



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

AMBITION 2030

Growing our Economy



Table of Contents

1.0	Ambition 2030 – A Framework for Economic Growth	04
1.1	Our Vision – Enhancing our Lifestyle	06
1.2	Leeton – A Glimpse of a Thriving Community	09
1.3	Community Priorities & Council's Role	10
1.4	Population – A Growing Community	13
1.5	Education – Learning to Grow	14
1.6	Occupational Profile – By Profession	17
1.7	Occupational Profile - By Industry	18
1.8	Occupational Profile - Opportunities	21
1.9	Industry Value – Diversity and Vertical Integration	22
1.10	Gross Regional Product	25
1.11	Exports by Industry – Feeding a Nation and the World	26
1.12	The Visitor Economy – Building on our Attraction	29
1.13	Strategic Context – Working Together	30
2.0	Ambition 2030 – Future Focused	32
2.1	Focus Area 1.0 Business Retention and Attraction	33
2.2	Focus Area 2.1 Infrastructure to Support the Economy	35
	Focus Area 2.2 WR Connect – Western Riverina Terminal	38
2.3	Focus Area 3.0 Workforce Economy	41
2.4	Focus Area 4.0 Environmentally Sustainable Economy	44
2.5	Focus Area 5.0 Liveability	49
2.6	Focus Area 6.0 Tourism and Visitor Economy	52
3.0	Measuring Success	56
3.1	Delivering the Strategy	58
3.2	Economic Outcomes	59

1. Envisage 2030 — A framework for Economic Growth



1.1 Our Vision — Enhancing our Lifestyle

OUR VISION: Leeton Shire will have a connected, sustainable and diverse economy in 2030, with an abundance of employment opportunities, growth, and investment that will protect Leeton's sense of community and enhance our lifestyle.

Leeton Shire Council's Economic Development, Tourism, and Events Strategy Ambition 2030 is a framework for strengthening Leeton shire's liveability, and economic sustainability. The goal of Ambition 2030 is to capture the shire's economic growth vision.

Ambition 2030 serves as an inspiration and guide for Council and the local community to take action to ensure the future growth of the shire.





1.2 Leeton — A Glimpse of a Thriving Community

Leeton, founded in 1913, and named after Sir Charles Alfred Lee, former NSW Minister for Public Works is the birthplace of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and was purposely built by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. The shire includes the main township of Leeton, with Yanco and Wamoon nearby as well as the villages of Murrami and Whitton. The traditional owners of the land in and around Leeton Shire are the Wiradjuri people.

Located in the Western Riverina food bowl, Leeton is approximately 580km from Sydney, 470km from Melbourne, and 370km from Canberra, with the shire covering an area of 1,167km².

Leeton Shire has an estimated population of 11,343 with the largest populated area being the township of Leeton. People of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin make up 5.7% of our population with much of the population being of Australian, English, Irish, Scottish and Italian descent. We are a Refugee Welcome Zone with the percentage of people born overseas being 8.1%.

Leeton is also renowned for quality education facilities which include six primary schools, and three high schools that attract students from across the state. There is also the Leeton campus of TAFE NSW and the Country Universities Learning Center at the town library that provides several training options for the community while remaining in the local area. The district also boasts the Yanco Agricultural Institute which has been at the forefront of development and research for the irrigation farmers of the MIA.

Leeton is fortunate to have several high-quality sporting fields and facilities that cater to a range of activities for all ages. Councils' facilities include the newly redeveloped Leeton Aquatic Centre and the Whitton Swimming Pool. Throughout the shire, there is a range of sporting fields that cater for numerous codes of football, cricket, tennis, netball as well as the Leeton Indoor Stadium that accommodates basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer and is available for private functions.

Leeton, referred to as the jewel in Australia's Art Deco crown is affluent in Arts and Culture. 35 buildings in the town are listed with the Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant 20th Century Buildings, including the soon to be updated Roxy Community Theatre, The Historic Hydro Hotel, and the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission building that now is home to the Leeton Museum and Gallery.

Leeton Shire has a thriving economy primarily driven by our access to water from the Murrumbidgee River and prime agricultural land. It is one of the most productive farming regions in the state with citrus, rice, grapes, cotton, walnuts, almonds, and cereal grains all grown throughout the shire. Aquaculture is also an emerging farming practice with its low eco-footprint, traceability, and sustainability.

The processing of agricultural products from local producers comprises one of Leeton's largest industries. Ricegrowers Limited operating as SunRice and CopRice is one of the shire's largest employers with its main office, rice mill, and manufacturing plant located in Leeton. Other major companies located within the Leeton shire include The Daily Juice Company (Bega Dairy and Drinks Pty Ltd) juice factory, JBS Australia (as a subsidiary of JBS S.A) operating a cattle feedlot and abattoirs, Stahmann Webster walnut orchard and processing plant, Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Pacific Fresh Premium Australian Citrus, with Southern Cotton, Voyager Craft Malt and the Whitton Malt House located in Whitton.

1.3 Community Priorities and Council's Role

Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders was sought to provide detailed feedback in relation to some of the key drivers and key challenges for Leeton and how the Council can play a key role in shaping the future of the Leeton economy. This was completed in conjunction with the Community Strategic Plan and industry consultation with the local business community.

The key drivers identified by stakeholders include population growth and industry retention/attraction, agri-food production and manufacturing, irrigated agriculture, education, and a skilled workforce.

Key challenges centre around skilled workers to assist in driving business growth, housing including rental and owner-occupied accommodation to house a growing workforce, diversification of industry, educational qualifications, and connectivity in heavy vehicle and rail networks.

Council alone will not be able to achieve growth in these key areas. Community leaders, State, and Federal agencies all play an important role in driving the Leeton economy forward and tackling challenges head-on through collaboration, innovation, and the strength and resilience of the local community.

Council's main role will be directional support, facilitation, and planning with each term of Council determining what actions will be included in its 4-year Delivery Program.



KEY DRIVERS

- Population Growth
- Industry Retention/Attraction
- Agri-food production and manufacturing
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Education
- Skilled workforce



CHALLENGES

- Skilled workforce
- Housing - owner-occupied & rental accommodation
- Diversification of industry
- Heavy Vehicle & Rail networks
- Educational Qualifications



COUNCIL'S ROLE

- Leadership
- Facilitation
- Planning
- Partnership
- Infrastructure
- Continued consultation



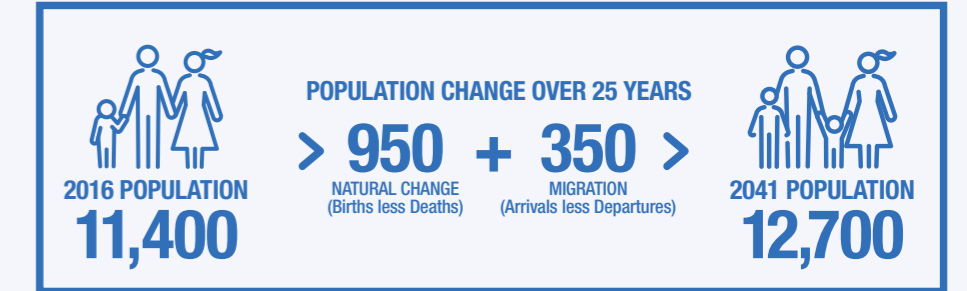


1.4 Population — A growing Community

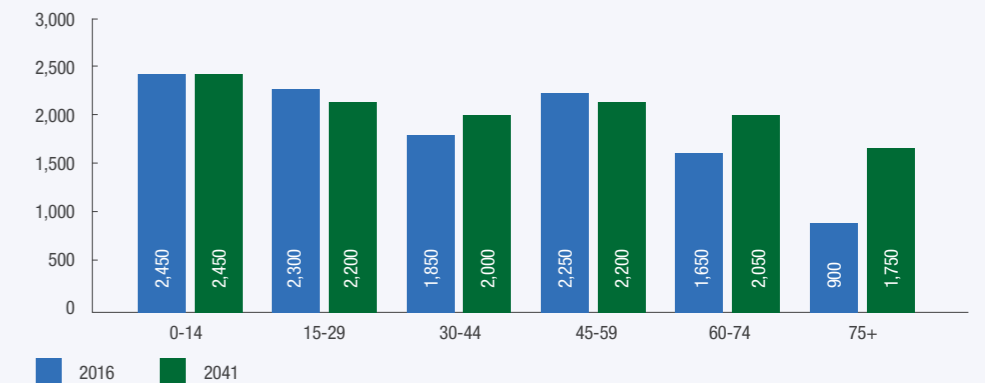
Leeton was the birthplace of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and is the second largest regional centre in the Western Riverina region. The shire includes the main township of Leeton with Yanco and Wamoon nearby as well as the villages of Murrami and Whitton.

Leeton Shire has a thriving economy and plays an integral role in value-added agricultural processing, agriculture, education and research, transport, and logistics which is primarily driven by our access to water and prime agricultural land.

Leeton's population has increased marginally in the past decade with the population forecasted to increase by approximately 1,300 people by 2041. The main increases included 30-44 years (working age) and + 60 years (retirement age).



Population by Age

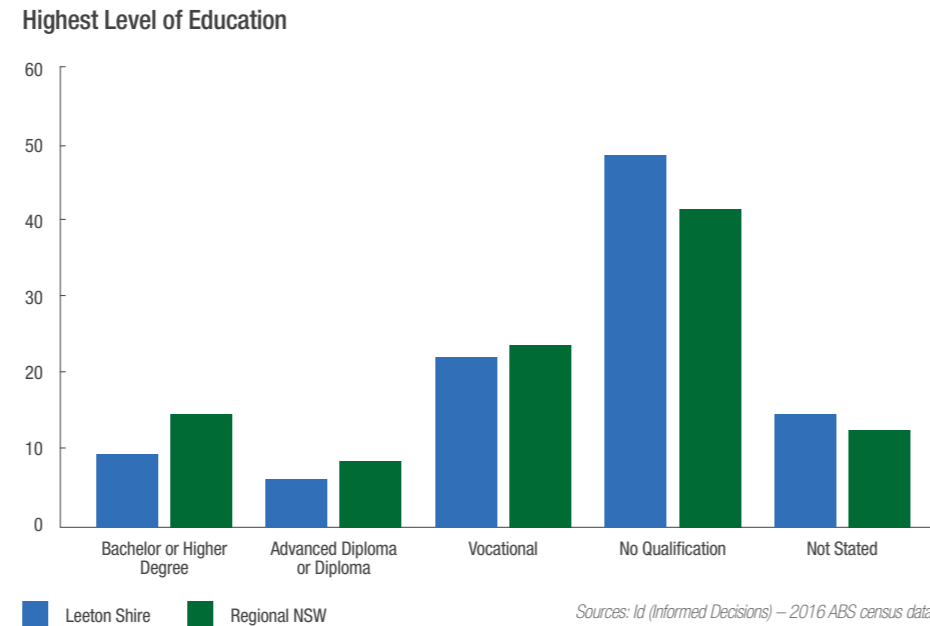


1.5 Education — Learning to Grow

Leeton is also known for its excellent educational facilities, which include six primary schools and three secondary schools, with two of them offering boarding facilities, that draw students from across the state.

TAFE NSW Leeton campus and the Country Universities Center in the town library offer a variety of vocational training choices locally for the community. The Yanco Agricultural Institute, which has been at the forefront of development and research for the MIA's irrigation farmers also offers as part of Tocal College, short-term training courses for primary producers.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census analysis of the qualifications of the working-age population in Leeton Shire shows that there was a lower percentage (52.8%) of the population holding formal qualifications (Bachelor or higher degree, Advanced Diploma or Diploma; or Vocational qualifications), and a higher percentage (42.8%) with no formal qualifications when compared with 65.9% and 31.1% respectively for New South Wales.





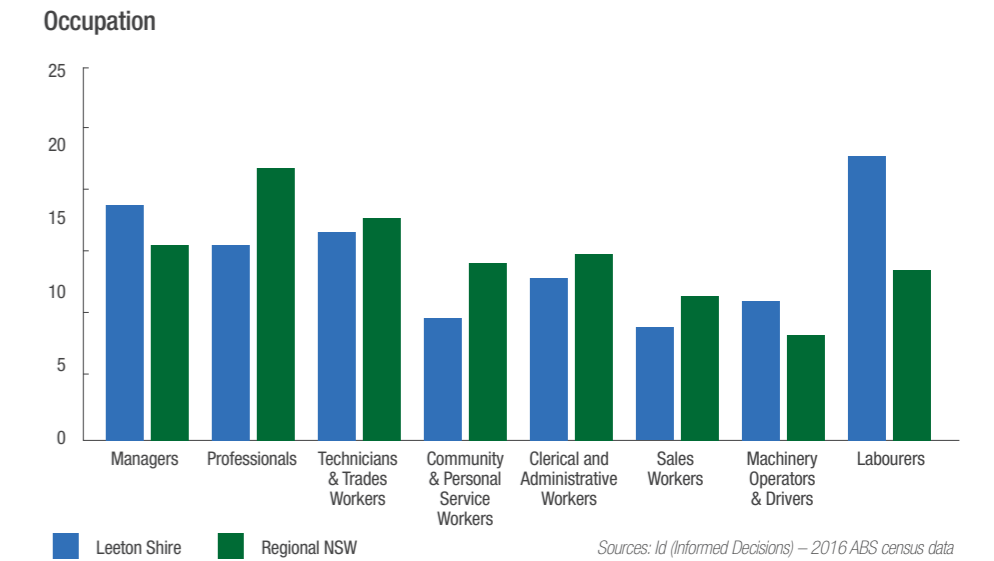
1.6 Occupational Profile — By Profession

Leeton was the birthplace of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and is part of the Riverina area often referred to as the “Food Bowl of Australia.

Leeton Shire has a thriving economy, which is primarily driven by our access to water, prime agricultural land, and the ability to grow a wide variety of agricultural commodities.

Leeton is also home to several large food processors, as well as the supporting industries that cater to the wide range of agricultural commodities produced in the area.

The three most common occupations in the Leeton Shire according to the ABS 2016 census were Labourers (900 people or 19.1%), Managers (737 people or 15.6%), and Technicians and Trades Workers (650 people or 13.8%). These three occupations accounted for 48.5% of the employed resident population.



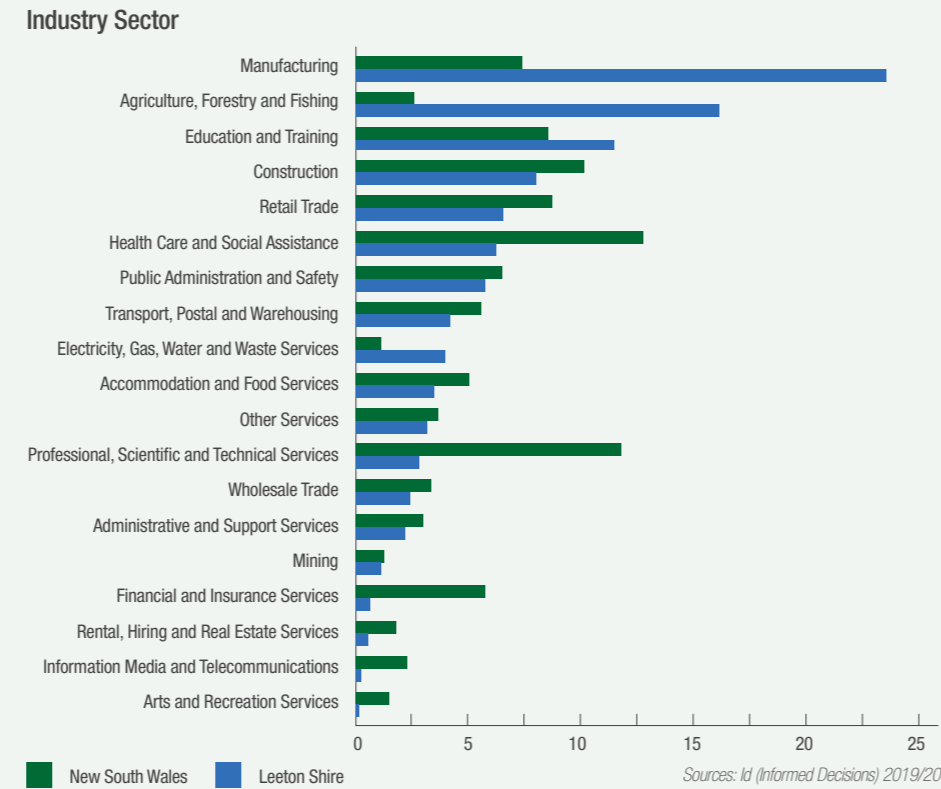
1.7 Occupational Profile — By Industry

There are 957 businesses employing 5,039 residents in 4,773 full-time equivalents (FTE) jobs in the Leeton Local Government Area (LGA). The majority of Industry is driven by the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area – the availability of water and prime agricultural land.

Manufacturing, in particular, Food Product Manufacturing is the largest sector of employment (22.6%) followed by Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (15.5%), Education and Training (11.1%), Construction (7.8%), Retail Trade (6.4%) and Health Care and Social Services (6.1%).

The major difference between the employment opportunities held in the Leeton LGA and New South Wales was a larger percentage of FTE were employed in Manufacturing (22.6% compared to 7.1%) and in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (15.5% compared to 2.6%).

The national unemployment rate as of September 2021 from the National Skills Commission was 4.5%, NSW at 5.4% with Leeton being much lower at 2.6%. The largest rise in the unemployed for Leeton was in the younger demographic, going from 6.6% in March 2020 to 12.2% in October 2021 driven predominately by COVID-19 restrictions and temporary business closures.





1.8 Occupational Profile — Opportunities

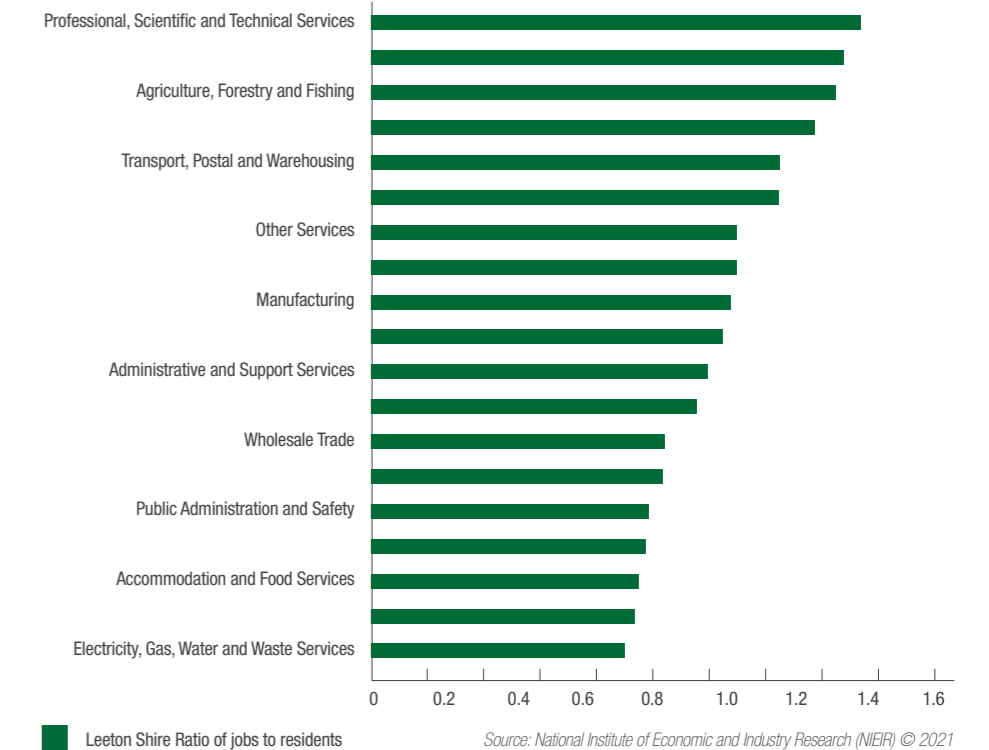
Employment capacity is a straightforward way of looking at whether the industry in Leeton Shire could provide jobs for all its residents.

The number of employment opportunities available in an industry is divided by the number of residents employed in that industry, whether that be in Leeton Shire or outside of the shire. A figure over 1.0 means there are more jobs available than residents employed in that industry and Under 1.0 means there are more residents employed in that industry that reside in the LGA than jobs available in the LGA with residents traveling outside of the LGA for employment.

Maximising the employment opportunities available locally within the Leeton shire will decrease unemployment and build a more sustainable community. In 2021 there were 4,773 jobs across a range of employment types being casual part-time and full-time.

The jobs to resident ratio for Leeton Shire in June 2021 was 0.95, meaning that there were fewer jobs than resident workers. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services had the highest ratio (1.38), although the largest gap in actual workers was in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing with a combined total of 139 fewer employed residents than available jobs, while the lowest ratio was found in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (0.71%) with 73 more residents employed than available jobs.

Industry June 2021

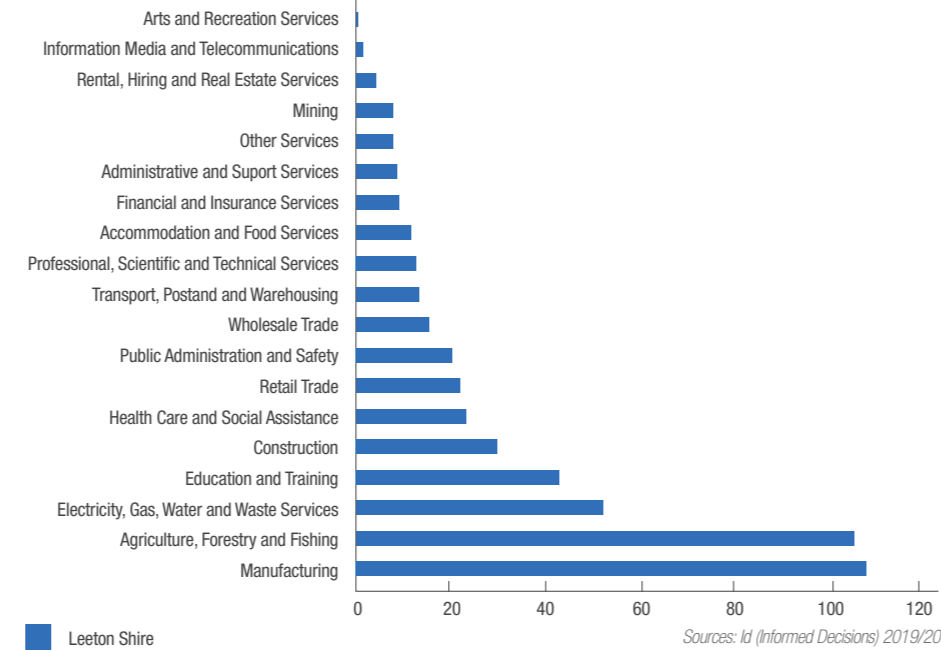


1.9 Industry Value — Diversity and Vertical Integration

Value added by industry is an indicator of business productivity. It is the value of goods and/or services produced less the cost of production.

The value-added in Leeton Shire in 2020/21 shows the largest industries were Manufacturing (\$107m or 21.7%), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (\$104.7m or 21.3%), and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (\$51.9m or 10.5%) with these three industries accounting for 53.5% of the total value added by industry in the Leeton Shire. The fastest growing industry in Leeton Shire in 2020/21 was Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, growing by 132% or \$25.7m.

Value Added by Industry Sector 2020-2021





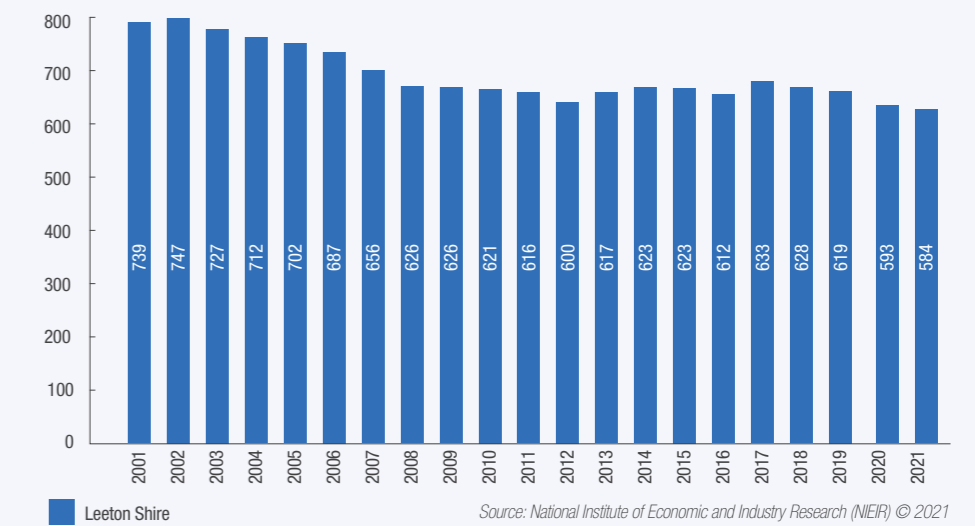
1.10 Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the monetary measure or net wealth generated by the local economy. The GRP for Leeton Shire is largely dependent on climate and the availability of water (high/general security allocation) and the price of commodities for our major agricultural industries.

This is evident in the trajectory of the GRP over the past 20 years with a high of \$747m in 2002 to a low of \$584m in 2021. The lingering drought and low allocation of water have seen a reduction in the growing of commodities in the region which in turn reduces our local manufacturing.

The Gross Regional Product as of June 2021 was \$584m.

Gross Regional Product (GPR)



1.11 Exports By Industry — Feeding a Nation and the World

Sales of goods and services to non-resident consumers, businesses, and other organisations beyond the Leeton Shire limits are referred to as exports.

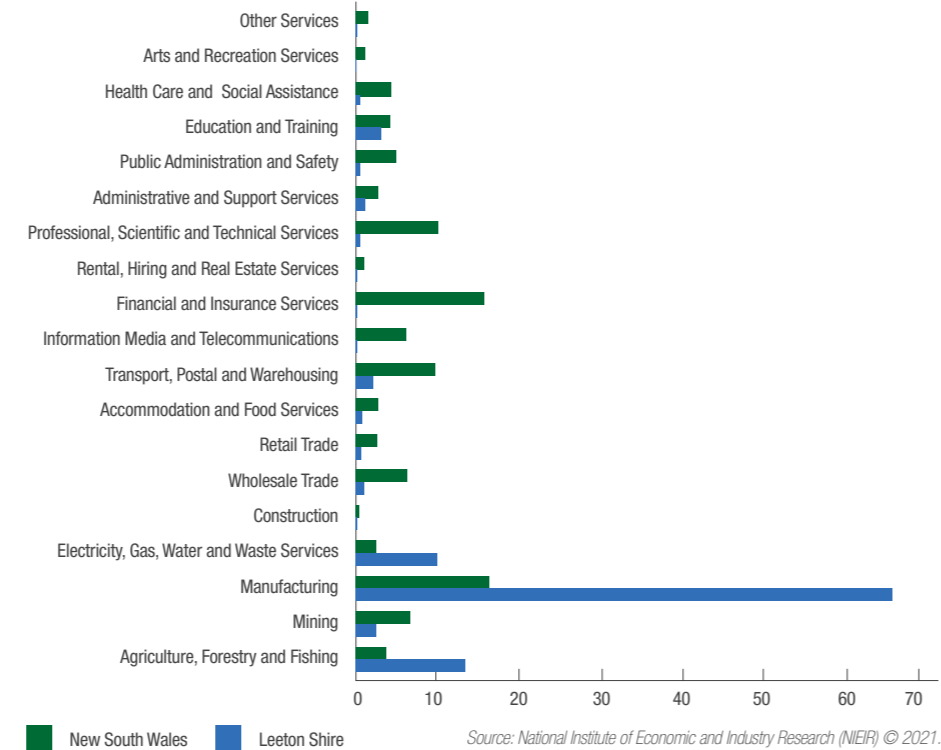
Exports from the shire to other areas of Australia are classified as domestic exports and all exports from the shire to nations outside of Australia are classed as International Exports.

We contribute considerably to Australia's export profits as a community. The average farmer in the MIA is estimated to feed on average 600 people, 450 of these are through exports. In a typical year, around 18,000 containers leave Leeton. JBS Riverina Feedlot processes 153,000 head of cattle per year. Walnuts Australia processes 13,000 tonnes of walnuts at its Leeton factory each year, with 4,000 tonnes of those walnuts originating in Leeton. Over 600,000 paddy tonnes of rice are produced over the Riverina in a typical crop year.

Total exports for Leeton Shire in 2020/21 reached \$625m, \$508m of this was Domestic, and \$117m was International.

Overall, the three largest industries in Leeton Shire according to a study of total exports by industry sectors were Manufacturing of goods (\$409m or 65.4%) with food production manufacturing accounting for \$375m of this, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (\$83m or 13.3%) and services for Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (\$61m or 9.8%).

Total Exports by Industry 2020-2021





1.12 The Visitor Economy — Building on our Attractions

Over the next five years, the tourism sector is expected to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and flourish.

However, many factors, including lingering concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic and political crisis, are likely to hamper the industry's recovery in the medium term.

As a result, domestic families, travelling for leisure, and visiting friends and relatives are anticipated to continue to be significant drivers of the visitor economy. Travel for business purposes is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels but will be slower to recover.

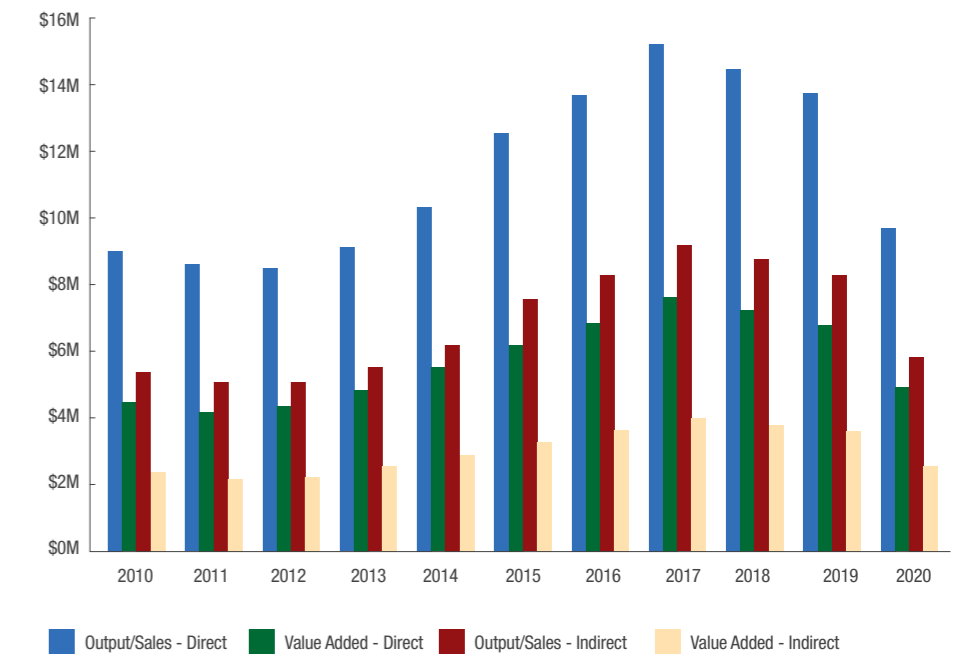
Understanding the current role of the tourism sector is important if you are looking at attracting visitors to your area, and as information for businesses looking to locate in the area.

Most visitors stay for three nights and spend an average of \$147 per day. People who visit for sport spend about \$262 each day.

We offer a variety of public and private tourist attractions and activities that help draw 43,000 domestic overnight visitors to Leeton each year. This contributes around \$15 million to our community's economy with a value add of \$7.1M.

The Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton, the SunRice Festival (held biannually), the Bidgee Classic, the Leeton Show, the SunRice Golf Pro-Am, the Outback Band Spectacular, and the Leeton Eisteddfod are some of our most popular tourist events.

Value of Tourism in Leeton



1.13 Strategic Context — Working together

Ambition 2030 has been developed to align with our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) – Liveable Leeton 2035

Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive, and enriched community (Cc)

Outcome Cc. We are friendly, inclusive, and connected

Cc1.1 Build and support connections and relationships within the community

Outcome Cc4 We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities

Cc4.1 Provide quality childcare and early learning to preschool-aged children

Cc4.2 Provide quality education to local school-aged children

Cc4.3 Provide local access to tertiary and further education

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy (Ec)

Outcome Ec1 Our local businesses are prospering

Ec1.1 Support local businesses

Ec1.3 Ensure Federal and State water policy frameworks enhance productivity in the region

Ec1.4 Facilitate access to labour, both skilled and unskilled

Outcome Ec2 We attract and retain new businesses and residents and our population is growing

Ec2.1 Promote Leeton Shire as an attractive business location

Ec2.2 Support business development opportunities throughout the Shire

Ec2.3 Support ideas and programs that will expand the number and variety of local jobs

Outcome Ec3 We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy

Ec3.1 Provide a transport network that meets the Shire's transport needs

Ec3.2 Improve freight and logistics capabilities

Ec3.3 Provide enough appropriately located commercial and industrial land to allow for growth

Outcome Ec4 We have the skills and knowledge required to undertake the work available

Ec4.1 Increase access to a range of vocational education pathways

Ec4.2 Expand skills and knowledge in sectors of local skills shortage

Outcome Ec5 We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of short- and long-term residents

Ec5.1 Encourage and facilitate the development of land for affordable housing in suitable locations across the Shire

Outcome Ec6 We have diverse employment opportunities

Ec6.1 Provide jobs

Ec6.2 Provide traineeships and apprenticeships

Outcome Ec7 We are a popular tourist destination

Ec7.1 Promote our towns, villages, and attractions

Ec7.3 Host events, festivals and activities that attract visitors to the shire

Focus Area 4. A quality environment (En)

Outcome En1 We enjoy a protected natural environment and quality agricultural land

En1.2 Provide the access and facilities required to enable community members and visitors to enjoy our natural environment

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation (L)

Outcome L3 We work together to achieve our goals

L3.1 Develop and maintain relationships and partnerships for the benefit of the community



LOCAL	Liveable Leeton 2035— Our Community Strategic Plan Towards 2030	This outlines the community's vision and long-term plans for the future of Leeton Shire.
	Leeton Shire Council Delivery Program 2017-2022 and Operational Plan 2021-22	Outlines the major projects in the region, and how Council aims to deliver on the community objectives and vision from the Community Strategic Plan.
	Leeton Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020	Defines the land-use planning priorities for Leeton Shire and provides a framework for building on the strengths of the region.
REGIONAL	Western Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022	Articulate a framework for identifying actions crucial to achieving regional economic growth as a combined community
	Destination Riverina Murray Strategic Plan & Destination Management Plan	Aims to strengthen the regional visitor economy by fostering partnerships through strategic planning
	Riverina and Murry Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Statement of Regional Priorities	To collaborate effectively through strategic planning, priority setting, advocating, engaging with governments and key stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability, wellbeing, and liveability of the region's communities.
	Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036	Encompasses a vision, goals, directions, and actions that were developed with the community and stakeholders to deliver greater prosperity to the Riverina Murray region.
STATE	Premier's & State Priorities	The priorities of the NSW Government to enhance communities and address challenges that arise.
	20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021 Refresh	Aims to drive economic recovery and rebound from the drought, bushfires, floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the regional economy from 2018-to 2020. The Vision aims to guide regional NSW towards a sustainable and resilient future economy through clear priority actions

2. Ambition 2030 — Focus Areas

Focus Area 1. Business Retention and Attraction

Focus Area 2. Infrastructure to Support the Economy

2.1 WR Connect – Western Riverina Terminal

Focus Area 3. Workforce Economy

Focus Area 4. Environmentally Sustainable Economy

Focus Area 5. Liveability

Focus Area 6. Tourism and Visitor Economy



2.1 Focus Area 1. Business Retention and Attraction

The majority of future investment and job development in the Leeton Shire will come from existing businesses. Making sure they can grow locally will encourage a more innovative and vibrant local economy.

Supporting current businesses by increasing capacity and capabilities, expanding their client base, gaining access to new technologies and markets, and utilising state and federal business assistance programs will stimulate investment and employment creation across the area, propelling the economy forwards.

Engaging in communication with the local business community will also help it flourish and provide vital insights into issues that may affect the future of the business community giving council the ability to identify, and act to support the retention or expansion of the businesses.

Attracting new investment into the economy can have a variety of positive benefits, including the creation of supply chains, the expansion of employment, the promotion of sharing knowledge, the expansion of export capacity, and the generation of innovation. A strategy for targeted investment to bring new industry not reliant on agriculture to the shire would provide additional employment and a buffer to the effects of climate and our access to water. More marketing measures for the community as a business and tourism destination were strongly supported by stakeholders. Aside from more marketing and promotion, stakeholders believed that Council could play an important role in creating an environment favourable to investment by collaborating with regional companies.

Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION	Support Local Businesses to build capacity and capability through workshops or webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with collaboration Partners on upcoming workshops or webinars for local businesses Promote via bi-monthly newsletter and direct engagement 	Quarterly	Leeton Shire Council – Economic and Community Development Manager Leeton Business Chamber BEC – Business Enterprise Riverina Murray Business Business NSW
	Support business retention and expansion through business engagement and visitation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitation schedule to connect with local Businesses Encourage businesses to contact council for support – from visitation schedule Quarterly business networking event Advise businesses of state and federal assistance packages and funding opportunities via targeted contact 	Immediate	Leeton Shire Council – Economic and Community Development Manager
	Establish and facilitate open-forum sessions with key industries and Council to discuss, promote and acknowledge economic development issues and improvements across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any local issues are tabled to report to state and Federal Government 6 monthly forum schedule with key industries and Leeton Shire Council 	Short term	Leeton Shire Council – Local Activation and Economic and Community Development Manager NSW State & Regional Government
	Support business-to-business Networking to connect local businesses with each other (customers and suppliers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business After Hours meetings to promote local business Quarterly business networking event Small Business Months Yearly Dinner 	Short Term Quarterly	Leeton Shire Council Economic and Community Development Manager Leeton Business Chamber
	Monitor and maximise Council's expenditure within the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote businesses to register with Vendor Panel Procurement policy buy local 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Economic and Community Development Manager Procurement Coordinator
	Promote Buy Local Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research options for local online gift cards replacing existing gift cards as they are limited to specific technology Social Media Campaign – Buy Local/Stay Local with local businesses promoting each other 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council Economic and Community Development Manager Communications Coordinator Leeton business Chamber Local Businesses

Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION	Update marketing material to promote identified investment opportunities and Leeton Shire as a business and investment destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Leeton Shire Business Attraction Prospectus Research Targeted marketing to promote new industry investment 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council – Economic and Community Development Manager
	Identify and seek investment opportunities in tourism products (accommodation and experiences) and event/ experience infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate possible Food/Wine/music festival (Day on the Green type event) Work with existing tourism businesses for expansion and collaboration ideas 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council – Economic and Strategic Development Manager Manager Visitor Services and Local Activation Events Manager
	Review all Council held land and identify surplus sites for targeted investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best-fit businesses for available land – look for businesses that are needed and do not currently have a presence 	Short term	Leeton Shire Council – Local Activation Local Businesses
	Secure investment in the region's infrastructure and other region-building projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively look for grant funding to update and provide new infrastructure in line with our Delivery Program Promote local infrastructure projects to state and Federal Government Promote state and federal government projects to local businesses for tender 	Short Term Ongoing as they arise	Leeton Shire Council State and Federal Government
	Promote expansion of Vance Industrial Estate for new investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek EOI for purchase prior to subdivision completion Real Estate marketing to promote investment outside of LGA Targeted Marketing by Real Estate for new industry investment 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council Local Activation Economic and Community Development Manager QPL Real Estate
	Promote business capability within the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a 1-page brochure to be updated 6 monthly covering major projects along with business capability within the shire 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council Local Activation Economic and Community Development Manager Local Business

2.2 Focus Area 2. Infrastructure to Support the Economy

Infrastructure promotes economic growth by facilitating trade and investment, promoting business prospects, and creating jobs.

Leeton Shire is dedicated to addressing infrastructure challenges to foster long-term economic growth and expand investment possibilities throughout the region.

One of these challenges is the availability of suitable industrial land throughout the region. Leeton Shire is in the early planning stages of expanding the Vance Industrial Estate to provide suitable land for additional industrial development in the shire.

The development of transportation infrastructure contributes to investment and economic growth by increasing productivity and efficiency since it connects resources to industry, people to employment, and goods to markets.

Increasing regional investment in road and rail infrastructure will enable the expansion of freight and warehousing-related development within Leeton Shire. Forward planning to improve the integration of regional transportation and land use planning will ensure effective supply chain links with the main industrial and activation precincts.



Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMY	Provide a road transport network that meets the Shire's transport needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Road maintenance schedule in line with the Delivery Program Seek funding to improve road infrastructure within the shire to improve accessibility where required Review road train and heavy vehicle bypass for funding and upgrade supporting infrastructure Facilitate findings of the "WR Connect" Road Linkages Plan 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Operations Manager Roads & Drainage Transport for NSW Neighbouring Councils RAMJO State & Federal Government
	Provide enough appropriately located commercial and industrial land to allow for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Vance Estate expansion project producing 20 industrial lots for industrial development and investment 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council Local Activation Economic and Community Development Manager
	Review and identify appropriate land for rezoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Leeton Local Environment Plan (LEP) Identify appropriate land for rezoning to allow for additional investment 	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council – Planning NSW Dept Planning External Planning consultants
	Improve and expand telecommunications capacity across the Shire (NBN, mobile phone coverage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate with collaboration partners for additional infrastructure to improve the capability in known blackspots Continue to work with FSG to supply place-based telecommunications to improve digital connectivity infrastructure to improve digital connectivity across the shire 	Short Term FSG project currently underway	Leeton Shire Council Telecommunications providers FSG NBN Co Federal Government, Local MPs
	Monitor and maximise Council's expenditure within the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging local businesses to register on Vendor Panel to tender for bigger projects within the shire Leeton Shire Council Procurement Policy gives preference to local suppliers 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council - Economic and Community Development Manager Procurement Coordinator
	Improve and provide enabling infrastructure for housing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate with collaboration partners for additional enabling infrastructure and funding to increase housing development across the shire 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council Local Activation Economic and Community Development Manager State and Federal Government

Focus Area 2.1 WR Connect — Western Riverina Terminal

A key focus for investment in logistics within Leeton Shire is the development of the Western Riverina Terminal, WR Connect located on MR80 within the Leeton Shire boundary at Wambulgal.

The state government has recently completed a \$60.4m upgrade of the line from Griffith to Junee which runs through the site at WR Connect, connecting it to the Inland Rail Project. The Inland Rail project is a \$9.3b investment to connect Melbourne to Brisbane by rail through Albury, Wagga Wagga, and Junee. Rail Freight from the Western Riverina is carried along the existing Hillston to Junee rail line to Junee, most containers are then delivered to the Port of Melbourne and bulk commodities to Port Kembla.

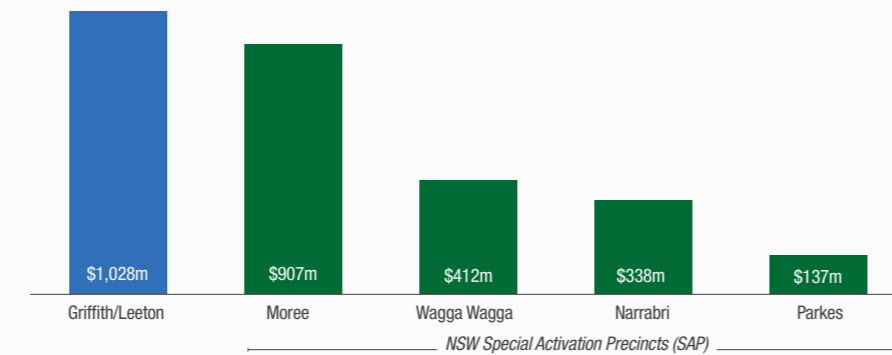
The investment and expansion of WR Connect would provide a mixed freight logistics and manufacturing activation precinct, capable of:

- more efficiently capturing and consolidating freight from across the Region at a central intermodal point,
- optimising development of the site for product processing and manufacturing of products,
- diversifying developments on the site to allow for renewable energy generation, education, vehicle maintenance, small scale retail and so on,
- utilising contemporary smart technologies such as blockchain and internet of things (IoT) applications to provide greater efficiency on-site and throughout the supply chain,
- facilitating the movement of LINX Cargo Car, the current logistics operator in the Griffith CBD, to WR Connect and thereby eliminating the negative community impacts of heavy freight movements

- allowing access to Inland Rail and thereby allowing regional products to get to markets more efficiently
- Reducing truck movements and improving road safety in built-up areas
- Strategy alignment –Western Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022
- Western Riverina being the “food Bowl” has higher agricultural export values (\$1,028M) than any of the approved NSW Special Activation Precincts (SAP) on the Inland Rail corridor
- Achieving projected freight volumes for Western Riverina. +24% by 2030 with the existing freight facility located in Griffith at capacity

The NSW Treasury approved a Gateway review of the project. Recently Leeton Shire Council in collaboration with Griffith City Council has been assisting with the finalisation of the Gate 4 Business plan which has been submitted for further consideration. Feedback will be provided and if successful we would move into the next gate for funding approval.

Agriculture Gross Value by Region - ABARES 2015-2016



Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
WR CONNECT	Contribute to the “WR Connect” Multimodal Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend fortnightly meetings with collaboration partners For business case advancement • Supply additional information as required for advancement from Gate 4 to 5 and funding 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Griffith City Council Ernest & Young State & Federal Government Regional NSW
	Liaise with Key Industry Partners to encourage collaboration and support for WR Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a meeting with each collaboration partner within 6 months to allow for additional input 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire council Griffith City Council GrainLink LINX Pacific National
	Liaise with key Government Departments and officials to advocate for WR Connect as a major freight logistics hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for WR Connect with Government officials in all interactions • Continue to liaise with Regional NSW to gain support and assist with advocating for State/Federal Government funding 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Griffith City Council Regional NSW State & Federal Government
	Promote WR Connect to existing local and new businesses for support and possible investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify industries within the LGA who would benefit from investment in WR Connect 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Griffith City Council





2.3 Focus Area 3. Workforce Economy

The workforce economy can easily be described as the number of skilled and unskilled workers in the shire, the availability of appropriate housing and childcare, the number of employment opportunities, and the availability of education services to upskill our existing workforce and school leavers.

The businesses within Leeton Shire are experiencing a shortage in the workforce, both skilled and unskilled which is enhanced by the current shortage of available housing in the shire. With a rapidly aging workforce and a decline in workforce aged population, this shortage will only worsen as time goes on. The COVID-19 pandemic has also restricted the “Backpacker” labour force as international travel restrictions prevented the overseas workforce from filling these roles. Leeton Shire businesses have seen an increase in “Grey Nomad” visitors who are willing and able to fill some seasonal labour shortages.

Leeton Shire is considered the “Gold Standard” across regional areas for welcoming refugees, migrants, and new settlers and is home to over 35 different nationalities. We recently celebrated the official launch of the NSW Growing Regions of Welcome (GROW) Pilot program with partners Multicultural NSW, Australian Red Cross, Regional Development Australia Riverina, Temora Shire Council, and Leeton Shire Council. This is a 3-year funded program designed to bring interested migrants and refugees living in Western Sydney to the pilot sites of Leeton and Temora to assist with the workforce shortages.

Another strategy we are keen to support through the “Grow Our Own” initiative is encouraging school leavers to seriously consider Leeton Shire businesses as exciting options to develop their careers. With access to education facilities including TAFE NSW Leeton Campus, Country University Centre providing support for distance university study, and Tocal College allowing local career options without leaving the shire.

Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
WORKFORCE ECONOMY	Facilitate access to labour, both skilled and unskilled through ongoing collaborations with agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to advocate for Leeton with NSW Growing Regions of Welcome (GROW) to increase labour supply Seek support from RDA for the promotion of skilled workforce requirement Assist industry find suitable accommodation for Skilled and Unskilled labour Research the ability to promote Leeton as a great location for “Grey Nomad” travellers to base themselves and be able to do some seasonal work and visit the local attractions. 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Regional Development Australia – Riverina (RDA Riverina) Multicultural NSW Employment Agencies Skills NSW
	Provide local access to tertiary and further education through collaboration with education providers and council services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to Collaborate with Country University Centre by providing a dedicated center in the Library Promote Grow our Own and education pathways available Attend Regional Careers day to promote local education partners and career pathways 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Country Universities Centre (CUC) Western Riverina TAFE NSW Leeton TOCAL College Yanco NSW Department of Education, Universities such as Deakin/Charles Sturt
	Provide quality childcare and early learning for pre-school children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the capacity at the Leeton Early Learning Centre with the Construction of an additional room Assisting and recommending private development in Childcare within the shire 	Short Term	Leeton Early Learning Centre Leeton Shire Council Local Contractors Private Development
	Facilitate and support the upskilling of the existing labour force and employment pathways for local school leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Grow our Own initiative in schools – video currently being distributed on pathways in Leeton Shire Attend Regional Careers day to promote education partners 	Short/Medium Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Regional Development Australia – RDA Riverina Grow Our Own Apprenticeship Centre

Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
WORKFORCE ECONOMY	Encourage and facilitate the development of land for housing in suitable locations across the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action items from the Leeton housing Strategy and review on an annual basis Liaise with property developers to plan future development Develop and promote Council own land for housing 	Short – Long Term Ongoing – in conjunction with the Leeton Shire Council Housing Strategy	Leeton Shire Council Property Developers Housing Agencies
	Assist with short term accommodation solutions by fostering relationships with accommodation providers and larger employment providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Local accommodation providers and provide details to key industry employers, particularly in relation to the Pacific Labour Scheme Investigate and Identify additional council land for the potential development of short term accommodation Investigate “Grey Nomad” opportunities within Gogeldrie Riverside Park 	Short-long Term Ongoing – as required	Leeton Shire Council Employment Providers Accommodation Providers Pacific Labour Scheme Gogeldrie Riverside Park
	Promote Leeton as a great place to work, live and raise a family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Country Change initiative promoting Leeton, Updating the new resident’s kit and Leeton Council Website Produce a video promoting Leeton as a great place to relocate from the hustle and bustle of the city Facilitate “The Hub” website promoting all things within the Leeton Shire 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Country Change Leeton Business Chamber Leeton Connect

2.4 Focus Area 4. Environmentally Sustainable Economy

Leeton has a semi-arid climate with hot dry summers and cool winters. The maximum average summer temperature is 32°C and the maximum average winter temperature is 15°C.

The average annual rainfall is 457mm. Leeton is strategically located in the centre of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, making it an ideal place to attract investment in organic waste recovery, recycling, raw water reticulation, and renewable energy projects.

There is great opportunity for organic compost that will increase due to the mandated Food Organics Garden Organics mandate by 2030 with circular economy benefits. Leeton Shire Council actively promotes, supports, and encourages increased recycling of all products through the Leeton Landfill and Recycling Centre and Whitton Transfer Station.

Leeton Shire is home to an extensive and diverse array of Businesses that are dependent on various forms of energy to enable the manufacturing of goods and the delivery of services to national and international markets. Since 2015 Leeton has seen a steady and continued increase in the uptake of renewable energy within the Shire. This trend is encouraged by Council and advocates a reduced reliance on fossil fuels and strengthens our local region's alignment to the Federal Government's net zero carbon emissions by 2050 target.



Focus Area	Challenges & Opportunities	Proposed Actions	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY	To continue the reduction of Council's carbon footprint to improve environmental outcomes.	Council to take a lead in Energy Sustainability via the implementation of the Leeton Shire Council Energy Master Plan.	Short – Long Term	Leeton Shire Council Riverina Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) NSW Department of Planning and Industry. 100% Renewables
	An opportunity exists for Council to explore potential small-scale solar farms on closed landfill sites.	Council may conduct an assessment and feasibility study for solar farm installations on closed landfill sites to inform future capital investment works.	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council Riverina Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) NSW Department of Planning and Industry
	Funding opportunities for investment in renewable projects.	Implementation of a Revolving Energy fund to enable further funding contributions for an increase in renewable capital investments	Short – Long Term	Leeton Shire Council Riverina Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) NSW Department of Planning and Industry 100% Renewables
	Increase waste diversion and waste recovery programs to meet the 2030 mandated waste targets.	Implement Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) by 2030. Increase recycling initiatives within the community with increased messaging and education.	Short Term	Leeton Shire Council Riverina Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) NSW Department of Planning and Industry NSW Environmental Protection Agency





2.5 Focus Area 5. Liveability

Liveability is an assessment of what a place is like to live in, using criteria such as environmental quality, safety, an abundance of public spaces, access to shops and services such as transport, healthcare, education facilities, sporting facilities, access to employment opportunities and cultural activities.

Leeton has been renowned as the “heart of Australia’s food bowl” for more than a century. The average farmer in the MIA is estimated to feed on average 600 people, 450 of these are through exports and contributes 38% of NSW vegetable production. This provides an abundance in employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers.

We are also delighted to say that our Shire is much more. It serves as a hub for innovative growers and manufacturers, a small business incubator, a supplier of high-quality education, and a new home for migrants and refugees.

Leeton is also known for its high-quality educational facilities, which include six primary schools and three high schools that draw students from all across the state. There is also the Leeton campus of TAFE NSW and the Country Universities Centre in the town library, which offer a variety of training choices to the community while staying in the region. The Yanco Agricultural Institute, which has been at the forefront of development and research

for the MIA’s irrigation farmers, is also located in the shire.

Leeton is fortunate to have a number of high-quality sporting grounds and facilities that accommodate a variety of activities for people of all ages. The newly redeveloped Leeton Aquatic Centre and the Whitton Swimming Pool are two of the council’s amenities. There are several athletic grounds around the shire that provide for various codes of football, cricket, tennis, and netball, as well as the Leeton Indoor Stadium, which accommodates basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer, and is accessible for private gatherings.

Leeton has a thriving arts and culture scene, including the soon-to-be-renovated Roxy Community Theatre, the Major Dooley Library, Henry Lawson Cottage, and the Leeton Museum and Gallery.

The Murrumbidgee River is in the shire offering fishing and other water-related activities. The Ramsar-listed and culturally significant Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands plays an important part in the local ecology with up to 174 bird species have been recorded at the Wetlands.

We have a variety of health services available in Leeton, ranging from General Practitioners (GPs) or GP Registrars, dentists, and allied health services along with the Leeton District Hospital providing limited services. Attracting additional medical services to the Hospital and shire is a high priority of the Leeton Shire and the community.



Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
LIVEABILITY	Provide facilities and opportunities to enable people to connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Multicultural programs, community groups Maintain sporting facilities and promote participation with sporting groups Facilitate the development of “The Hub” an online platform promoting Leeton community groups, Businesses and facilities Maintain and promote council facilities for hire for community group Welcoming Committee 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council Leeton Business Chamber Multicultural NSW Leeton Connect Community groups Community Halls Leeton Museum and Gallery Parks/Sports Grounds
	Provide quality childcare and early learning for pre-school children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the capacity at the Leeton Early Learning Centre with the Construction of an additional room Working with private development within the shire to provide additional child care facility 	Short – Long Term Ongoing LELC additional room by January 2023	Leeton Early Learning Centre Leeton Shire Council Local Contractors Private Development
	Support programs and services that promote the safety of residents and Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote road safety program, driver education, Safety inspections within the shire Advocate for local Police presence within the shire 	Short- Medium Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Road Safety Officer NSW Police Forc Transport for NSW (TfNSW)
	Create, maintain and improve inclusive playgrounds within the shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground safety inspection program including the skate park, splash park As part of the Delivery Program identify equipment requiring upgrades in the coming year and seek funding for replacement 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council NSW Planning and Environment State and Federal Government – Funding
	Provide sporting, recreational and leisure activities catering for people of all ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current recreation facilities Regular consultation with sporting groups on facility upgrade requirement including disability access requirements Seek funding from State and Federal government for improved facilities 	Medium Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Sporting Groups NSW Office of Sport
	Advocate for the recruitment and retention of Hospital staff and doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the newly formed Leeton Health Services Crisis Committee with MOU Consultation with MLHD on the recruitment drive, partly funded by Council 	Short Term Ongoing	Leeton Shire Council Leeton District Hospital MLHD Leeton Health Services Crisis Committee

2.6 Focus Area 6. Tourism and Visitor Economy

The tourism and visitor economy for the near future will predominantly consist of domestic travelers. Besides those traveling for work or to visit family and friends, the majority of visitors to our region will visit for a specific festival, event or sporting competition.

Being able to capture and plan when festivals, events, and sporting competitions are on in the region will enable local businesses to plan for extended trade to capture additional revenue in the town. It will also allow for the collaboration of events, bringing a larger visitor base to the shire.

Recent research has shown that those traveling for food, wine, and fresh produce are statistically going to spend more nights and money in regional towns. Combining these with other events and providing specific food/wine tours, will increase visitor numbers and contribute a greater share to local businesses.

Creating a new campaign with both video and imagery, promoting what Leeton has to offer as a tourist destination including accommodation, destinations, events, and local produce is essential to growing the tourism and visitor economy.

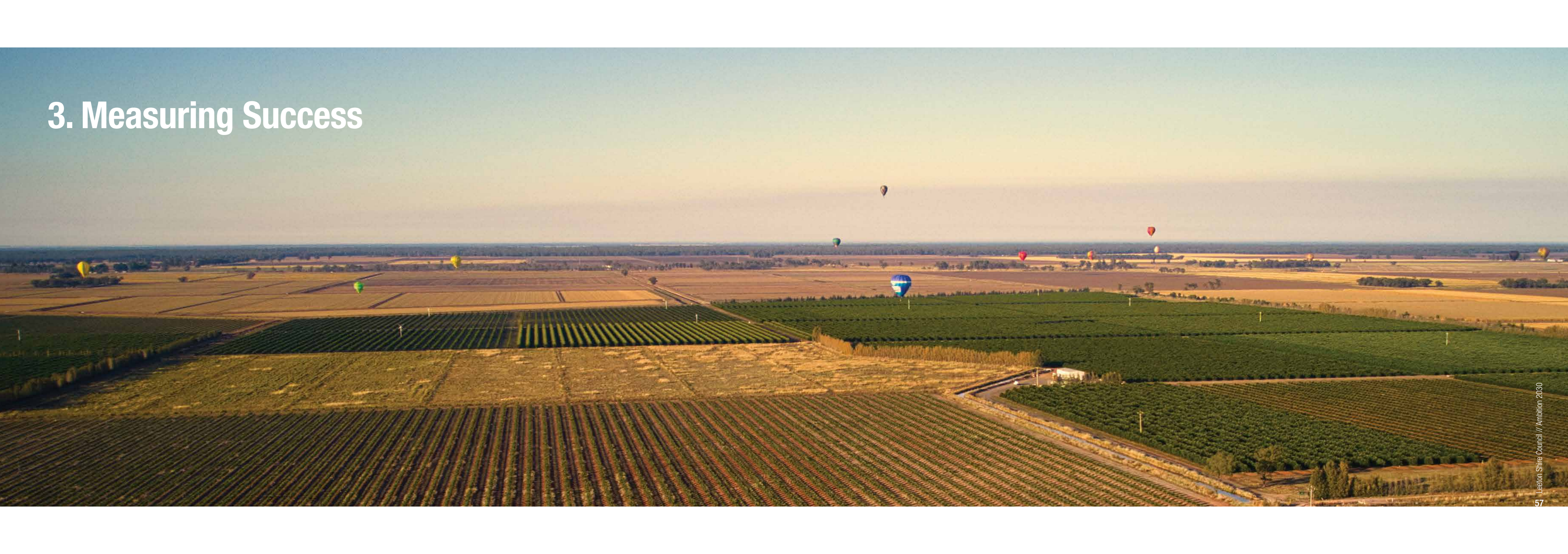


TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY

Focus Area	Opportunity	Action to Support	Timeline	Collaboration Partners
	Promote our towns, villages, events, and attractions across all forms of media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New council website including Tourism and Events Create a yearly calendar of events in print, update additional events on the website and on social media Promote across collaboration partners Research and Develop a Leeton Open for Business Campaign – 4 times a year where businesses are open to capture weekend travellers and day-trippers Invest in new content imagery and video promoting Leeton’s current and emerging attractions. Seek funding for additional promotion Promote Art Deco Way Leeton touring route 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council Leeton Business Chamber Visit Riverina Destination Riverina Murray Murrumbidgee Trails Marketing Local Businesses
	Gogeldrie Riverside Park Redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a range of cabin accommodation to suit a range of travellers Provide new toilet facilities in the recreation reserve Updating of recreation facilities, BBQ’s picnic tables Upgrade Function centre facilities Collaborate with State Water and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to create and fund a destination profile promoting the natural environment and available activities 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council State Water NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
	Set a calendar of events for all known festivals, sporting events, and activities held across the shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calendar of Events for planning and promotion, including updating of councils’ websites Advocate for local businesses to support events/festivals and sporting activities by increasing trade over those events 	Short – Medium Term	Leeton Shire Council – Tourism and Events Destination Riverina Murray Visit Riverina Sporting Groups
	New Events opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and collect ideas and feedback from local businesses and tourism operators to create a Food/ Wine/Music event twice a year Research and Develop a Leeton Open for Business Campaign – 4 times a year where businesses are open to capture weekend travellers and day-trippers – can be in association with major events with a festival type fee Advocate and promote local venues as ideally placed and equipped to host major conference’s 	Medium – Long Term	Leeton Shire Council Local Businesses Local community groups
	Roxy Theatre Redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Roxy Theatre Redevelopment as a major events space Collaborate with retail businesses in the CBD when major events/productions are on to capture additional trade 		Leeton Shire Council Ripa Local Businesses



3. Measuring Success





3.1 Delivering the Strategy

Leeton Shire Council's Economic and Community Development Manager will manage and monitor the implementation of this strategy. The essential function of the Economic and Community Development Manager will be to maintain a consistent emphasis on the implementation of strategic measures that maximise collaboration.

Accountability for delivering specific initiatives listed in the plan rests with the Council department delegated primary responsibility for implementation. Collaboration partners for each action are required to contribute feedback, professional advice and information, contacts, and linkages, and to proactively advocate to other parties to progress delivery.

The Economic and Community Development Manager will assess the strategy yearly, with an annual report created on the year's implementation status, including coordinated input from all key regional collaboration partners to establish a one-year Action Plan that addresses the strategies goals. The Annual Implementation Report and Action Plan will be presented collectively to Leeton Shire Council's Senior Management Team and elected members of council for endorsement.

3.2 Economic Outcomes

Monitoring important data that reflect changes in jobs, investment, and economic diversity is one method of indirectly assessing the progress of the economic development strategy. Below lists the economic indicators that will be tracked in order to monitor the economy. These metrics give insight into the strategy's intended outcomes.

Outcome	Measure	Target	Report
Economic Growth	Gross Regional Product (GRP)	Increase	National Institute of Economics and Industry Research (NIEIR) as reported by ID.
Job Creation	Number of Jobs in the region	Increase	National Institute of Economics and Industry Research (NIEIR) as reported by ID.
Unemployment	Local Unemployment Rate	Decrease	Labour Market Information Portal – Small Area Labour Market Report
Population	Population Growth	Increase	ABS – Estimated Resident Population (ERP) as reported by ID.
New Business	Change in the number of Businesses	Increase	ABS - Counts of Australian Business as reported by ID.
Increased Construction Activity	Number of residential and non-residential building approvals	Increase	Internal - Quarterly
Increase Tourism Activity	Tourism and Hospitality Value	Increase	National Institute of Economics and Industry Research (NIEIR) as reported by ID.



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