
DRAFT

OUR FORBES SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



2017 – 2027



The Forbes Shire community is committed to:

Strengthening our vibrant Society and Places
Enhancing Economic Development
Ensuring Our Environment remains healthy, sustained and attractive
Respected Leadership and Governance
Pride in Our Infrastructure

Our community wants to feel:

Safe
Important
Connected
Sustained
Harmonious
Equal
Successful

The Community Strategic Plan can be accessed on the Forbes Shire Council website at www.forbes.nsw.gov.au

Further information or feedback on the Plan can be made via email to: forbes@forbes.nsw.gov.au

Alternatively, comments can be made in writing to:

Feedback on Community Strategic Plan
Forbes Shire Council
PO Box 333
FORBES NSW 2871

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Integrated Planning and Reporting

Integrated Planning and Reporting is the framework for planning and reporting by Local Governments across New South Wales. The aim is to integrate the various plans of Council with the strategic objectives or aspirations of the community. The key element in the framework is the involvement of the whole of the community in the formulation of the Community Strategic Plan.

The principal components of the integrated planning and reporting model are:

Community Strategic Plan – sets out the long term aspirations of the community of the Forbes Shire for the next 10 years. It is the key reference to guide Council decision-making during this period.

The plan was prepared by Council after extensive consultation with residents, land owners, visitors, Councillors, Council staff, businesses, community groups and youth. It is informed by the Central West and Orana Regional Plan (Draft), the NSW Premier's Priorities, the Forbes *Fit for the Future* Action Plan and, where appropriate, shows links to the directions and actions in these plans.

The Forbes Shire is well known for its friendly people who make a great country community which thrives along the Lachlan River, enjoys the peace and quiet of Lake Forbes and the heritage of the town of Forbes.

Delivery Program – Under the Delivery Program, Council is accounting for its stewardship of the community's long-term goals, outlining what it intends to do towards achieving these goals during its term in office (four years) and what its priorities will be.

Operational Plan – annual plan detailing Council's activities and budget for each year of the Delivery Program

Resourcing Strategy - brings together Council's key planning strategies for the utilisation of the resources available to Council to fulfil the community strategic objectives.

Reporting On Progress

Council is required to report periodically to the Forbes Shire community on the progress of the activities undertaken by Council in achieving the strategic objectives of the Community Strategic Plan. Key accountability reporting points are:

- Council's Annual Report which is prepared after the end of the financial year and reports the results and achievements for the year against the Operational Plan and Delivery Program, and
- Every four years tied to the Council election cycle, the Community Strategic Plan must be reported upon by the outgoing Council and the incoming Council must undertake a review of the Plan. At this time the Community Strategic Plan has to be rolled forward four years to maintain a minimum long term 10 year strategic focus.

Integrated Planning and Reporting framework

'Local Government Planning and Reporting framework – NSW State Government'



Underlying Principles

The Community Strategic Plan has been developed and based on two sets of guiding principles, those of social justice and sustainability.

Social justice principles in particular underpinned the Forbes Shire community engagement strategy in the formulation of the community strategic plan. The four social justice principles are:

Equity – there should be fairness in decision making, prioritizing and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances

Access – all people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life

Participation – everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives

Rights – equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Quadruple Bottom Line

The Community Strategic Plan and all Council plans and reports under the integrated planning and reporting framework consider the four key areas under what is known as the quadruple bottom line – namely: Social, Environment, Economic and Civic Leadership (or governance).

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Forbes Shire Vision

Forbes Shire Council's vision is

"The Forbes Shire is a safe, connected and welcoming community. We aspire to create job opportunities, improve our infrastructure and support a diverse and thriving economy".

Building the Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan sets out the long term aspirations of the community of the Forbes Shire for the next 10 years. It is the key reference to guide Council decision-making during this period.

The plan was prepared by Council after extensive consultation with residents, land owners, visitors, Councillors, Council staff, businesses, community groups and youth. Over 133 residents attended 21 workshops held over a two-week period and 820 surveys were completed with 603 from residents and 207 from youth.



There were 21 workshops held during a two-week period with more than 130 residents attending.



Demographic Profile

From the 2011 Census Forbes' estimated resident population was 9,469. This was made up of 4,737 females and 4,732 males. The 0-14 age group represented around 21% of the total population, which is higher than the state average of 19%. Residents between the ages of 15 to 64 made up 60% of the population with 19% over the age of 65. From the resident population 4,106 were employed. The biggest employer was the agricultural, forestry and fishing industry employing 19.2% of the working population, followed by retail (10.9%) and healthcare and social services (10.9%).

The unemployment rate was 5.4% but has been fluctuating between a high of 7.8% to a low of 5.8% since 2011. Since 2011 Forbes population has been steadily rising with an estimated 9,754 residents in 2015. This represents an increase of approximately 3% in the 5 years since 2011 and is comparable with the growth rate of regional NSW which was 3.4% for the same time period.

Challenges

Forbes Shire faces challenges are:

Attracting business and industry to grow the population and jobs base in the face of potentially static population and rate bases;

Capacity to absorb increasing costs, notwithstanding rate pegging, and the significant loss of revenue caused by Federal Government freezing of Financial Assistance Grants; and

- Ever-growing community expectations as regards to service levels.

The Council was identified as not achieving the NSW Office of Local Government *Fit for the Future* benchmarks for Operating Performance Ratio and Building Infrastructure Renewal Ratio.

Council is implementing a range of efficiencies and business management enhancements to ensure that we remain financially sustainable.

VISION

The Forbes Shire is a safe, connected and welcoming community. We aspire to create job opportunities, improve our infrastructure and support a diverse and thriving economy.

What our Community Consultation told us

Consultation was conducted between October 2016 and January 2017 and drew a wide cross-section of the community. A website was set up to provide information and create a point of contact for the engagement process: www.forbes.localvoices.com.au. Social media was used to stimulate interest and included links to the Forbes Community Engagement Website. 133 people attended workshops where an external facilitator conducted a conversation about the future of the Forbes Shire and where relevant these workshops focused on specific areas of interest. 4,420 surveys were distributed and 820 were completed on line or on paper. Of these 207 were from our youth.

There was consistency in the feedback from the surveys and workshops across a broad range of age groups, groups, industry and residents in emphasising the importance of the following in the Forbes Community Plan 2027:

- Improving safety - reduction of crime, drug usage, domestic violence
- Protecting and maintaining the lake and river systems
- Improvement and maintenance of road infrastructure
- Increasing employment opportunities
- Ensuring affordable and accessible sporting and recreation opportunities
- Ensuring a positive population growth whilst retaining the strong sense of community
- Supporting Forbes and Parkes' regional strengths
- The importance of groups, organisations and volunteers to the community
- Ensuring accessible education training opportunities (TAFE)
- Increasing accessibility

The consultation also indicated new or reviewed strategies in relation to:

- Tourism
- Branding
- Economic Development
- Targeting specific health services to the needs of young people, older people and the Aboriginal community
- Connecting groups and organisations in the Community
- Forbes Shire Council communication with the Community (including villages in the Shire)
- Crime and community safety (including proactively securing a 24/7 Police presence)
- Sport and recreation upgrades and ensuring affordability across all sectors

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



What this document will show

The strategies that Council will implement to achieve the aspirations, objectives and needs identified through the consultation process, strategies. The actions and activities specific to each strategy are detailed. Some activities by their nature will have inputs from more than one area of Council.

How Council will demonstrate that it meets the targets of the Community Strategic Plan

Introduced in June 2012, Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) each local government area is required to have a community strategic plan under section 402 of the Local Government Act. The legislation requires each council in NSW to prepare:

- A 10 year Community Strategic Plan
- A 10 year Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan
- A 10 year Long Term Financial Plan
- A 4 year Workforce Plan
- A 4 year Delivery Program
- A 1 year Operational Plan
- Regular reports will be prepared to measure performance against these.

This integrated planning and reporting framework (IPR) is designed to:

- Strengthen the strategic focus of councils
- Ensure that council services, programs and actions are aligned to high level strategy
- Improve the integration of planning and reporting processes (in particular, across the
- 'Quadruple bottom line' of society/community, environment, economy and governance)
- Streamline reporting processes and thus reduce duplication

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



STRATEGIES

The identified key strategies have been grouped into the following five elements that reflect the main themes identified during the Community Engagement Workshops and from the Community Survey. These reflect Council's broad governance, reporting and operational structure.

OUR SOCIETY AND PLACES

Strengthen our vibrant society that makes up the Forbes Shire and provide places that enhance liveability and equity

STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Build a diverse community |
| 2 | Create community opportunities |
| 3 | Enhance health and wellbeing |
| 4 | Increase community safety |

OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our community's diverse needs are met for living, working and learning and the economic drivers of the Shire are enhanced

STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 5 | Agribusiness Strategy |
| 6 | Manufacturing Industry Strategy |
| 7 | Wholesale and Retail Strategy |
| 8 | Visitor Economy |
| 9 | Development of Skills and Technology |
| 10 | Contribute to Regional Growth |

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our stunning rural, residential and industrial environments remain healthy, sustained and attractive for future generations

STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 11 | Natural Environment Strategy |
| 12 | Built Environment Strategy |
| 13 | Waste and Recycling Strategy |
| 14 | Controls and Compliance |

OUR LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Our community participates in decision-making, is well informed and our leadership is responsive, builds partnerships and plans for the future needs of the Forbes Shire

STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 15 | Financial sustainability |
| 16 | Transparent budgeting and decision making |
| 17 | Council is the employer of choice |
| 18 | Communications Strategy |

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Our infrastructure is built and maintained to connect people and places, remains resilient and meets the future needs of the Forbes Shire

STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 19 | Infrastructure for Transport Strategy |
| 20 | Local Utilities Strategy |
| 21 | Council Buildings and Facilities |
| 22 | Open Space Strategy |
| 23 | Asset Management Strategy |

OUR SOCIETY AND PLACES

Strengthen the vibrant society that makes up the Forbes Shire and provide places that enhance liveability and equity.

Committee – Community and Places S355 Committee

Responsible Department – General Manager

1. BUILD A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

- 1.1 Plan activities for the growing aged population
- 1.2 Enhance public transport options throughout the Shire
- 1.3 Support and recognise volunteers and their organisations in the Shire
- 1.4 Sustain and preserve the heritage of the Wiradjuri people
- 1.5 Provide support to community funded cultural and wellbeing activities and events
- 1.6 Build a culture of respect for diversity and differences
- 1.7 Engage and encourage the disadvantaged members of the Forbes community by supporting the work of regional government agencies and NGOs
- 1.8 Foster and provide unique cultural experiences of Forbes through the performing arts and the visual arts

2. CREATE COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Provide a range of community entertainment activities including activities for youth, seniors and people with disabilities
- 2.2 Enhance the capacity of community organisations and sporting groups to access external grants and funding opportunities
- 2.3 Council-provided grants and in-kind support is efficiently and equitably distributed to support the efforts and activities of community organisations and sporting groups
- 2.4 Foster and support volunteerism within the community
- 2.5 Strengthen community pride through nominations for honours and awards and the annual program of local recognition
- 2.6 Provide the opportunity for a Youth Council in Forbes
- 2.7 Facilitate access to new communication networks in Australia's digital economy
- 2.8 Maintain a current housing strategy to support a range of affordable, accessible and adaptable housing to suit the needs of the community

3. ENHANCE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 3.1 Operate Jemalong Regional Education Centre for visiting students and professionals
- 3.2 Support the continuity of health services from the public and private sector
- 3.3 Influence the maintenance of existing levels of health, emergency and wellbeing services in Forbes
- 3.4 Increase the focus on the delivery of mental health services
- 3.5 Ensure the Forbes Library is a cultural, recreational and learning centre for the community
- 3.6 Ensure the Forbes Olympic Pool is accessible for, and provides benefits to, the whole community
- 3.7 Encourage collaboration and communication between service providers
- 3.8 Provide support for employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- 3.9 Increase awareness and participation in education
- 3.10 Manage and sustain the environs of Lake Forbes to provide a beautiful public amenity
- 3.11 Parks and gardens are maintained and enhanced
- 3.12 Maintain public health inspection and licensing program and compliance

4. INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 4.1 Lobby for a greater police presence in Forbes
- 4.2 Council supports community safety initiatives
- 4.3 Participate in the Forbes/Parkes/Lachlan Road safety program
- 4.4 Participate in the Community Drug Action Team and associated projects
- 4.5 Effectively respond to disasters, emergency situations and provide effective relief measures

OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our community's diverse needs are met for living, working and learning and the economic drivers of the Shire are enhanced

Committee – Economic Development S355 Committee

Department responsible – General Manager

5. AGRIBUSINESS STRATEGY

- 5.1 Use the Central West/Orana Regional Plan to develop relevant initiatives that stimulate interest in Forbes as an agribusiness hub for Central NSW
- 5.2 Efficient commercial management of Central West Livestock Exchange
- 5.3 Identify barriers to agricultural operations, processing and storage facilities and seek solutions with government stakeholders
- 5.4 Influence the protection and enhancement of the agricultural supply chain to increase economic output and sustain employment in the Shire

6. MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY STRATEGY

- 6.1 Development and implementation of a business attraction program for Forbes industrial areas
- 6.2 Promotion of Forbes as a location for light manufacturing wholesale and retail businesses to diversify the industries and stimulate employment growth
- 6.3 Progress the sale and development of blocks of land in the Central West Industrial Park estate
- 6.4 Partner with local businesses to broaden market opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region for local products through high technology, improved freight, and co-operation with other LGAs
- 6.5 Engage and support mining companies and businesses supporting the mining industry to continue to prosper in the region

7. WHOLESALE AND RETAIL STRATEGY

- 7.1 Progress the sale of blocks and development of land in the Homemakers Centre and Landrace estates
- 7.2 Partner with, and provide opportunities to support, local business
- 7.3 Promote diverse retail and commercial opportunities
- 7.4 Create opportunities for warehousing, freight and distribution to Eastern Seaboard ports/airports
- 7.5 Promotion and sales at Forbes Aerodrome facility

8. VISITOR ECONOMY

- 8.1 Implement actions of the Forbes Tourism 2021 Plan
- 8.2 Provision of a 7-day-a-week professional information centre for the benefit of residents and visitors
- 8.3 Encourage and support the improvement of visitor accommodation in the Forbes Shire
- 8.4 Increase visitation to the Forbes Shire through branding of “amazing Forbes” as a destination
- 8.5 Promote Forbes as a regional arts hub through public art installations
- 8.6 Provide promotion and resources for tourism service providers
- 8.7 Provide promotion and support for major events
- 8.8 Develop opportunities for further recreational activities on Lake Forbes and Aquatic Area

9. DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY

- 9.1 Raise community awareness of TAFE programs and the importance of Forbes TAFE
- 9.2 Enhance links to other educational institutions and attract skilled teachers to Forbes
- 9.3 Provide a subsidised Innovations Centre to encourage new digital/creative industries
- 9.4 Provide opportunities to enhance people’s and business’s access to internet services throughout the Shire
- 9.5 Foster a skills development program

10. CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL GROWTH

- 10.1 Work in collaboration with regional stakeholders to build the Forbes Shire profile and maximise cooperative opportunities
- 10.2 Support and value add to regional strengths, for example: Parkes Regional Airport and Central West Livestock Exchange
- 10.3 Contribute to regional tourism initiatives and major events in the Central West
- 10.4 Ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing to stimulate growth in population
- 10.5 Support local business with improvements in infrastructure, training, workforce skills and technology
- 10.6 Build data and analysis of business and industry in the Forbes Shire

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our stunning rural, residential and industrial environments remain healthy, sustained and attractive for future generations

Committee – Environment S355 Committee

Department Responsible – Planning and Environmental Services

11. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

- 11.1 Ensure the conservation of the natural beauty and ecology of the shire for future generations and are attractions for visitors
- 11.2 Implement the concept plan for Forbes Wetlands (gum swamp and bird hide)
- 11.3 Reduce energy consumption through the implementation of plans to replace grid power with alternative energy technologies
- 11.4 Manage a program of weeds reduction
- 11.5 Foster learning about and celebrate the Shire's natural resources
- 11.6 Manage environmental opportunities and challenges

12. BUILT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

- 12.1 Implement a plan for the improvement, beautification and revitalisation of the Forbes CBD
- 12.2 Stimulate the conservation of important heritage assets of Forbes Shire
- 12.3 Sustainable land use, planning and development

13. WASTE AND RECYCLING STRATEGY

- 13.1 Implement the Rural Landfill Plan
- 13.2 Waste minimisation and re-use framework

14. CONTROLS AND COMPLIANCE

- 14.1 Conduct principal certifying authority functions in the Shire
- 14.2 Ensure best practice planning controls and building compliance
- 14.3 Ensure best practice public and environmental health controls
- 14.4 Stray animals and illegally-kept animals are not allowed to become a nuisance to the community

OUR LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Our community participates in decision-making, is well informed and our leadership is responsive, builds partnerships and plans for the future needs of the Forbes Shire

Committee – Leadership S355 Committee

Department Responsible – General Manager

15. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 15.1 Review and develop a complete Asset Management Strategy, System and Program ensuring its full integration with the Long Term Financial Plan
- 15.2 Develop and implement full procurement model, process, policy and procedures including contract management resulting in streamlined processes, improved probity and savings on procured items
- 15.3 External grants and funding are sourced for identified projects and initiatives
- 15.4 Detailed project plans and designs are developed and approved before any major or complex activity or work commences
- 15.5 Fully implement Council's Enterprise Risk Management program

16. TRANSPARENT BUDGETING AND DECISION MAKING

- 16.1 Provide leadership through ethical, accountable and legislative decision-making processes
- 16.2 Optimise council revenue streams and assets
- 16.3 Community participation in the Community Strategic Plan is reflected in Council's budget

17. COUNCIL IS THE EMPLOYEE OF CHOICE

- 17.1 Implement full WHS Management System including reporting and monitoring
- 17.2 Build capabilities about our workforce plan
- 17.3 Develop our people
- 17.4 Implement the recommendations arising from the functional review of Council's service and process review and the staged review itself to continually improve our service

18. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- 18.1 Engage with outlying residents
- 18.2 Partner with providers of emergency services to ensure an appropriate level of response to community emergencies
- 18.3 Provide opportunities for the community to contribute to Council's decision making and be informed of Council's activities
- 18.4 Ensure a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to all of Council communications with the community

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



- 18.5 **Build strong, effective and productive alliances and partnerships with community organisations, state and federal governments**
- 18.6 **Identification of opportunities and advocacy for the advancement of Forbes**

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Our infrastructure is built and maintained to connect people and places, remains resilient and meets the future needs of the Forbes Shire

Committee – Infrastructure S355 Committee

Department Responsible – Engineering and Technical Services

19. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TRANSPORT STRATEGY

- 19.1 Support activities that ensure the Newell Highway remains open at all times
- 19.2 Maintenance of local, regional and state roads and bridges in line with Council's Asset Management Plan
- 19.3 Improve accessibility of streets and buildings for the mobility impaired
- 19.4 Provide and maintain footpaths, cycle ways and kerb and guttering

20. LOCAL UTILITIES STRATEGY

- 20.1 Manage water assets in line with best practice standards
- 20.2 Manage sewer assets in line with best practice standards
- 20.3 Manage stormwater assets in line with best practice standards

21. COUNCIL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

- 21.1 Manage and maintain community and sporting built facilities for the benefit of the community
- 21.2 Efficiently manage and maintain Council's buildings and special-purpose facilities
- 21.3 Efficiently manage and maintain Council's plant and equipment
- 21.4 Manage public liability and risks associated with public infrastructure
- 21.7 Forbes Cemetery is managed and maintained

22. OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

- 22.1 Provide and maintain a range of community recreation facilities
- 22.2 Ensure public places are clean and well-maintained
- 22.3 Crown Land and Reserves management
- 22.4 Enhance and expand sporting opportunities

23. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 23.1 Maintain a comprehensive asset management capability framework
- 23.2 Continue to engage with the community in relation to acceptable service level for all public assets