

HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL

STATE OF OUR CITY REPORT 2021-2024

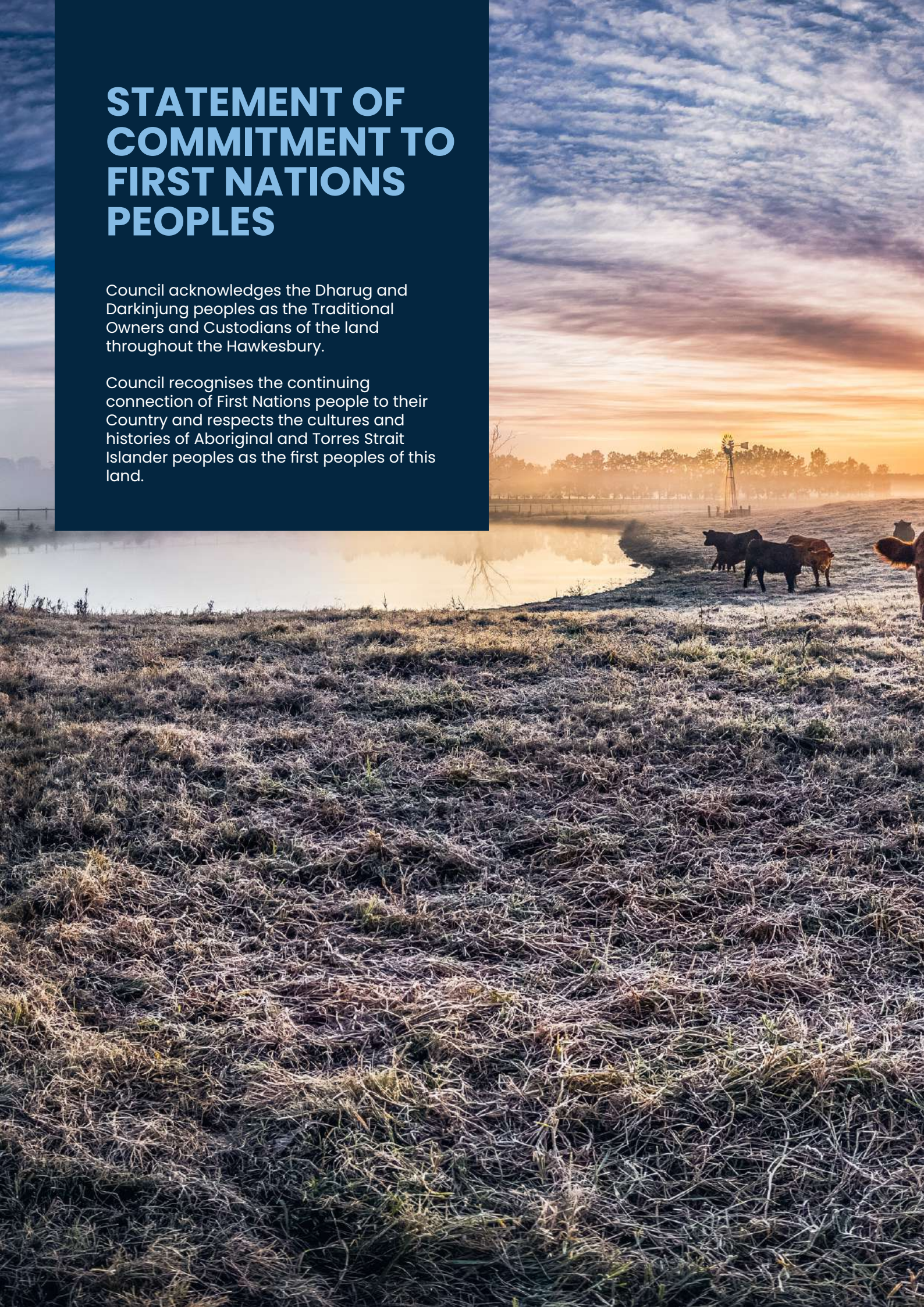


www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Council acknowledges the Dharug and Darkinjung peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land throughout the Hawkesbury.

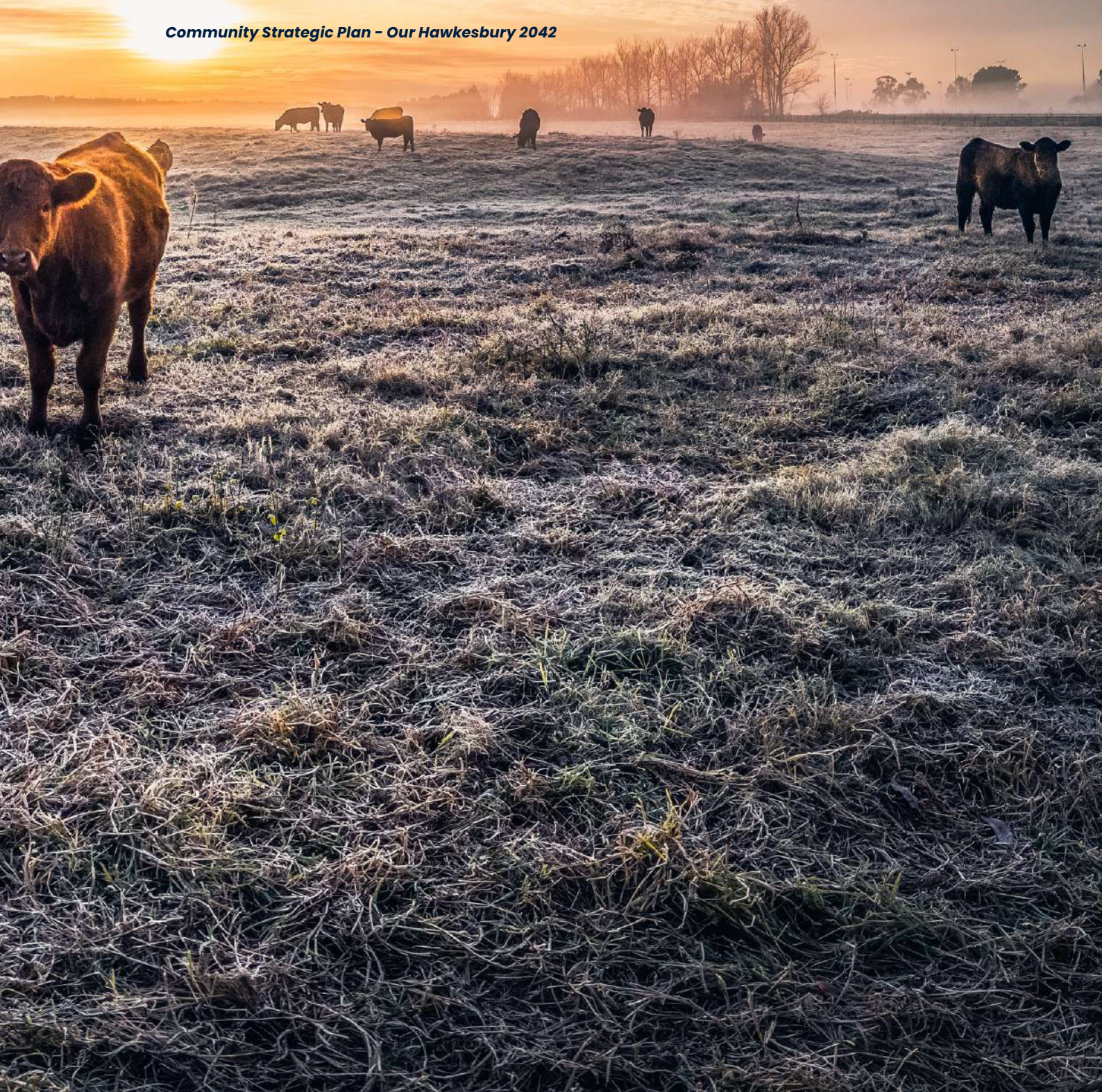
Council recognises the continuing connection of First Nations people to their Country and respects the cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this land.



OUR COMMUNITY'S VISION

We see the Hawkesbury as a vibrant and collaborative community living in harmony with our history and environment, whilst valuing our diversity, striving for innovation, a strong economy and retaining our lifestyle and identity.

Community Strategic Plan – Our Hawkesbury 2042





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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

I am proud to present Hawkesbury's State of our City Report for 2021-2024, an update on our progress towards the goals set out in the Community Strategic Plan: Our Hawkesbury 2042. Our Community Strategic Plan is the foundation for everything Council does, from daily services like waste collection, our libraries and looking after our roads, to planning and advocating for the long-term future of our area.

This report ensures we remain accountable to our community and provides valuable insights for our new Councillors as we work together to tackle our challenges and build on our successes together.

Over the past three years, we have seen positive progress in several areas. Our local economy is strengthening, with more businesses opening and residents choosing to work locally. At the same time, we've taken steps to make the Hawkesbury more sustainable, including reducing carbon emissions, investing in sustainable asset management and encouraging our community to do the same.

The past few years have tested our resilience as a community, particularly with the devastating floods that have impacted so many of us. Recovery is ongoing, and Council is focused on rebuilding and supporting our residents as we strengthen our preparedness for future challenges. Together with State and Federal Governments, our incredible local organisations, and our amazing community we have come together to build back even better.

We have engaged and listened to our community and our infrastructure, including roads, building and facilities as well as effectively managing the growth of our region are of the utmost importance. Key projects Council has delivered include the restoration of flood-affected roads, bridges, and public spaces, as well as new and improved infrastructure that supports community resilience.

Looking ahead, we're committed to working with our partners to revitalise local town centres, improve essential services, and provide more opportunities for residents and businesses to engage with Council. These partnerships are at the heart of everything we do, and I'm deeply grateful to all the organisations we continue to work with to deliver the community's vision for the Hawkesbury.

The Hawkesbury is a special place to live, and with your input and the dedication of our new Councillors, we'll continue to improve local services, programs, and infrastructure to benefit our community as we look forward to a strong future.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to what we can achieve together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Richardson".

Elizabeth Richardson
General Manager

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

ABOUT THIS REPORT

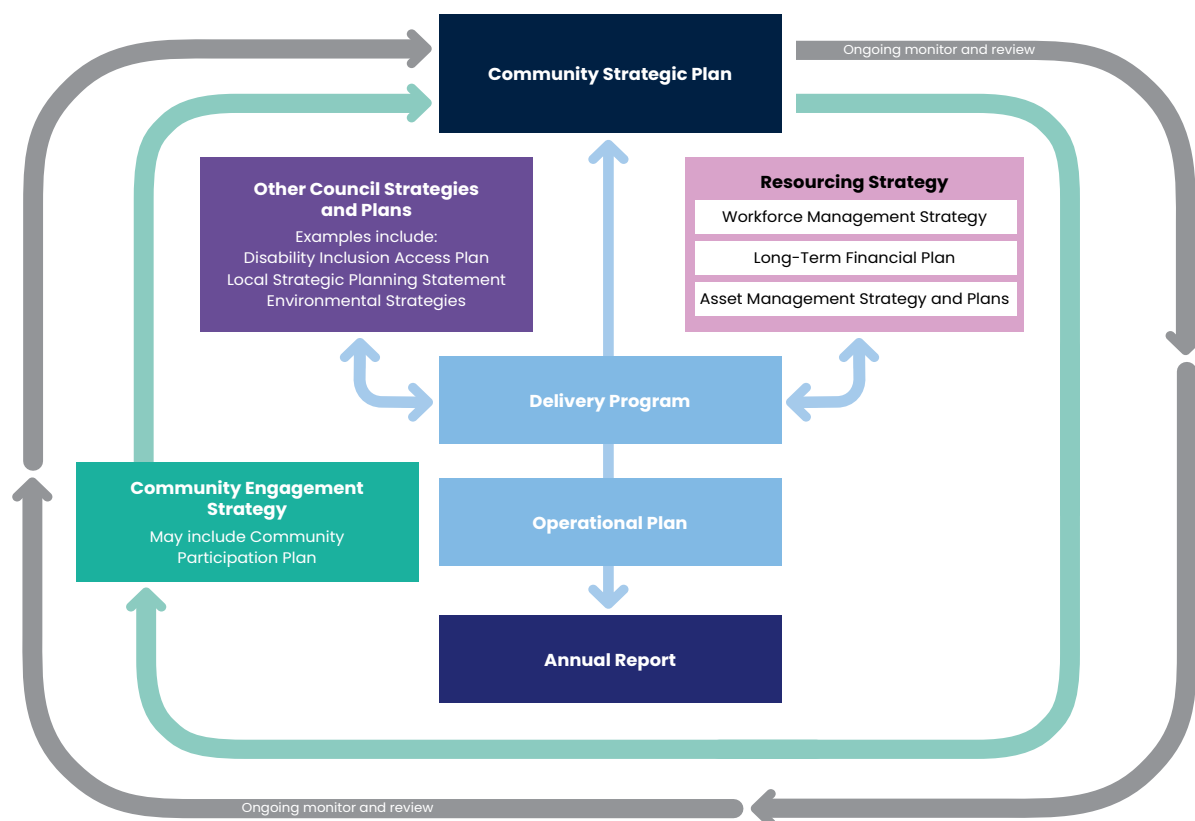
Under the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Government, Council is required to produce a report on its progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan during its term, as part of the Annual Report in the year that an election is held.

The Community Strategic Plan sits above all other Council Plans and Policies. Its purpose is to identify the Hawkesbury community's priorities and aspirations for the future.

The Annual Report provides a comprehensive review of the Council's performance over the past year, highlighting achievements and progress against the principal activities and key priorities of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It also contains key statutory reporting information on a wide range of Council's services.

The State of our City Report complements this by offering a broader perspective on the current conditions, recent trends, and challenges facing the region, assessing the effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan over the previous term, including its long term goals and indicators.

As 2023/2024 marks the final year of the current Council term, this State of our City Report provides an important review of the progress and effectiveness of our CSP: Our Hawkesbury 2042. It measures progress on the long term objectives, movement against key success indicators and will serve as an important resource for the incoming Council following the September 2024 local government elections.



Office of Local Government – Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework 2021

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Council conducts a Community Satisfaction Survey every two years to understand the movement of several success indicators under the Community Strategic Plan: Hawkesbury 2042 (CSP). These indicators relate to Council's overall service delivery and the way the community currently perceives the local area from a range of perspectives. The results also feed into future planning by informing service reviews, initiatives, resourcing and focus areas for future CSP's, Operational Plans and Delivery Programs.

The Satisfaction Survey is completed externally by a selected supplier, to ensure impartial and unbiased results as well as a significant sample (400 residents) of the community from which the results can be more accurately relied upon.

The objectives of the Survey are to:

- Engage with a significant portion of the community to conduct an in-depth survey of satisfaction.
- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council service performance and a range of attributes of the local area.
- Understand the main drivers of satisfaction and prioritise key focus areas.

Two surveys were completed during the previous Council term, in September 2021 and October 2023. Below is a summary of the key results, significant changes and major themes between the surveys. Common questions are asked in each survey to help determine trends over time. Further results are used throughout this report to help measure key success indicators.

Economic and Cost of Living Pressures

Questions around the affordability of rents/mortgages and affordable housing choices had the most significant changes between the 2021 and 2023 surveys. This is consistent with broader economic indicators in Greater Sydney and nationally that have shown an increase in cost of living pressures, particularly with housing affordability and goods and services inflation.

Survey Question	2021	2023
My current rent/mortgage is affordable	74%	53%
There are housing choices available to meet all the community's needs	41%	27%

Most Valued Aspects of the Hawkesbury

The surveys provide good insight into the most valued aspects of the Hawkesbury area to local residents. These themes have stayed relatively consistent between the surveys and match the current outcomes and themes of the CSP.

These themes are also consistent with a range of recent community feedback on a key projects delivered by Council, which highlights the importance of retaining and strengthening these themes in future plans and strategies.

1. Rural character with large open spaces

2. Access to natural settings and beautiful scenery

3. Sense of a friendly community

4. Rich history and heritage

Most Important Services

Questions about the most important services to the community help to understand community priorities and ensure that Council’s resources are allocated effectively. By capturing feedback on what matters most to the community—such as road maintenance, waste management, or preserving open spaces—the survey helps Council align its services and initiatives with residents’ needs and expectations.

The trends show consistent emphasis on emergency services and infrastructure, particularly roads. It is clear that the bushfires and floods have further highlighted the importance of these services for the community now and into the future. Council’s resourcing has shifted to focus heavily on flood recovery and community resilience in recent years and these themes will continue to be a future focus.

Most Important Services 2021

1. Road maintenance
2. Emergency services planning
3. Road safety
4. Kerbside waste and recycling services
5. Improved services and infrastructure

Most Important Services 2023

1. Emergency Services planning
2. Road maintenence
3. Kerbside waste and recycling services
4. Long term planning for the future
5. Healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways

Drivers of Overall Satisfaction

The surveys explored drivers of overall satisfaction to identify the key factors influencing how residents perceive Council’s performance. Understanding these drivers—such as quality of services, responsiveness to community needs, and communication—helps Council pinpoint what impacts community sentiment and prioritise improvements that matter most to residents.

Communication and engagement is the major theme in this area. Highlighting the importance of effective community consultation. Council has been investing heavily in this area by producing a new Communications and Engagement Startegy 2024-2028, increasing it’s use of online engagement methods and creating key information points including the online and face to face Community Hubs and Renewing Hawkesbury’s Roads online dashboard.

Satisfaction Drivers 2021

1. Level of communication Council has with the community
2. Road Maintenence
3. Provide transparent, accountable and respected leadership

Satisfaction Drivers 2023

1. Level of communication Council has with the community
2. The way Council consults with the community
3. Long term planning for the future

Long Term Planning for Hawkesbury’s Future

The survey results highlight the critical need for effective future planning to address the community’s priorities, including preserving the rural character of the Hawkesbury, maintaining and improving local roads, providing high-quality waste management, and enhancing parks and open spaces.

These themes reflect the community’s desire for a balance between preserving the area’s unique identity and supporting growth, economic development and sustainability.

By understanding these priorities and the drivers of overall satisfaction, Council can develop a revised Community Strategic Plan for the community that aligns community values, address pressing concerns, and ensures that resources are sustainably allocated to meet future challenges and opportunities.

HOW THE HAWKESBURY HAS CHANGED



Population

2017
66,708

2021
67,605

2023
68,156



Dwellings

2011
22,462

2016
22,831

2021
24,484



Gross Regional
Product

2011
**\$3.74
Billion**

2016
**\$4.01
Billion**

2021
**\$4.53
Billion**



Number of Businesses

2011
6,648

2016
7,181

2023
7,597



Number of Jobs

2011
27,223

2021
27,620

2023
31,424



Tourist Visits
(Domestic)

2010/11
824,587

2015/16
1,169,591

2022/23
1,456,180

MAJOR EVENTS AND IMPACTS

Flooding Events

Between 2021 and 2024, the Hawkesbury region faced severe flooding, most notably in March 2021 and March and July 2022, the largest in recent decades. These events caused widespread damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, displacing residents and testing community resilience. The April and June 2024 floods further emphasised the need for robust disaster preparedness and response.

In response, Council prioritised floodplain risk management, advocacy for support and funding and improving community preparedness, connection and communication. Significant initiatives included the reconstruction of Greens Road, Lower Portland, the Upper Colo Bridge and the development of strengthened partnerships with emergency services including the Disaster and Emergency Dashboard to provide real-time updates during emergencies. These efforts, combined with partnerships with state and federal governments, local community groups and our incredibly resilient residents, have shown that these challenges can be overcome.

Bushfires and Environmental Challenges

Bushfires remained a notable concern, with the lingering impacts of the 2019–2020 Black Summer bushfires still evident. Recovery efforts focused on clean up, hazard reduction strategies, financial support and providing mental health services to affected residents.

Council's longer term sustainability initiatives include programs to reduce carbon emissions, expand renewable energy adoption, and enhance disaster preparedness through community hubs and educational campaigns.

As the Hawkesbury Local Government Area is made up of more than 70% National Parks and expansive natural areas, it is likely that the region will face these challenges in the future, highlighting the importance of preparedness and proactive mitigation strategies.

Economic and Social Impacts

The economic and social impacts of natural disasters were significant, with many local businesses facing closures or disruptions, particularly in flood-affected areas. Council's recovery efforts included business support initiatives and revitalisation projects aimed at stimulating the local economy. Programs including the establishment of the Community Hubs provided vital spaces for support services and recovery activities. The economy has improved significantly over the last year, showing positive signs of recovery.

Socially, the cumulative toll of disasters highlighted the need for stronger community networks and mental health services. Council is working with local organisations and government to deliver targeted programs that build resilience and connection.

Infrastructure Impacts and Initiatives

Hawkesbury's infrastructure endured significant damage from the repeated disasters, particularly roads, bridges, and public facilities. Flooding highlighted the vulnerabilities of key transport routes, including flood evacuation roads. Council prioritised the repair and upgrade of this infrastructure in recent years, actively pursuing State and Federal Government recovery grants and securing vital funding to accelerate recovery efforts.

Council implemented infrastructure upgrades designed to withstand future disasters, including the Upper Colo Bridge, and will continue to focus on these key projects. Council's Asset Management Strategy has also been updated, targeting at significantly reducing asset renewal backlogs and prioritising high quality future focused upgrades.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN: OUR HAWKESBURY 2042

The Community Strategic Plan: Our Hawkesbury 2042 (CSP) is the key plan for our community, setting out the long term vision for the region.

“We see the Hawkesbury as a vibrant and collaborative community living in harmony with our history and environment, whilst valuing our diversity, striving for innovation, a strong economy and retaining our lifestyle and identity.”

It captures the priorities, aspirations, and challenges identified by residents and stakeholders, forming a shared roadmap for the next twenty years.

Developed in consultation with the community, the CSP focuses on four Community Outcomes that cover important themes including economic development, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, and social well-being.

It ensures that Council’s actions align with the community’s expectations and provides a framework for collaborative efforts with state and federal governments, local organisations, community groups and our residents.

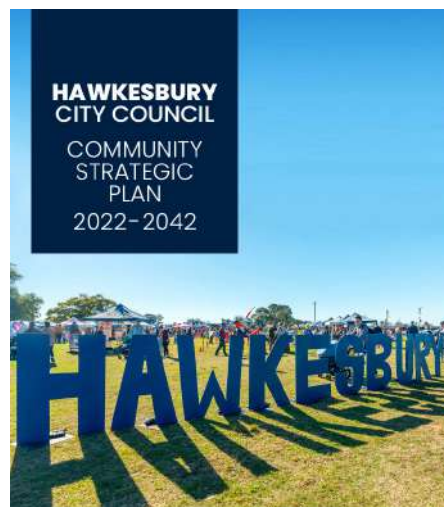
COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

1. Great Place to Live

2. Protected Environment and Valued History

3. Strong Economy

4. Reliable Council



MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR HAWKESBURY 2042

The State of our City Report is a crucial tool for assessing the implementation of the CSP for the Hawkesbury Local Government Area. This report provides analysis of progress made towards achieving the long term objectives and success indicators set out in the CSP over the previous term of Council from 2021-2024. It helps ensure that Council remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community and has effective measures in place to monitor trends and changes.

Each section of the report is built around evaluating how well the objectives within the CSP have been met. By using key data, community feedback, and performance indicators, the report details Council's efforts for each objective and identifies areas where further focus is needed. The report focuses on high level strategic initiatives, demonstrating partnerships and key focus areas.

For each of the four outcomes identified in the CSP, progress is also measured against the specific success indicators, highlighting major changes, and any gaps that need to be considered.

As Council prepares to update the CSP to Our Hawkesbury 2045, the report serves as a link between the current and future terms of Council. It not only reviews the effectiveness of past strategies but also sets a foundation for new priorities by tracking economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Importantly, while Council plays a custodial role in developing and maintaining the CSP, the implementation of its long term objectives involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including state agencies, a range of community groups and local residents.

Key to the development of Our Hawkesbury 2045, will be a focus on building a community indicator model which comprehensively tracks economic, social and environmental outcomes for the region.

In the following sections, the report assesses each outcome of the CSP using the established long term objectives and success indicators. This structured approach provides a clear picture of the Hawkesbury's progress towards achieving its vision for Hawkesbury by 2042.



COMMUNITY OUTCOME 1

GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

INTENT

Council will continue to partner with the community and key service providers to deliver outcomes which support a connected, healthy and inclusive Hawkesbury.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

1.1 Enable a shared responsibility for community resilience, community safety and disaster management

Council made significant progress in enhancing community resilience, safety, and disaster management through strategic partnerships. Key achievements include securing funding and support for a new Fire Control Centre at Wilberforce to improve emergency response coordination by co-locating the NSW State Emergency Services, NSW Rural Fire Service, and an emergency operations centre.

Council prioritised community engagement through initiatives including the Bright Ideas to Build Resilience project, showcasing locally led efforts to strengthen community connections. Collaborations with the NSW Government advanced the Hawkesbury-Nepean Flood Risk Management Study and established Community Hubs to provide social support and health and wellbeing resources.

The Prepared, Informed and Ready Program has equipped residents with resources for emergency planning, supported by a Disaster and Emergency Dashboard offering real-time updates. These initiatives highlight the Council's commitment to fostering a resilient, well-prepared community through collaborative efforts.

1.2 Encourage and enable our community to participate in a healthy lifestyle

Council promoted healthy lifestyles through partnerships, particularly as part of the Western Sydney Health Alliance. This collaboration has focused on increasing physical activity and access to healthy food for residents.

Council also enhanced local recreational infrastructure, upgrading parks and walking trails. Initiatives like community fitness classes through the Community Hubs and health workshops encouraged active living, while support for local farmers' markets and local food through the Savour the Flavour event provided access to fresh produce and local cuisine.

Public health campaigns, in collaboration with NSW health districts as well as water safety campaigns provided educational resources to empower residents to lead healthier lives, reflecting Council's commitment to a health-conscious community.

1.3 Increase the range of local partnerships and plan for the future

Council expanded and strengthened its network of partnerships to address critical challenges. As a member of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Council's, Council collaborated with our neighbours to advocate for regional infrastructure and sustainability priorities. It also contributed to the Western Parkland City initiatives to drive sustainability and economic growth.

Locally, Council formed alliances with community groups and educational institutions to enhance service delivery in areas like cultural development and environmental conservation. A strong focus was placed on advocacy for flood and bushfire recovery, securing funding and support for infrastructure repairs and community resilience programs.

Increased collaboration with emergency services resulted in improved disaster preparedness and mitigation measures, reflecting the Council's proactive approach to safeguarding the community.

1.4 Facilitate the delivery of infrastructure through relevant agencies for Council's own works

Council facilitated infrastructure projects through significant advocacy to State and Federal Governments. Notable projects included the reconstruction of Upper Colo Bridge and Greens Road in Lower Portland, both of which were severely damaged in floods. These efforts focused on improving resilience against future disasters.

In sports infrastructure, collaboration with the Hawkesbury Sports Council enabled upgrades to fields and amenities, enhancing community access. Council also secured funding for significant upgrades through Disaster Recovery and Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants projects.

1.5 Provide the right places and spaces to serve our community

Council has enhanced community spaces through initiatives like the Liveability Program, revitalising town centres in Richmond, South Windsor, and Windsor. This includes ongoing upgrades to streetscapes, pedestrian access, and tree planting to boost local economies.

Council also secured grants under the Greening Our City Program to establish green boulevards, aligning with sustainability goals. Upgrades to recreational facilities and community hubs aimed to build social interaction and our major events program used our spaces to celebrate our culture.

Our Libraries, Museum and Gallery continued to be places for people to meet and explore our rich culture, hosting award winning exhibitions and delivering programs to support a range of interests and abilities.

1.6 Build on a sense of community and wellbeing

Council focused on strengthening community well-being through initiatives such as the Community Hubs and Community Sponsorship Program, supporting local groups and encouraging a strong sense of community.

Support for and Council events to promote diversity and inclusion included Hope Walk for Suicide Prevention with Hope4U Foundation, NAIDOC Week, National Day of Healing, 16 Days of Activism and YouthFest. These targeted programs reflect the Council's dedication to a connected, vibrant community.

1.7 Encourage broad and rich celebration of our local culture and significant heritage

Council promoted cultural celebration through events like Hawkesbury Fest and Australia Day on the Hawkesbury which continue to grow every year. Council also set out to deliver a new Cultural Plan which will guide future initiatives.

Efforts to restore heritage buildings in Windsor and Richmond preserved the area's architectural legacy. The Hawkesbury Timber Slab Barns Study documented historic barns to develop conservation strategies.

Council's focus on Aboriginal culture expanded with NAIDOC Week and events, alongside the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan and exhibitions at the Museum and Gallery including Dyarubbin, which highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the Dharug people along the Hawkesbury River and the Bangadji Nawi (Making a Canoe) project.

Council's Heritage Advisory Committee and free Heritage Advisory Service support the community to protect these important artifacts of our history. These initiatives demonstrate the Council's commitment to celebrating and preserving the region's rich cultural heritage for future generations.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

Success Indicator(s)	2021–2024 Data	Analysis						
More of us will use public transport, walk or cycle for journeys, rather than our personal cars	ABS Census Q:Method of Travel to Work Car 2016: 73% 2021: 53.6% Public Transport 2016: 5.4% 2021: 1.3% Walk 2016: 5.4% 2021: 1.3% 2024 Active Transport Survey Q:Primary method of transport <table> <tr> <th>Car</th><th>Walk</th><th>Cycle</th></tr> <tr> <td>87%</td><td>4%</td><td>1%</td></tr> </table>	Car	Walk	Cycle	87%	4%	1%	The Hawkesbury is a heavily car dependent region, due to it's expansive geographic range and limited public transport options. Car travel still dominates transport modes. Notably there has been significant decrease in car usage and also public transport usage, likely linked to increases in work from home (25.3% from 5.4%, between 2016 and 2021.) Council has recently developed the 2024 Active Transport Plan to actively encourage and seek investment for improved pedestrian and cycle connections, and is investing in key linkage projects through the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program.
Car	Walk	Cycle						
87%	4%	1%						
Our recreational, leisure and cultural facilities will be well-used and well-regarded and We will enjoy and use our local sporting, leisure and cultural facilities as they meet our needs	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with Parks Playgrounds and Reserves 2021: 3.56 2023: 3.59 Q: Importance of parks playgrounds and reserves 2021: 4.31 2023: 4.29 Q: Satisfaction with public swimming pools 2021: 3.74 2023: 3.79 Q: Importance of public swimming pools 2021: 3.92 2023: 4.01 Q: Satisfaction with sporting and recreation facilities 2021: 3.67 2023: 3.61 Q: Importance of sporting and recreation facilities 2021: 4.24 2023: 4.21	The Oasis Aquatic and Fitness Centre and Richmond Swimming Centre are well utilised and highly valued community leisure facilities. Council is planning significant upgrades to these facilities under the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program. The recreational facilities including parks, playgrounds and sporting fields are seen as incredibly important to our residents and satisfaction has remained steady between the recent satisfaction surveys. Council has also prioritised several recreational projects as part of the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Programs to build modern amenities and regional facilities for residents. The partnership and support of the Hawkesbury Sports Council also demonstrates Council's focus on supporting sport and active lifestyles across the region.						

Data Sets:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021
- Hawkesbury Community Satisfaction Survey 2021 and 2023
- Hawkesbury Liveability Census Survey 2023
- Hawkesbury Active Transport Strategy 2024

Success Indicator	2021–2024 Data	Analysis
Our infrastructure will service our community in the most effective and sustainable ways	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with infrastructure 2021: 3.12 2023: 2.95	The effects of the recent floods on Hawkesbury's infrastructure cannot be understated. Council has prioritised infrastructure through significantly expanded capital works programs in recent years, focused heavily on road related flood recovery projects. It has also invested heavily in asset management practices that prioritise longevity and sustainability as well as effectively communicating with residents as these ongoing upgrades and works as they have occurred.
We will have a diverse community where everyone is respected and feels welcome	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Quality of life 2021: N/A 2023: 4.97 Q: I feel safe in my local neighbourhood 2021: 88% 2023: 84% Q: Satisfaction with programs for people from diverse cultures (including Indigenous Australians) 2021: 3.27 2023: 3.42	Hawkesbury's sense of community is noted as the second most valued aspect about living in the Hawkesbury by residents in the recent satisfaction survey. This is supported by very high quality of life and safety ratings. There is growing demographic and cultural diversity within the Hawkesbury region, highlighting the need for effective service planning to cater for a wide range of needs. Initiatives such as the Reconciliation Action Plan, Child Safe Framework and Disability Inclusion Action Plan and a strong focus on Volunteer support demonstrate Council's commitment to promoting a Hawkesbury that is safe, friendly and welcoming for everyone. The results show an increasing satisfaction from residents from these programs.
We will like how our city looks and feels and we will be proud to live here	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with valuing and protecting the Hawkesbury's heritage areas and buildings 2021: 3.15 2023: 3.52 Q: Satisfaction with helping to create thriving town centres 2021: 3.01 2023: 3.13 Liveability Census 2023 Q: Satisfaction with liveability in their local neighbourhood 2023: 75% Q: Liveability Priorities 2023: Public open and general spaces and walking, jogging, bike paths.	As noted above, the Hawkesbury community is extremely proud to live in the region and ensuring the area retains it's character is consistently mentioned by our community as a key priority. Liveability is rated as high with 75% satisfied with Liveability in their local neighbourhood. Council is supporting this through key heritage support projects and infrastructure improvements including the Liveability Program and 2024 Active Transport Strategy. Satisfaction in these areas has increased between the recent surveys.

COMMUNITY OUTCOME 2

PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT AND VALUED HISTORY

INTENT

Through leadership, stewardship, and education, ensure that our natural and historic built environments are protected and enhanced in a culturally sensitive ways for the current community and for future generations.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

2.1 Value, protect and enhance our historic built environment as well as our relationship to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history

Council has focused on preserving Hawkesbury's historic built environment and fostering connections to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history. Restoration of heritage-listed structures in Windsor and Richmond, supported by the Heritage Grants Program, has ensured these landmarks remain community assets. Council has also strengthened recognition of Aboriginal heritage through NAIDOC Week events, alongside developing a Reconciliation Action Plan to integrate Aboriginal history into community programs.

The Hawkesbury Timber Slab Barns Study has been crucial in documenting historic barns, preserving vital remnants of early rural life. These efforts highlight Council's commitment to valuing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories, ensuring the diverse cultural legacy is preserved.

2.2 Value, protect and enhance our natural land-based environment with an emphasis on using local resources and key partnerships

Council has prioritised the protection of natural land-based environments by collaborating with state and local partners. Key initiatives include tree-planting projects under the Greening Our City Program to enhance biodiversity and reduce urban heat. Support for our Buschcare and Nursery Volunteers continues as these groups provide vital community connections with our natural environment.

Council's approach extends to promoting sustainable land management on Council properties and encouraging local businesses to adopt regenerative practices. Council's Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan are being progressively updated to protect our natural features and local character.

2.3 Encourage and enable our community to embrace the waste management principles of reduce, reuse and recycle

Council adopted a comprehensive Waste Management Strategy, including a focus on the FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) transition to divert organic waste from landfill. This shift not only reduces waste but supports local composting efforts. The Beyond 2046 Waste Management Facility Strategy outlines a vision for future waste infrastructure, prioritising local resource recovery and sustainability.

Community engagement and education campaigns with schools and local residents have been key in educating residents on responsible waste management and recycling. Workshops, social media initiatives, and events have helped empower the community to embrace sustainable waste practices and Avoid, Reduce, Recycle and Reuse.

2.4 Encourage and enable our community to make more sustainable choices

Council has been dedicated to promoting sustainable choices through educational programs and incentives. Workshops on energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable living have helped residents reduce their environmental footprint. Promotion and education on rainwater tanks, solar panels, and energy-efficient appliances have encouraged sustainable practices.

Hawkesbury's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023-2033 was developed and adopted, to position Council as a leader in environmental sustainability and create a roadmap for key initiatives to combat climate change and effectively manage growth.

The Sustainable Hawkesbury campaign raised awareness on reducing single-use plastics and composting. Partnerships with schools and businesses facilitated clean-up events, tree-planting days, and sustainable gardening workshops, fostering a culture of sustainability across the community.

2.5 Value, protect and enhance our waterways and wetlands with an emphasis on using local resources and key partnerships

Council's efforts have focused on protecting waterways and wetlands through partnerships, including the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System Coastal Management Program that supports sustainable management of the river system, enhancing waterway health and resilience. The support of our Buschare volunteers helps to create local champions for these areas. Council's involvement with the Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) also assists with effective weed management.

Nutrient offset programs, including riparian restoration and constructed wetlands, have improved water quality by reducing nutrient runoff. Implementing smart sensor technology to minimise and eliminate water infiltration in sewer treatment infrastructure has resulted in improved asset maintenance, reduced emissions, cost savings and improved environmental outcomes. These initiatives demonstrate Council's commitment to maintaining the ecological integrity of the region's waterways.

2.6 Achieve net zero emissions targets

Council has made significant strides toward achieving net zero emissions by adopting a range of targeted strategies. In 2021, Council adopted the Net Zero Emissions and Water Efficiency Strategy, setting ambitious targets for reducing corporate and community emissions by 2030. This was further supported by the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

A key initiative has been Council's participation in a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), allowing Council to procure 90% renewable electricity for its operations. This Agreement significantly reduces Council's carbon footprint and is a crucial step toward achieving its net zero targets.

Additionally, the transition to energy-efficient LED street lighting across the region, in collaboration with WSROC, has led to substantial energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Council's Solar Program has also transformed several of its key buildings, including the Deerubbin Centre and Wastewater Treatment Facilities by offsetting power usage with solar unit installations.



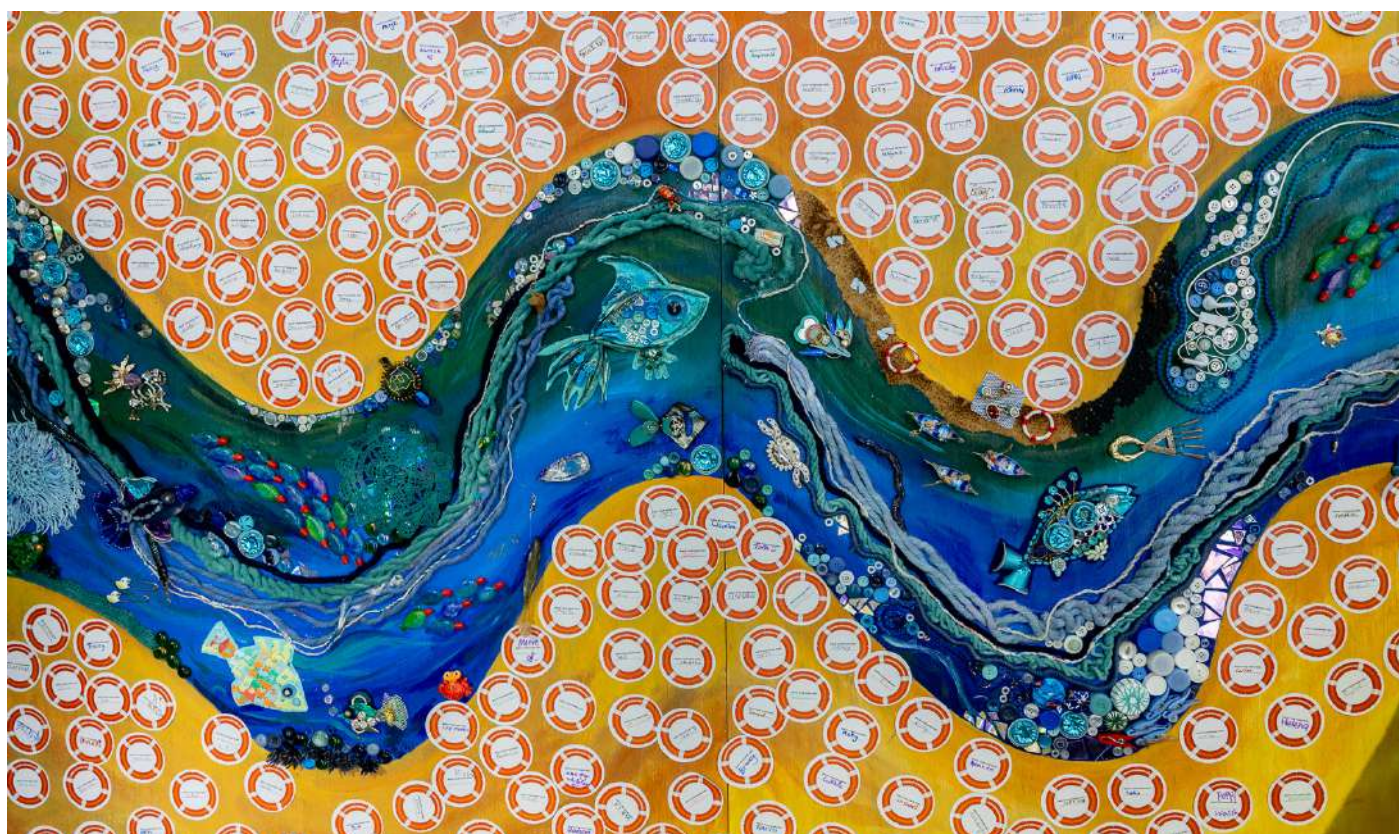
SUCCESS INDICATORS

Success Indicator(s)	2021–2024 Data	Analysis
We value our historic built environments and take active steps to protect and enhance them	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with valuing and protecting the Hawkesbury's heritage areas and buildings 2021: 3.15 2023: 3.52	The protection of the historical aspects of the Hawkesbury region is a recurring theme for the community and consistently noted on engagement activities for key projects across the Hawkesbury. Satisfaction with these services has increased between the surveys, demonstrating Council's initiatives are helping to protect and improve these important artefacts. Key projects are currently underway including the Timber Slab Barns Study, which will be a significant milestone in heritage protection.
We value our waterways and wetlands and our land-based natural environments and take active steps to protect and enhance them.	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with a healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways 2021: 3.06 2023: 3.01 Q: Importance of a healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways 2021: 4.62 2023: 4.54 Q: Satisfaction with protecting bushland, open space, and natural habitats 2021: 3.34 2023: 3.40 Q: Importance of protecting bushland, open space, and natural habitats 2021: 4.42 2023: 4.36 Water Quality Q: Windsor Water Quality 2018/19: D 2021/2022: C Co2 Emmissions Hawkesbury Local Government Area 2016/17: 810,940 tonnes 2020/21: 833,686 tonnes 2022/23: 771,054 tonnes	Our natural areas and the Hawkesbury River are the cornerstone of the region's value. These areas attract significant tourism and are highly valued by our residents. The satisfaction with initiatives and the protection of these items has remained relatively steady across the recent satisfaction surveys. Importance continues to be extremely high, highlighting the significance of prioritising initiatives in this area to our community. Council is developing it's data capabilities to assist in monitoring and reporting on these important themes. Total Co2 emmissions in the region have decreased significantly in recent years, likely due to the uptake of more sustainable practices by residents and businesses. This is a key opportunity and increasing area of focus.

Success Indicator(s)	2021-2024 Data	Analysis
We value our waterways and wetlands and our land-based natural environments and take active steps to protect and enhance them. (continued)	Commercial and Industrial Waste Hawkesbury Local Government Area 2016/17: 54,655 tonnes 2020/21: 59,748 tonnes 2022/23: 64,265 tonnes Residential Waste Hawkesbury Local Government Area 2016/17: 22,175 tonnes 2020/21: 22,398 tonnes 2022/23: 23,444 tonnes Recycling Hawkesbury Local Government Area 2016/17: 56,842 tonnes 2020/21: 63,147 tonnes 2022/23: 66,169 tonnes	Commercial and Industrial Waste has grown the fastest, with a 17.6% increase over the six-year period. Recycling has also seen significant growth at 16.4%, almost keeping pace with the increase in commercial waste. Residential Waste has grown at a much slower rate, with only a 5.7% increase, suggesting better waste management or stable residential waste generation despite population growth. The data shows that while recycling efforts have kept up with the increase in commercial waste, residential waste has grown at a significantly slower pace. This indicates that while commercial sectors are generating more waste, residential waste management strategies may be more effective, potentially due to increased awareness or waste reduction initiatives. However, the near-parallel growth rates of commercial waste and recycling highlight the need for continued recycling programs to offset the rising levels of commercial and industrial waste.

Data Sets:

- Hawkesbury Community Satisfaction Survey 2021 and 2023
- Resilient Sydney Dashboard by Local Government Area
- Upper Hawkesbury River Water Quality Monitoring Program 2021 - 2022



COMMUNITY OUTCOME 3

STRONG ECONOMY

INTENT

Be a place that is vibrant, attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors, and which treasures and celebrates our shared history, environment, local economy and lifestyle.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

3.1 Creating an integrated and well-maintained transport system is an important local priority

Council has prioritised creating an integrated transport system with a focus on rebuilding flood resilient infrastructure. In response to flood damage, Council led the reconstruction of key roads such as Greens Road and Upper Colo Bridge, with several other major projects including Settlers Road and Gorricks Run under construction. These projects are designed to restore essential transport links while incorporating flood-resilient features, ensuring safer travel routes for residents in flood-prone areas.

Council is also utilising Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants to fund amenity upgrades, improve signage, and enhance pedestrian safety, including the Wayfinding and Signage Project, to help people get around and recognise our key centres as well as Rickaby's Creek and Kurrajong to Kurmond Cycleways. The Active Transport Strategy also aims to increase funding for pedestrian and cycle linkages.

3.2 Increase the range of local industry opportunities and provide effective support to continued growth

Council focused on expanding local industry opportunities and fostering sustainable economic growth. The Business Support Program offered workshops, networking, and advisory services to help small businesses adapt and grow. This initiative has empowered local entrepreneurs, driving innovation and resilience.

Council has also partnered with regional organisations to attract investment, sponsor events and leverage the Western Sydney City Deal and grant funding to enhance local amenities and transport links. These efforts have improved the region's appeal for new businesses and industries, particularly in agribusiness, tourism, and creative sectors which have seen strong growth in recent years.

3.3 Promote our community as the place to visit, work, and invest

Council promoted Hawkesbury as a prime destination for tourism, business, and investment. The Discover Hawkesbury campaign showcased the area's natural beauty, heritage, and community events, attracting visitors and boosting local businesses, particularly in hospitality and retail. The Visitor Information Centre provides a valuable resource for key information to promote and facilitate visitation.

To enhance the region's attractiveness for work and investment, Council has leveraged its strategic location within Western Sydney's growth corridor, promoting opportunities in agribusiness, creative industries, and sustainable tourism. Partnerships with the Western Sydney City Deal and regional business networks have further supported these efforts.

3.4 Support the revitalisation of our town centres and growth of our business community

Council focused on revitalising town centres to stimulate economic growth and enhance the vibrancy of business districts. The Western Parkland City Liveability Program enabled upgrades to streetscapes, pedestrian access, and green spaces in Richmond, and South Windsor, with Windsor currently underway, making these areas more inviting for both visitors and businesses.

Council's major events program, featuring highlights such as Hawkesbury Fest, Savour the Flavour, Light Up Windsor, and Australia Day on the Hawkesbury, plays a vital role in boosting the local economy. These signature events attract thousands of visitors to the region, providing significant support to local businesses, especially in

the hospitality, retail, and tourism sectors.

By celebrating the region's unique heritage, food, and community spirit, these events enhance the Hawkesbury's profile as a vibrant destination, encouraging repeat visits and increased spending. Additionally, the program fosters community pride and cohesion, creating opportunities for local vendors, artists, and performers to showcase their talents, thereby driving economic activity and strengthening the sense of local identity.

3.5 Celebrate our creativity and cultural expression

Council has championed creativity and cultural expression, recognising their importance to community well being. The Street Speak project brought together artists, youth, and residents to create vibrant street art that celebrates local stories, enhancing public spaces and fostering community pride.

Council has also been developing a comprehensive Cultural Plan to guide future investments in arts and heritage. This Plan, shaped by local stakeholders, will strengthen support for artists and cultural organisations, ensuring diverse creative opportunities for the community.

Ongoing support for local events, community sponsorship and volunteering, along with investments in the Regional Gallery and Regional Museum, have enriched cultural engagement while promoting Hawkesbury as a cultural destination.



SUCCESS INDICATORS

Success Indicator(s)	2021–2024 Data	Analysis
We are satisfied with the jobs, training and education opportunities available in the city	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with supporting training and career opportunities 2021: 3.22 2023: 3.16 Q: Importance of supporting training and career opportunities 2021: 4.09 2023: 4.18 Q: Satisfaction with promoting local employment opportunities 2021: 3.18 2023: 3.24 Q: Importance of promoting local employment opportunities 2021: 4.35 2023: 4.39 NIEIR 2024 Number of Local Jobs 2011: 27,223 2021: 27,620 2023: 31,424 ABS Census Q: Residential location of local workers by industry In the area 2021: 58.1%	Local jobs are very important to our community and Council's role as not only an employer, but economic enabler is also highlighted as having very high importance. Council's current workforce is made up of over 50% local employees, highlighting the passion of our residents and their desire to work not only locally, but for the betterment of the community and Hawkesbury region. This is similar to the broader region, with almost 60% of residents working locally in the Local Government Area. The number of local jobs spiked significantly between 2022 and 2023, spurred by the growth of Greater Sydney including infrastructure to support the new Western Sydney Airport as well as growth in both the tourism and agribusiness sectors. The University of Western Sydney and Richmond RAAF base continue to be significant educational and employment hubs for the region.
We have more businesses and industry established in the city, complementing those that have been here a long time	ABS Census Number of Local Businesses 2011: 6,648 2021: 7,181 2023: 7,597 Highest number of businesses by type 2023: Construction (28.4%), Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (9.4%) and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (8.6%)	The number of local businesses has been slowly yet steadily increasing throughout the last few years in the Hawkesbury, spurred by economic growth and infrastructure investment. Construction has grown significantly in recent years and is now the largest number of registered businesses, with transport and logistics and rental, hiring and real estate services also growing significantly. Continuing to support the local economy and local jobs is vitally important to the continued prosperity of the Hawkesbury.

Success Indicator(s)	2021–2024 Data	Analysis
The town centres of Windsor, Richmond and North Richmond have more residents and more diverse retail, cultural and service opportunities	ABS Census Windsor Estimated Population 2017: 1,923 2021: 1,938 2023: 1,959 Richmond Estimated Population 2017: 6,272 2021: 6,196 2023: 6,440 North Richmond Estimated Population 2017: 5,287 2021: 6,397 2023: 6,695	The three centres have experienced slow growth during this period. The populations of Windsor and Richmond have not experienced significant growth in recent years largely due to planning restrictions, heritage protections, and limited availability of developable land. Both towns are surrounded by flood prone areas and agricultural zones, which restrict large scale residential development. Additionally, heritage conservation efforts aim to preserve the historic character of these town centres, limiting the scope for high density housing projects. While there is some infill development and small scale housing expansion, the focus on maintaining the area's unique cultural and environmental features has contributed to slower population growth compared to more rapidly developing regions in Western Sydney. The Liveability and Events Program has aimed to improve the local amenity of these town centres and make them more attractive to new businesses.

Data Sets:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021
- Hawkesbury Community Satisfaction Survey 2021 and 2023
- National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2024.



COMMUNITY OUTCOME 4

RELIABLE COUNCIL

INTENT

Be a respected civic leader through consistent, transparent and engaged decision making the community can understand.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

4.1 Provide representative, responsive and accountable governance

Council strengthened its commitment to representative and accountable governance. A key focus was enhancing community consultation through face to face engagement, surveys and workshops, and Your Hawkesbury Your Say, ensuring residents had a meaningful voice in decision-making processes. By actively engaging with the community, Council aligned its actions with the needs and expectations of residents.

To further enhance transparency, Council upgraded its digital services, making it easier for residents to access information on Council meetings, financial reports, and project updates. This has empowered the community to stay informed and engaged with Council's work. Additionally, Councillors and staff participated in training programs that ensured alignment with best practices and several key policies, strategies and frameworks were updated and adopted.

4.2 Encourage an informed community

Council has prioritised creating an informed community by enhancing communication and engagement strategies. A comprehensive review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy demonstrated the need for more targeted outreach, ensuring information reaches all segments of the community effectively. The launch of the Renewing Our Roads portal provided real-time updates on roadworks, closures, and repairs, particularly during the flood recovery period, keeping residents informed of disruptions and progress.

Further efforts included the Prepared, Informed, Ready Disaster Dashboard, which offers real-time alerts on weather conditions and emergencies, helping residents stay prepared. Additionally, the expansion of the Your Hawkesbury Your Say platform has enabled ongoing consultations and feedback opportunities, ensuring that the community remains engaged in decision-making processes.

4.3 Build strong financial sustainability for now and future generations

Council has focused on achieving long-term financial sustainability through the development of a robust Resourcing Strategy under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. The Strategy includes a Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure sustainable budgeting and resource allocation, adapting to changing economic conditions. This approach helps Council manage finances prudently, securing the future of essential services for residents.

Additionally, the Workforce Management Strategy was designed to optimise staff culture and capacity, while the Asset Management Strategy prioritises the maintenance and renewal of key community assets, linking directly with the Financial Plan to create clear priorities on infrastructure renewal. These integrated strategies have strengthened Council's ability to make informed financial decisions, ensuring resources are efficiently used to benefit both current and future generations.

4.4 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities

Council has placed a strong emphasis on building collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including local organisations, state agencies, and neighbouring councils. These partnerships have been vital in addressing shared challenges like flood recovery, infrastructure development, and economic growth.

Initiatives such as the Community Sponsorship Program have supported projects that promote social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and local economic development.

4.5 Encourage a shared responsibility for effective compliance

Council has been committed to fostering a culture of shared responsibility when it comes to compliance, recognising that community involvement is essential for upholding local standards. Educational programs, workshops, and outreach campaigns were rolled out to increase awareness of regulations related to environmental protection, public safety, and building codes. Our recently upgraded Animal Care Facility continues to champion effective rehoming and adoption strategies for the surrounding area and offers free microchipping programs.

To streamline compliance efforts, Council introduced digital tools like an online reporting system that allows residents to easily report issues such as illegal dumping. This system ensures that concerns are addressed promptly, promoting a collaborative approach to maintaining high standards across the region.

4.6 Support the operation of the organisation through effective staff engagement

Council focused on enhancing staff engagement and culture to support effective service delivery. The development of a new Workforce Management Strategy was a significant initiative aimed at optimising staff capabilities, improving job satisfaction, and aligning workforce planning with strategic goals. Council's Heartbeat and Values are a centrepiece of its cultural initiatives and several training and development initiatives have been rolled out to support staff.

Regular staff culture surveys were implemented to gather feedback, assess employee satisfaction, and identify areas for improvement. Insights from these surveys have informed initiatives like professional development programs, flexible work arrangements, and health and wellness support. These results have been extremely positive and show a strong organisation that has clear priorities and an engaged workforce.

4.7 Encourage informed planning, balanced growth, and community engagement

Council prioritised informed planning and balanced growth to ensure sustainable development in the Hawkesbury region. A comprehensive review of the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) is being conducted to align planning controls with evolving community needs. This review incorporated extensive community consultations via the Your Hawkesbury Your Say platform, allowing residents to provide input on zoning, land use, and growth priorities.

Council has also invested in digital tools to enhance transparency and accessibility in the planning process, making it easier for residents to access planning documents, development applications, and updates on significant projects.



SUCCESS INDICATORS

Success Indicator(s)	2021-2024 Data	Analysis
Our community will be more aware of our elected leaders and Council operations and More of our community will be actively engaged in local discussions and decisions about strategic directions, services, plans and programs	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with level of communication 2021: 2.95 2023: 2.89 Q: Satisfaction with community consultation 2021: 2.70 2023: 2.70 Q: Satisfaction with engaging the community in making decisions 2021: 2.95 2023: 2.88 Q: Importance of engaging the community in making decisions 2021: 4.32 2023: 4.35 Q: Satisfaction with long term planning for the future 2021: 2.95 2023: 2.73 Q: Importance of long term planning for the future 2021: 4.54 2023: 4.55 Your Hawkesbury Your Say Contributions 2018/19: 276 2021/2022: 4,979 2023/2024: 6,429	Communication and engagement are extremely important to the Hawkesbury community and a key driver of overall satisfaction levels. Long-term planning for the future of the Hawkesbury is also very important to our Community. Satisfaction on these items has slightly decreased across the two satisfaction surveys, highlighting the importance of effective communication and engagement. Council has made significant efforts to improve the engagement and communication with residents. The development of a new 2024-2028 Communications and Engagement Strategy as well as key online information centres including Renewing Hawkesbury's Roads Online Portal, Disaster Dashboard and Your Hawkesbury Your Say engagement platform are key initiatives. The platform has seen a significant increase in users over recent years and Council is continuing to promote the platform as a key engagement tool for key projects including the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants, Flood Studies, Cultural Plan and CSP Review.
There will be a higher satisfaction level with Council's performance	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Overall satisfaction with Council performance 2017: 2.97 2021: 3.22 2023: 2.92	The community's overall level of satisfaction with Council's performance has decreased from 2021-2023, following an increase from 2017-2021. This highlights the importance of understanding the communities priorities and drivers of satisfaction and delivering good outcomes in these areas.
The delivery of services to the community is of the highest quality	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Overall satisfaction with Council services 2017: 3.07 2021: 3.31 2023: 3.20	The community's overall level of satisfaction with Council's services has decreased from 2021-2023, following an increase from 2017-2021. This highlights the importance of understanding the communities priority services and focussing on resourcing and improving these areas.

Success Indicator(s)	2021–2024 Data	Analysis
Our assets will be managed effectively to ensure ongoing sustainability	Hawkesbury City Council Audited Financial Statements Buildings and Infrastructure Asset Renewals Ratio Benchmark >100% 2021: 78.64% 2024: 211.98% Infrastructure Backlog Ratio Benchmark <2% 2021: 2.07% 2024: 3.13%	Council has been investing in the development of a new Asset Management Strategy and Plans, including the revaluation and modelling of asset conditions and the development of improved project lifecycle management across all asset classes. The significant influx of grants to support infrastructure recovery following the recent flood events has seen an unprecedented increase in expenditure on asset renewal and repair, as can be seen through the Buildings and Infrastructure Asset Renewals Ratio The revaluation has revealed a significant backlog, which will require additional focus and resourcing to maintain and improve asset conditions across the region, including relevant financial ratios. Sustainability is at the core of Council's prioritisation of asset renewals, ensuring longevity of improvements and ensuring future proofed works are championed at every opportunity.
We will be satisfied with transport infrastructure and transport options across the city	Community Satisfaction Survey Q: Satisfaction with ability to commute via public or private transport Work Inside the LGA 2021: 3.48 2023: 2.99 Work Outside the LGA 2021: 3.12 2023: 2.78	Connectivity and transport are key issues for the Hawkesbury. The floods during the period heavily impacted this area, causing delays, increase travel times, and reduced the overall reliability of transport infrastructure. As new housing developments occur, traffic volumes may increase on existing roads, leading to congestion, especially during peak times. This can significantly impact satisfaction if infrastructure has not kept pace with growth. Increasing fuel costs can make commuting by car more expensive, impacting satisfaction among residents who rely on private vehicles due to limited public transport options.

Data Sets:

- Hawkesbury Community Satisfaction Survey 2021 and 2023
- Your Hawkesbury Your Say User Data
- Hawkesbury City Council Audited Financial Statements 2024 and 2021

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This section explores the key areas that require focus and long term planning as Hawkesbury City Council moves forward and develops the next CSP: Our Hawkesbury 2045. It takes into account the current considerations contained in the CSP and the insights gained through this report.

By identifying these considerations, and engaging with our community and stakeholders, Council can develop a new CSP that strongly represents its community, with clear goals, strategies and measures of success that help move us towards the vision for Our Hawkesbury 2045.

This may involve some changes to the current outcomes, long term objectives and success indicators, to ensure the CSP is representative, responsive and effectively measurable.

GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

- Sustainably managing regional growth and development
- Connectivity of our centres and transport networks
- Understanding how our population and demographics are changing and the services, support, places and spaces they require
- Supporting and nurturing our culture and social responsibility
- Helping the community connect, learn and build resilience
- Ensuring and advocating for community safety disaster management

PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT AND VALUED HISTORY

- Protecting and enhancing the health and value of our waterways and wetlands
- Protecting and enhancing our natural areas
- Working with our community to reduce waste, increase reuse and adopt sustainable choices and lifestyles
- Respecting and protecting our heritage from places to people
- Leading change as champions of sustainability
- Ensuring growth is balanced and harmonises with our natural environment

STRONG ECONOMY

- Understanding our place in State and Regional Planning and leveraging off our unique offerings
- Supporting the growth of our economy, promoting local jobs, business and industries
- Creating strong and successful town centres in Windsor and Richmond and supporting the unique centres and villages across the region.
- Holding and supporting events that activate our town centres and bring people to our area

RELIABLE COUNCIL

- Effectively and authentically engaging our community and communicating on the long term plans for our city
- Developing strong partnerships and advocacy that lead to improved outcomes for the Hawkesbury
- Building long term financial sustainability and well managed, future focused assets and infrastructure
- Ensuring our long term plans and strategies clearly prioritise the things that matter to our community



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