includes the development of a network of public paths, trails and public/community-based transport connecting rural towns with Regional Nodes.

One of the challenges in regards to providing the required infrastructure to support residential and rural residential land release will at the strategic planning stage and in identifying release areas that are suitable for residential and rural residential development in that such land is close to existing infrastructure services and balance the costs of providing such services whilst ensuring the continued affordability of land and low investment costs in comparison to surrounding LGA's.

## OUR VISION

Over the next 20 years as the Coolamon Shire grows and changes to meet community needs, key priorities for Council will be to maintain the high levels of environmental amenity, livability and affordability of property that characterises the Shire.

Housing opportunities and choice will continue to be provided to cater for changing demographics and population needs, ensuring that resident amenity is maintained and enhanced. Housing growth will be in the form of infill development and small areas of new development on land in close proximity to existing infrastructure.

Investigation will also be undertaken to identify suitable locations for the rezoning of additional RU4 (Rural Small Holdings) zones. The scale of development will respect a supply and demand analysis in the form of a Residential and Rural Residential Land analysis and will be required to be appropriate to environmental and infrastructure constraints.

The Shire's heritage will continue to be protected and conserved; development will be of high-quality design and construction and sympathetic to heritage streetscapes. A consideration for environmental responsive design and landscape over built form will be promoted, with good design ensuring that streetscapes within the Shire are enhanced so as to maintain and promote existing amenity and character.

Towns and villages / local centres will continue to support the community as great, connected places. The town and village atmosphere and character of these centres will be retained and promoted as the Coolamon Shire grows and changes to meet the ever evolving dynamics of community needs. There is an opportunity to renew and revitalise our towns and villages centres to streetscapes, improve accessibility, amenity and viability, particularly in Coolamon with the identification of a suitable location for light industrial land uses within Wade Street Coolamon. Employment opportunities will continue to be provided and promoted throughout town centres and within the Wade Street / Canola Way light industrial corridor.



The importance of the agricultural industry from an employment perspective for the Shire is significant and needs to be protected and supported to ensure future viability and sustainability of all of our towns and villages. Land use planning should serve to protect and promote the sustainability of the agricultural industry by providing flexible and responsive land use solutions.

Tourism will continue to play an important role in the Shires productivity and employment with key attractors including the many heritage buildings, mains streets and walking trails. Artistic and creative enterprises and facilities will be encouraged.

Improved traffic solutions and transport routes that serve the Shire and connect product to market will continue to be advocated for. Sustainable transport, such as trains, buses, cycling and walking will be encouraged for a healthy, active community. Council will be responsive to flexible and innovative solutions.

Management of existing open spaces will continue to be important, vibrant towns and villages have a well-distributed network of natural areas, as well as walkable and attractive public open spaces. These spaces allow the community to meet, play, chat and connect. Parks, sports fields, bush walking tracks, and other public spaces will be maintained and enhanced to support the community healthy lifestyle, offering passive and active recreational opportunities. The community will be further supported by infrastructure that responds to their needs, for example, youth centres, child care centres, in addition to emergency and health services.

The effects of climate change and natural hazards will be managed through good planning, ensuring resilience and a sustainable urban environment. Waste outcomes will be efficient and cost effective, maximizing recycling opportunities and well-planned waste infrastructure will contribute to the built form and livability of the community. Tree coverage will be enhanced to mitigate the heat island effect and maintain the landscape amenity of the Shire.

Based upon the abovementioned challenges the vision statement for the Shire, now and into the future, is:

*Coolamon Shire will retain its identity as a place where a productive agricultural economy supports a diverse range of town and village communities, each of which enjoys a unique physical setting and environmental heritage. The Shire will continue to attract new residents seeking career opportunities, family amenities, comfortable retirement facilities, and quality educational and health care. Tourists and visitors will be warmly welcomed, and encouraged to enjoy the Shire's scenic and heritage attributes whilst engaging with indigenous and European history.*



## **ACHIEVING OUR VISION**

- **LIVEABILITY**
- **PRODUCTIVITY**
- **SUSTAINABILITY**

## PLANNING PRIORITIES

To achieve the 20-year vision for the Coolamon Shire, Council has identified the following 10 Planning Priorities to indicate the focus of future strategic planning work in the Shire, which are consistent with the:

- Directions of the Riverina Murray Plan
- Strategic direction for the Coolamon Shire identified in the Community Strategic Plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

Council will monitor and report on the implementation of the actions to ensure that the planning priorities are being achieved. This will, as much as possible, be aligned to other Council review and reporting processes such as:

- Review of the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011 (every five years)
- Development Control Plans (every five years)
- Review of the Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan (every four years) and reporting (i.e. annual report, quarterly progress reports, and end of term report)
- State of the Environment (SoE) report (every 4 years)

This approach is consistent with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework under the *Local Government Act 1993*, which recognises that council plans and policies are inter-connected.

This Statement will be reviewed at least every seven years pursuant to section 3.9(1) of the Act.

### A GROWING AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

#### Planning Priority 1

Promote the protection of agricultural land.

#### Planning Priority 2

Support agricultural research & development opportunities via a flexible and responsive Local Land Use Planning Framework.

#### Planning Priority 3

Protect Environmental Heritage Assets.

#### Planning Priority 4

Promote opportunities for local employment.

### A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WITH PRISTINE WATERWAYS

#### Planning Priority 5

Adapt to the impacts and hazards of climate change.

## EFFICIENT TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

### Planning Priority 6

Improve access to, from and within the Coolamon Shire, and encourage active transport.

## STRONG, CONNECTED AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Planning Priority 7

Advocate to State and Federal Governments for development to be supported by Infrastructure funding.

### Planning Priority 8

Investigate opportunities for residential and rural residential land rezoning.

### Planning Priority 9

Ensure that building design and construction is of high quality, and maintains resident amenity and promotes sense of place.

### Planning Priority 10

Provide diverse housing choices and opportunities to meet changing demographics and population needs, with housing growth in the right locations.

## A Growing and Diverse Economy

### Planning Priority 1

Promote the protection of agricultural land

#### Rationale

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan identifies that agriculture is integral to the success of the economy and a major force in the State. The Riverina Murray makes the largest regional contribution to agricultural production in NSW (\$1.4 billion). Agricultural productivity, combined with the region's strategic locational advantages and value-added manufacturing capabilities, make for an exciting future for this region. The Coolamon Shire is a major contributor to the production of agriculture in the region and the continued viability of the Coolamon Shire is strongly linked to the protection, promotion and sustainability of agriculture.

The Riverina region has a diverse agricultural sector. The most important commodities in the region based on the gross value of agricultural production were wheat (\$375 million), followed by cotton (\$347 million) and cattle and calves (\$247 million) (Department of Agriculture 2019). The agricultural industry in the Coolamon Shire contributes over \$129 million to the region's gross regional product per year. Of the employed people in Coolamon (A) (Local Government Areas), 7.3% worked in 'Other related Grain Growing' sectors. Other major industries of employment included Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming 6.3%, Local Government Administration 3.2%, Sheep Farming (Specialised) 2.9% and Higher Education 2.8% (ABS 2016).

Identifying and protecting important agricultural land in the Coolamon Shire is fundamental to the future of agricultural production within the LGA and Region. As agricultural output continues to increase, expanding value-added manufacturing of agricultural produce, including food and beverage manufacturing, will also help drive diversity in the economy.

By facilitating rural related development opportunities and reducing the location of incompatible land uses adjoining agricultural land through a flexible and robust land use planning framework - the protection of valuable rural land and creation of a diverse agricultural economy will be promoted.

#### **Actions**

- Review the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011 to enable the facilitation of rural related development.
- Review the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011 to reduce the incidence of rural land use conflict created by inappropriate development types on agricultural land or adjoining land use zones.

#### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Report to Council as necessary.
- Ongoing review of Councils Planning Controls.

#### **Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan.

### **Planning Priority 2**

Support agricultural research & development opportunities.

#### **Rationale**

Agricultural Research and Development opportunities should be pursued within the Shire to improve the long-term productivity growth of the sector, it is imperative for government and industry to support agricultural research and development. Investment in research, development and innovation is vital for ongoing growth and improvement in the productivity, profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of not only the Coolamon Shires but Australia's agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries.

#### **Actions**

- Advocate for State and Federal Government investment in the agricultural research and development sector.
- Facilitate agricultural research and development through Councils Planning system and create a flexible and responsive Local Land Use Planning Framework.
- Locate agribusiness development in areas that capitalise on access to key freight networks.

#### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Report to Council as necessary.
- Ongoing review of Councils Planning Controls.



### Relationship to Other Plans

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

### Planning Priority 3

Protect Environmental Heritage Assets.

#### Rationale

Our built and social heritage makes a point of difference within the region, drawing residents and visitors to our towns and villages. Coolamon Shires heritage is diverse and includes buildings, monuments, streets and conservation areas. Shaped by architectural expressions, the charm of the Shires historic character is an attractor for residents and tourists alike.

Councils challenge is to establish a robust planning framework by which this vibrant local character can be protected into the future whilst at the same enabling for new development within the Shire.

Heritage listing within the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan (LEP) provides legal recognition that a place has heritage significance worth preserving for future generations, and is a physical link to the work and way of life of earlier generations. There are around 70 Heritage Items and 7 Heritage Conservation Areas listed in the LEP, informed by numerous main street studies prepared by various Heritage Consultants. The community also recognizes and values aboriginal cultural heritage which consists of places and items that are of significance to Aboriginal people because of their traditions, observances, lore, customs, beliefs and history.

Planning controls in the LEP and Development Control Plan, along with Council's Heritage Advisory Service, Local Heritage Fund support the conservation of the Shires heritage. Council will continue to protect the Shires Environmental Heritage Assets via the actions nominated under this planning priority.

#### Actions

- Maintain heritage listings in Coolamon Local Environmental Plan to facilitate the conservation of the Shires heritage.
- Actively promote Council's Heritage Assistance Fund, Heritage Advisory Service, Heritage Exemption Process and other initiatives that contribute to the conservation of the Shires heritage.
- Facilitate the repair, maintenance and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings, along with appropriate infill development, that ensures the conservation of the Shires heritage.

#### Monitoring and Reporting

- Report annually on projects funded and completed under the Heritage Assistance Fund.
- Report annually on the number of referrals and meetings undertaken each year as part of the Heritage Advisory Service.
- Monitor any demolitions of buildings with heritage listing on an ongoing basis.

### Relationship to Other Plans

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

#### Planning Priority 4

Promote opportunities for local employment.

#### Rationale

The Coolamon Shire has a supporting role in the Riverina's productivity, with most employment in the professional, managerial, technician and trades and agricultural sectors. There are numerous small businesses in the LGA including a diverse range of professional service providers including, automotive, agricultural services and health professionals as well as a substantial number of retailers. Employment opportunities are found within town and village sectors, as well as within agricultural / primary production zoned land. The Shire should continue to encourage and support the establishment of business both existing and proposed. The establishment of new business in the Shire should be supported by a robust and clear planning framework.

Development opportunity exists along Wade Street Coolamon for the creation of a flexible light industrial precinct which will be supported by Council owned utility infrastructure. Council will investigate the development of this area for light industrial purposes.

The actions listed in this planning priority are designed to promote local employment opportunities.

#### Actions

- Consider the range of business activities that occur within the Shire to ensure that Councils planning controls are responsive to innovation and change and encourage the location of business within the Shire.
- Investigate rezoning opportunities along Wade Street, Coolamon for Light Industrial purposes.
- Promote and support existing and new business investment within the Shire to take advantage of the Shire's access to Wagga Wagga, the Bomen Industrial Estate, Junee, and Temora.
- Foster and build partnerships with tertiary institutions (TAFE and CSU) to increase access to knowledge and skills within the Shire and the region to benefit shire businesses.

#### Monitoring and Reporting

- Complete the business review by 2024.
- Review applicable planning controls by 2025 to ensure that it supports and facilitates the location of businesses within the Shire.

#### Relationship to Other Plans

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

A Healthy Environment with Pristine Waterways

## Planning Priority 5

Adapt to the impacts and hazards of climate change

### Rationale

A changing global climate, an associated reduction in water security and the introduction of a carbon tax may affect us in ways not yet understood.

Climate change resulting in increasing temperatures and sea-level rise will exacerbate these natural hazards. This poses a challenge for Council and the Community in meeting the needs of future population growth, as placing development in hazardous areas or increasing the density of development in areas subject to hazardous conditions increases the risk to people and property.

As the Riverina continues to grow, the loss of vegetation and increase in urban surfaces results in urban areas creating their own microclimates as roads, driveways and buildings absorb, hold and re-radiate heat, raising the air temperature. This is known as the urban heat island effect. Maintaining canopy cover and ensuring good building design is important to help mitigate the heat island effect.

When planning and developing new urban areas within the LGA, design and environmental considerations such as vegetation, water management (water sensitive urban design) and energy efficiency will be key design considerations incorporated into the decision making process. This will assist our communities to build resilience to climate change.

### Actions

- Consider initiatives that respond to the impacts of climate change, mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce vulnerability to extreme heat.
- Investigate funding opportunities to undertake a shire wide Flood Study.
- Maintain, and review as necessary, existing planning controls and objectives within Coolamon Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plans relating to natural hazards and climate change.

### Monitoring and Reporting

- Investigation and review of Coolamon Shires planning controls as necessary by 2024.
- Reporting in the Council's State of the Environment Report.
- Completion of Flood Study (timeframe to be determined).

### Relationship to Other Plans

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

## Efficient transport and infrastructure networks

### Planning Priority 6

Improve access to, from and within the Coolamon Shire, and encourage active transport.

### **Rationale**

Access and transport are key community priorities and Council is actively involved in both delivering local improvements and advocating on the Shires behalf to other government agencies, including for improvements and upgrades to State and local road networks.

The provision a suitable road hierarchy that supports the agricultural industry and road safe and efficient roads networks that support tourism to the Shire are important to both the wider community and Council. The maintenance and promotion of opportunity's to utilize the regionally significant rail corridor which traverses the Shire is also important to issue to the Shire.

Council is continuing to explore new initiatives to, maintain local parking and access within and to the Shire, undertake education programs and capital improvements to improve road safety, and pursue active transport opportunities. New paths cycle ways have recently been constructed which form connection between Coolamon and Ganmain.

The accessibility of public space and infrastructure is also a key consideration and Council is guided by accessibility audits and strategy, and by other plans including Active Transport Plan.

### **Actions**

- Investigate provision of improved, more integrated public and community transport within the Shire, to reduce reliance on costly and environmentally unfriendly private transport, and to increase share of journeys to work and town on local public transport, including weekend transport, and more frequent services for teenagers to attend sport in the region e.g. touch, netball
- Maintain and promote the importance of freight corridors within the LGA.
- Maintain Activity Transport plan and review on a regular basis in consultation with the Community.
- Maintain Disability Access Inclusion Plan and review on regular basis in consultation with the Community.
- Ensure planning controls and objectives within the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan are consistent with Council's Access Strategy and Disability Inclusion Plan.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Ongoing reporting of transport initiatives to Council.
- Investigation and review of the Coolamon Shires planning controls as necessary by 2024.

### **Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

## **Strong, Connected and Healthy Communities**

### **Planning Priority 7**

Advocate to State and Federal Governments for development to be supported by Infrastructure funding.

### **Rationale**

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan identifies that the region will need 7,650 new homes over the next 20 years to meet the demands of a growing and ageing population. This figure reflects demand for new dwellings, replacement dwellings and greater housing choice. Coolamon has witnessed strong residential growth in recent years in both its urban areas and from a rural residential urban housing perspective.

Whilst the Coolamon Shire is not the focus of significant growth and change under State's plans, given its proximity to Wagga Wagga, increased population growth and change in this City will have an impact within the Coolamon Shire with further demand placed on the road network, public transport, open spaces, schools, community facilities, utilities and the like as people continue to gravitate to Coolamon as an alternative place to live.

Council is committed to investigating, via a master planning exercise and feasibility study, opportunity's to develop an area surrounding the Coolamon Showground / Harness Racing Track into a Harness Racing, Equine and Showground Precinct that is supported by rural residential lifestyle allotments. The success of such a project will rely heavily on infrastructure investment from all levels of Government.

Understanding the current capacity and planned investments in utility infrastructure in the towns and villages will enable Council to capitalise on opportunities for economic and housing growth. Critical infrastructure investments will be identified as Council conducts more detailed analysis on the identified investigation areas so that growth is aligned with upgrades to town water, wastewater, electricity and telecommunication facilities. Aligning these utility infrastructure projects with future growth opportunities and Councils Delivery Program and Operational Plan is a key initiative of this planning priority. Developing partnerships with key infrastructure providers, such as Golden fields County Council, is integral to the delivery of essential services within the LGA.

To meet the future needs of the community a number of sewer networks and sewer treatment projects are currently being undertaken or investigated. These include the construction of sewer treatment plant and network in Ardlethan and detailed investigation of a much needed Sewer Treatment plant upgrades in Coolamon.

Securing future funding opportunities to contribute to the ongoing operation of existing, upgrade and construction of required infrastructure will be crucial to the delivery of this priority.

### **Actions**

- Advocate for State Government investment in infrastructure in the Coolamon Shire as necessary in response to anticipated population growth and change within the Wagga Wagga LGA, including but not limited to investment in road and sewerage infrastructure.
- Support the development of the Bomen Industrial Area in the City of Wagga Wagga and promote Coolamon as a residential lifestyle opportunity for workers.

- Investigate funding opportunities to undertake a master plan exercise and feasibility study for a Harness Racing, Equine and Showground Precinct at the Coolamon Show Ground.
- Consider the adaptability of infrastructure and its potential shared use to meet future needs, including the use of technology and flexible design.

#### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Report to Council as necessary.
- Monitor the progress of the Development in the City of Wagga Wagga.

#### **Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

### **Planning Priority 8**

Investigate opportunities for residential and rural residential land rezoning.

#### **Rationale**

Coolamon has witnessed strong residential growth in recent years in both its urban areas and from a rural residential urban housing perspective.

To inform and identify the residential land supply needs for the Shire next 20 years, the development of a residential land strategy is required. A strategy will provide a way forward for housing in and should form part of a comprehensive review of the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011.

It is anticipated that the residential strategy will be used to guide decision making from the time it is developed and adopted by Council. Where necessary it will provide strategic guidance to amendments to the existing Planning framework.

At a project specific level, Council is committed to investigating lifestyle land use opportunities located on land surrounding the Coolamon Showground Precinct. Potential exists for the creation of residential lifestyle allotments via a master planning exercise to develop the area into a Harness Racing, Equine and Showground Precinct.

The development of a Residential Strategy needs to be informed by existing patterns of settlement in the wider region, and projections of future housing demand and should limit the impacts of residential development on agricultural land. The actions listed under this planning priority will contribute to establishing the need for residential and rural residential land supply in appropriate locations.

#### **Actions**

- Develop a Residential Land Strategy.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan 2011 and consider the provision of additional RU4 and RU5 land that may be identified in the Residential Land Strategy via rezoning proposal.

**Monitoring and Reporting**

- Development of Residential Land Strategy by 2025
- Investigation and review of Coolamon Local Environmental Plan by 2026.
- Report to Council as required.

**Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan

**Planning Priority 9**

Ensure that building design and construction is of high quality, and maintains resident amenity and promotes sense of place.

**Rationale**

The Coolamon Shire Local Government area contains many high quality buildings both aging building stock and new infill building structures. The area has a diverse range of architecture, with one of the earliest still standing the “Up to Date Store” constructed in 1883 and many fine forms of Federation, Inter-War, Post-War, late Twentieth century and contemporary buildings constructed over the years, which combine to give the Shire its distinct character.

The challenge faced by Council is to manage the ongoing demands for changes to the existing building stock, whilst ensuring local character and resident amenity is maintained. The Coolamon Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan set out objectives and planning controls relating to bulk/scale of buildings, design, landscaped area and amenity matters such as privacy, overshadowing and view sharing to ensure that development is of a high quality and provides good amenity for future occupants.

Council will continue to ensure that building design and construction is of high quality, and maintains a village / rural amenity and promotes sense of place through the actions listed under this planning priority.

**Actions**

- Review the Coolamon Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to ensure that the provisions of these documents promote high quality construction and design.
- Consider the approaches for integrating local character into land use planning outlined in the NSW Government’s *Local Character and Place Guideline* (February 2019), including a review of existing townscape statements in the Coolamon Shire Development Control Plan.
- Continue to provide free advice to applicants in the development application process that encourage and promote good design in the Shire.

**Monitoring and Reporting**

- Ongoing review of Coolamon Shires planning controls.
- Ongoing review and reporting of Council initiatives to promote good design.

**Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Community Strategic Plan

### Planning Priority 10

Provide diverse housing choices and opportunities to meet changing demographics and population needs, with housing growth in appropriate locations.

#### **Rationale**

Population growth in the Coolamon LGA is estimated to increase at a rate of 1.2% per year increasing from a population of 4342 people to 5,644 persons by 2039. The population of people aged 65 years and over makes up 23.4% of the population. The Shire is not identified as an area subject to significant growth and change under the Riverina Murray Regional Plan given its small size and other constraints.

In planning for growth and change, Council will strive to retain housing choice and diversity to meet community needs; ensure that development respects neighborhood character and resident amenity; and ensure that housing growth is in the right locations reflecting land constraints and infrastructure capacity. Options for housing affordability will be considered within a broader regional context.

#### **Actions**

- Investigate the need to develop a Local Housing Strategy to ensure sufficient housing is delivered to meet community needs and demand.
- Review planning controls for that provide for adaptable housing and universal design given the ageing population.

#### **Monitoring and Reporting**

- Complete the review of planning controls by 2023.
- If required develop Local Housing Strategy by 2022.

#### **Relationship to Other Plans**

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan
- Coolamon Shire Community Strategic Plan



## REFERENCES

- ABS., 2016, 2016 Census QuickStats, viewed 30 September 2019, at [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA12000](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA12000)
- Coolamon Shire Council., 2018, Community Shire Strategic Plan.
- Coolamon Shire Council., 2015, Development Control Plan.
- Coolamon Shire Council., 2011, Coolamon Local Environmental Plan.
- DPI., 2018, Riverina Murray Agricultural Profile, viewed 30 September 2019 [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/843363/Draft-ial-mapping-riverina-murray-agricultural-profile.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/843363/Draft-ial-mapping-riverina-murray-agricultural-profile.pdf)
- NSW Department of Agriculture,., 2019, Regional Profiles, viewed 2 October 2019, <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/aboutmyregion/nsw-riverina>
- NSW Department of Planning., 2017, Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036.