LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY SEPARATE ATTACHMENTS FOR

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
24 February 2021
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Content — Page No

FEBRUARY 2021

Leeton Housing Strategy 2021

Draft Strategy prepared for Leeton Shire Council

LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

sea&star
ADVISORY

DRAFTING NOTE:

THIS VERSION OF THE DOCUMENT REPRESENTS A **WORKING DRAFT** ONLY FOR REVIEW BY COUNCIL.

SUBJECT TO THE ENDORSEMENT OF COUNCIL, FINAL DOCUMENTARY PROOFS AND FORMATTING WILL BE COMPLETED SUBJECT TO RELEASE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND CONSULTATION.

ASPECTS TO BE FINALISED INCLUDE:

- LINE EDITING
- PHOTO SELECTION & PLACEMENT
- INFOGRAPHICS UNIFORMITY CHECK
- PAGE NUMBERING
- LAYOUT
- CAPTIONS ON FIGURES
- UNIFORMITY OF FIGURES
- REFERENCES
- CROSS-CHECK COUNCIL STYLE GUIDES

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LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Executive Summary

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Leeton Shire faces the welcome challenge of accommodating a growing population. The Draft Leeton Housing Strategy sets out Council's intended approach to ensuring an ample supply of appropriately diverse housing options for our residents.

Demand for housing has been rising sharply, with prices in Leeton increasing by close to 50 per cent over the past three years. While rising popularity is welcome, insufficiencies and inadequacies in supply are forcing residents and businesses to sacrifice significant social and economic opportunities.

The clear direction for Leeton Shire is to increase rates of dwelling supply and see more low-rise medium density options delivered. Council will seek to achieve this outcome through a range of policy settings, including its forthcoming Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plan and infrastructure contributions review processes.

Options for re-deploying Council assets towards appropriate housing supply will receive close consideration. To better inform the need for increased housing diversity in greater detail, Council will also commission studies on specific segments of the housing market.

Key segments for review include social & community housing, retirement living & aged care and low-rise medium density dwellings. This will include strategic consideration of feasibility impacts, to provide assurance the identified needs will actually get delivered as intended.

The Strategy proposes five strategic directions to guide Council's policy:

1. facilitate new sources of housing supply to support population and economic growth
2. enhance planning for essential infrastructure & services that enable new housing supply
3. increase diversity and choice in dwellings to better meet community needs
4. develop a holistic approach to increasing housing affordability & addressing community vulnerabilities
5. adopt a precincts & places approach to planning new housing and community spaces.

These strategies have been informed by targeted consultation with key stakeholders. Council now welcomes feedback from the broader community on its intended approach.

Following review of community & stakeholder feedback, these strategies will be incorporated into a final Leeton Housing Strategy later in 2021.

Introduction

THIS DRAFT LEETON HOUSING STRATEGY PROPOSES NEW DIRECTIONS TO SHAPE LEETON SHIRE'S RESIDENTIAL FUTURE OVER THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS.

Leeton Shire faces the welcome challenges of growth and the opportunity to live its values as a welcoming, caring community that prides itself on its openness to newcomers from all walks of life.

Over the next two decades, our community is projected to swell with additional people, requiring substantially more investment in and delivery of new dwellings.

This draft Strategy is a first step towards the key commitment of the Leeton Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement to ensure an adequate supply of diverse housing choices. It proposes key directions for how Council will go beyond the adequate towards securing a supply of ample, appropriately diverse housing options.

The Housing Strategy is intended to provide greater certainty for housing providers, businesses and Council in addressing housing needs over time. This draft Strategy approaches this task as follows:

- section 1 sets out key strategic directions and points of strategic alignment offered by other strategies
- section 2 sets out the elements of local and regional housing demand in Leeton and across the Western Riverina
- section 3 examines the structure of current housing supply, including the mix of dwelling types and balance of ownership and rental options
- section 4 identifies some key housing issues facing Leeton Shire considering its housing policies, including housing affordability, diversity of needs across the community and potential opportunity areas for new supply
- section 5 proposes five strategies and related actions for attaining the housing mix Leeton requires for its future.

Subject to considering the feedback of stakeholder and community members, it is proposed that the directions in the final Strategy will inform forthcoming Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan processes.

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Part 1: Strategic Context

Strategic Context

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

LEETON SHIRE IS AT THE HEART OF A WESTERN RIVERINA REGION RENOUN FOR ITS OPEN COMMUNITIES AND AGRIBUSINESS & MANUFACTURING ECONOMY.

Leeton and Griffith are the two major jobs, services and population hubs of the Western Riverina, "Australia's food bowl".

Despite extensive social and economic impacts from drought, extensive structural reforms and long periods of high exchange rates, the region is flourishing.

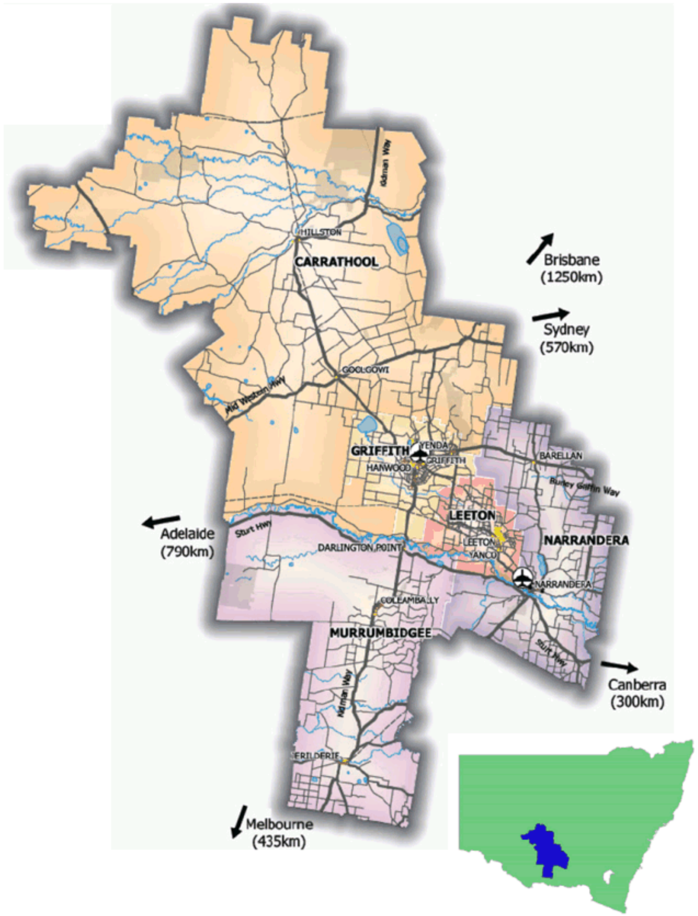
Agribusiness and manufacturing are the cornerstones of the region's success. Over the past seven years, agricultural land values in Leeton Shire have doubled. Rising investment along the supply chain has also fostered new opportunities in employment-intensive manufacturing activities, including food and beverage production.

Both of these key sectors have benefitted from a more moderate exchange rate following the mining boom. They also leverage the region's strategic location to access major metropolitan markets and freight gateways, transport corridors and other value-added industries elsewhere.

The overall effect of these changes has been to broaden growth in agribusiness and manufacturing out across many other sectors of the Western Riverina economy. Unemployment locally was already at relatively low rates, with growing demand encouraging a wide variety of people to move to the region to service its growing population and economic base.

Growth in population is centred on Leeton & Griffith, consistent with their central geographic locations and roles as the Western Riverina's jobs and services hubs.

Official NSW Government projections suggest both centres will continue to grow strongly over the next two decades. The housing markets of both centres reflect considerable growth in demand of recent years, highlighted by sharp appreciation in median house prices.



Strategic Context

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

THIS STRATEGY ADDRESSES A NUMBER OF STATE, REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY.

Housing is the most significant private investment most households will ever make. For many of our most vulnerable residents, social and community housing plays a critical role in offering the stability required to support a wide range of positive social outcomes.

Housing availability is also central to our promise of a welcoming, caring community that embraces those who move here in search of opportunity. Without a roof to offer to cover the heads of potential arrivals, better jobs, incomes and profits will go begging both for the individuals and the businesses who would employ them.

These factors make an effective housing strategy for Leeton Shire a key element in realising our social and economic aspirations for our community. Effective housing policies will afford our current and future residents the best of our social and economic opportunities amid our remarkable environmental and cultural setting.

This Strategy draws together many significant strategic directions for social progress and economic advancement. Some of the most important of these include:

- the *Riverina Murray Regional Plan*'s directions to:
  - promote greater housing choice
  - promote the growth of regional cities and local centres
  - deliver healthy built environments and improved urban design
  - provide access to quality local services in Leeton relevant to community needs
- the *Western Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy*'s priority to grow the Western Riverina's population and labour pool to support the expansion of its 'Engines of Growth' industries
- the *Local Strategic Planning Statement* priority to ensure our community has access to diverse housing options through building housing industry capacity to meet demands
- the *Community Strategic Plan* directions to identify land suitable for more housing and meet housing needs for the elderly, migrants & low-income workers.

	Carathool	Griffith	Leeton	Murrumbidgee	Narranderra
Estimated residential population 2019	2,799	27,029	11,445	3,917	5,899
Population growth rate between 2016 and 2019	0.2%	2.6%	0.3%	-0.3%	-0.8%
Population growth rate 2016 to 2041	-9.8%	7.2%	11.5%	-3.9%	-16.9%
Value added, 2019 ($m)	$228.4	$1,947.3	$777.0	$279.2	$332.1
2019 Gross Regional Product share, Western Riverina	6.3%	54.4%	21.8%	7.8%	9.6%
Unemployment rate 2016	3.2%	4.8%	5.2%	4.5%	6.1%

STATE

- Premier's & State Priorities
- A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

REGIONAL

- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036
- Western Riverina Economic Development Strategy

LOCAL

- Leeton Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- Leeton On The Go, Community Strategic Plan


LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL
Part 2: Housing Demand

Housing Demand

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

DEMAND FOR HOUSING IS RISING IN LEETON AND ACROSS THE BROADER WESTERN RIVERINA.

Official NSW Government forecasts project that Leeton will become home to an extra 1,300 people over the 25 years to 2041. The projected increase in population implies a significant need for additional dwellings over time.

Leeton's housing market serves not only the immediate area, but also is closely linked to the broader community and economy of the Western Riverina. Geographically, the Leeton local government area sits at the centre of three localities separated by about 90 kilometres along Irrigation Way. This means demands within the Leeton market closely reflect the demands & pressures from across the broader Western Riverina, especially those relating to Griffith & Narrandera.

The degree of economic & social integration between Leeton, Griffith & Narrandera can be seen in Census journey to work data:

- more than 10 per cent of Leeton's labour force works in either Griffith or Narrandera, with most of these workers heading west to Griffith
- almost 20 per cent of Narrandera's labour force works in either Griffith or Leeton, with the majority of these workers working in Leeton.

Living in one location and working in another can reflect conflicts between household structure & employment opportunities. For example, one or more household members may find their best job or education prospects outside the community they live in.

Any conflicts between where we live and work are best managed by the affected households. However, an effective housing strategy can increase the choices available to residents by addressing inadequacies in the housing market and better match residential locations with working opportunities.

In taking a regional approach, this Strategy considers region-wide demands for housing and to afford Leeton Shire residents the best balance of living, working & recreational opportunities available. Special focus rests on Griffith & Leeton, as the major jobs & services hubs and localities projected to see population growth.

2016 population
11,407

Population change over 25 years

946
Natural change
(Births less deaths)

+

364
Migration
(Arrivals less departures)

2041 population
12,717

Our people

11,445	Population in 2019
12,717	Population in 2041
38.3	Median age
5.7%	are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
8.1%	were born overseas
21.2%	of population are younger than 15
61.1%	Working age population (15-64yrs)
17.8%	of population are older than 65

Employment and affordability

94.4%	residents are employed, higher than NSW
4,687	jobs
87.10%	work in Leeton
11.50%	work elsewhere in the Riverina region
3.6 km	Median commuting distance to place of work
78%	travel to work by car

Leeton is more affordable than Griffith and Regional NSW

$1,190	Median weekly household income
$195	Median weekly rent
$1,300	Median monthly mortgage

Housing Demand

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

RISING HOUSEHOLD COUNTS & CHANGING HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION ARE KEY CHANGE FACTORS SHIFTING LOCAL DEMAND FOR HOUSING.

Households are the key unit of account reflecting demands for housing. Increases in the number of households, or changes in the relative composition of all households imply the new number of dwellings required and the scale of dwellings best suited to the changing demography of an area.

The major household structures in the Western Riverina are couples with kids, couples without kids and lone person households. Together, these three classifications account for upwards of 80 per cent of all households.

The NSW Government's main demographic projections suggest Leeton and Griffith will both see large increases in household numbers, reflecting marked shifts towards more lone person households and couples with no kids.

In Leeton, total household numbers are projected to rise by close to 20 per cent by 2041. However, the number of people per household is set to fall substantially. This is because most of the growth in households will relate to either people living alone, or couples living without kids.

In total, the projections suggest that lone persons and couples without kids will account for around 61 per cent of all households in 2041, up from around 57 per cent in 2016.

Looking at Leeton and Griffith as an aggregate, the increase in the numbers of households will be significantly larger again.

Close to 2,400 extra households will locate in the region's two major hubs in 2041 compared to 2016 levels. Around 90 per cent of this increase is projected to reflect additional lone persons households or couples without kids.

Housing tenure is another significant dimension to consider in understanding housing demands. While most either own their homes, or hold a mortgage to repay, close to 30 per cent of households in Leeton Shire rent their homes.

LEETON'S CHANGING HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

	total households	household average size	lone persons	couples no kids	couples with kids
IN 2016:	4,493	2.54	1,370	1,178	1,217
IN 2041:	5,306 (+813, +18%)	2.40 (-0.14, -5.6%)	1,743 (+373, +27%)	1,484 (+306, +26%)	1,271 (+54, +4.4%)

GRIFFITH & LEETON'S FUTURE HOUSEHOLDS

	total households	household average size	lone persons	couples no kids	couples with kids
2041 VS 2016:	+2,384 (+16.5%)	-0.18 (-6.8%)	+1,095 (+28.2%)	+1,058 (+28.7%)	+127 (+2.8%)

Housing Demand

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

OUR NEEDS HOUSING NEEDS CHANGE OVER OUR LIVES - YET OUR COMMUNITY STRUCTURE IS CHANGING, TOO.

In our youth, we tend to be more active and make greater use of education services. In our prime working age, we may face the most time-poor years of our lives, placing a higher premium on convenience and easy accessibility as a result. In our older years, we are often wealthier, but more reliant on health and other community services - and especially so as our personal mobility declines.

These generalised profiles do not describe all residents' circumstances well. However, they do reflect typical outcomes for many people.

Housing is the most significant private infrastructure we invest in. Our changing needs over our lives are reflected in where we are best suited to live and what type of dwelling fits us best - as well as what we can afford to invest in a home.

As for elsewhere, Leeton's demographic profile is expected to steadily grow older in coming decades. Projected population growth is concentrated among those 65 and older, with this cohort expected to increase by more than 1,000 people.

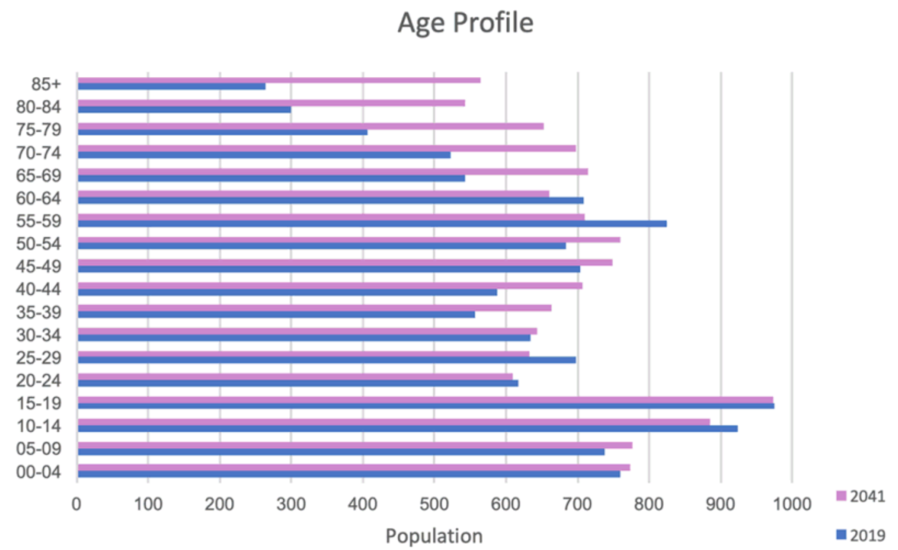
Even so, the working-age are projected to continue to be the largest cohort in our community. Among this cohort will be those with growing families, who not only see the needs of adults evolve, but also welcome new members into their households and the broader community.

The trend of many among our young striking out on their own in their early twenties will likely also continue, reducing household sizes and dwelling use as they leave.

These changes imply a range of trends and demands to be addressed, including:

- greater opportunities to 'age in place', supported by quality services
- increased provision of smaller dwellings or block sizes, that are likely to prove more affordable and more manageable as our mobility declines
- greater housing options closer to amenity and services, including child care
- better integration of community spaces & places with our own homes
- investigating innovative options for freeing up better use of existing dwellings.

LEETON'S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY




LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL
Part 3: Housing Supply

Housing Supply

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

LOCAL AND REGIONAL DWELLING SUPPLY HAS EXPANDED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE PAST DECADE, WITH SOME TYPES OF SUPPLY INCREASINGLY ALLOCATED TO THOSE NOT USUALLY RESIDENT IN LEETON SHIRE.

Over the decade between 2006 and 2016, the total number of private dwellings in Leeton Shire increased by around 240 dwellings - an increase of around 5.3 per cent.

The vast majority of these dwellings are occupied - close to 90 per cent in 2016. Of the occupied dwellings, most of the occupation is by those who are usually resident in the region. However, there are also signs that Leeton Shire's dwellings are increasingly used for shorter term, more flexible uses by temporary visitors. For example:

- while freestanding houses represent the vast majority of all stock, and the total number of private dwellings increased significantly, freestanding houses occupied by people usually resident in Leeton declined slightly over the decade
- the number of flats, units and apartments occupied by usual residents in Leeton declined dramatically by -36 per cent. This suggests many of these dwellings may have been re-purposed in favour of temporary visitors instead of usual residents
- the number of other types of private dwellings - like caravans, cabins, tents & adjuncts to commercial premises - occupied by usual residents also declined by 34 per cent.

These shifts suggest the economic needs of a growing region to accommodate people not usually living in Leeton Shire may be reducing supply for those it is home to.

This is likely a good economic outcome, but likely increases social risks from dislocation. In particular, the most vulnerable members of our community who may be least able to compete economically for housing are at more pronounced risks from reduced affordability and increased exposure to other social pressures.

The dwelling category seeing a sharp rise in popularity among our usual residents is semi-detached housing, including terraces and townhouses. The number of usual residents occupying these dwellings more than doubled over the decade to 2016, rising by 137 per cent.

Semi-detached dwellings are also highly appropriate for those who do not normally reside here, suggesting it should be a key focus for Leeton Shire's future supply.

LEETON'S CHANGING PRIVATE DWELLING PROFILE

	all private dwellings*	occ separate house	occ semi-detached	occ flat, unit or apartment	occ other dwellings
IN 2006:	4,510	3,385	83	334	53
IN 2016:	4,747 (+237, +5.3%)	3,380 (-5, -0.1%)	197 (+114, +137%)	214 (-120, -36%)	35 (-18, -34%)

GRIFFITH & LEETON'S PRIVATE DWELLING PROFILE

	all private dwellings*	occ separate house	occ semi-detached	occ flat, unit or apartment	occ other dwellings
2016 VS 2006:	+1,147	+141	+249	-94	-

Housing Supply

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

FEWER PEOPLE OWN THEIR OWN HOMES IN LEETON SHIRE THAN PREVIOUSLY THE CASE, WITH RISING NUMBERS OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL.

Trends over successive Census periods suggest that fewer dwellings are inhabited by owner-occupiers, with significant increases in the number of dwellings that are rented.

In total, owner-occupied dwelling counts fell by around 120 between 2006 and 2016 - a contraction of about 4.4 per cent.

Offsetting the contraction in owner-occupation has been the rise of rental properties. Between 2006 and 2016, the number of rentals increased by almost 90.

The sources of increased rental availability suggest that the case for increased social and community housing requires careful review. For example:

1. the number of social housing dwellings decreased by 70 (-38 per cent) in the ten years to 2016
2. the number of community, church & not-for-profit rentals also decreased off its modest existing levels
3. in total, this means the number of "non-market" rental properties has fallen from more than 200 properties in 2006 to just 125 dwellings now
4. by contrast, "market-based" rentals directed either by real estate agents or other private households increased by 164 dwellings - a 23 per cent increase.

Census data also suggests the median rent has increased by around $60, from $135 to $195, between 2006 and 2016 - a growth rate of 44 per cent. Growth in Leeton Shire's median household income has not kept pace with growth in rents at 40 per cent.

This suggests the rental market is in general less affordable than was previously the case. More tellingly, it suggests the risk of some segments facing acute reductions in housing affordability exposure to a broader range of social risks, as:

- some households with limited negotiating power, reliance on social support or no alternative work prospects may have seen markedly low growth in income
- affordable housing options have contracted, with great reliance on market-based rental supply.

LEETON SHIRE'S OWNERSHIP & TENURE PROFILE

	owned outright	owned with mortgage	rented properties
IN 2006:	1,459	1,255	1,042
IN 2016:	1,396 (-63, -4.3%)	1,199 (-56, -4.5%)	1,131 (+89, +8.5%)

LEETON SHIRE'S CHANGING PRIVATE RENTALS PROFILE

	total rentals	State agencies	other households	community groups	real estate agents
IN 2006:	1,042	182	274	20	435
IN 2016:	1,131 (+89, +8.5%)	112 (-70, -38%)	308 (+34, +12%)	13 (-7, -35%)	565 (+130, +30%)

Housing Supply

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

BEDROOM COUNTS SUGGEST A RISING MISMATCH BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES AND DWELLING STRUCTURES.

Review of 2016 Census data reflects that Leeton Shire's housing stock is heavily concentrated on 'large scale' dwelling footprints, consistent with its emphasis on large block sizes and free-standing houses.

Key aspects of the configuration of the 2016 dwelling stock are:

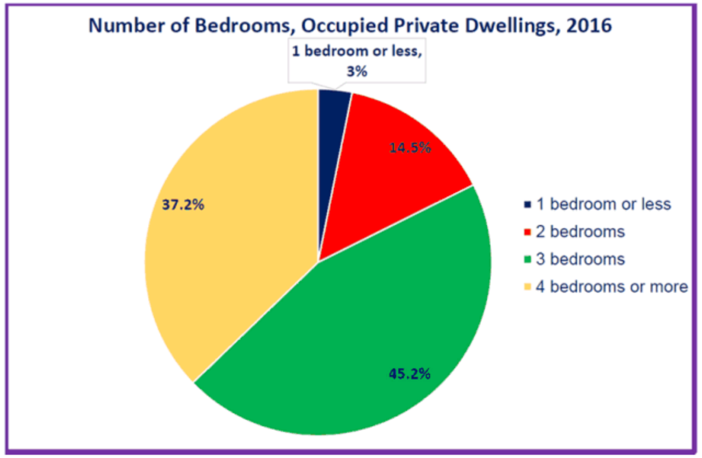
1. approaching half the occupied private dwelling stock has three bedrooms (45.2 per cent, 1,689 dwellings)
2. four bedroom dwellings account for more than a third of the occupied private dwelling stock (37.2 per cent, 1,391 dwellings)
3. together, this means more than 82 per cent of occupied private dwellings are configured with three bedrooms or more
4. just 659 occupied private dwellings are configured with two bedrooms or less (17.6 per cent).

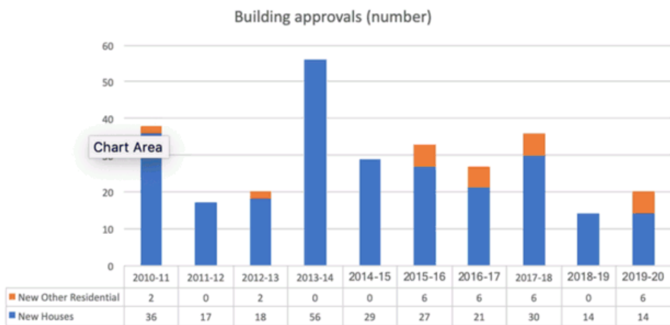
This large-scale supply configuration in the current stock carries the implication of a clear mismatch between household needs and the available supply. Today, Leeton Shire's largest cohort among households is people living alone, followed by couples with kids and couples without kids.

Over time, lone persons are expected to continue to grow in prominence, with couples without kids also projected to account for a larger number of households than couples with kids by 2041.

Many households will continue to choose a larger dwelling by preference. However, limited supply alternatives likely mean many households are presently forced to over-invest in their property relative to what they would otherwise opt for.

Building approvals data for the four financial years since the 2016 Census suggest freestanding houses continue to outstrip supply other dwelling configurations, suggesting potential issues relating to the respective feasibility or site availability of the two options.





LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Part 4: Key Housing Issues

Housing Affordability

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

In addition to rising rents, a swelling population has seen median house prices increase significantly in recent years in the Western Riverina's major population centres.

Median house prices in Leeton and Griffith have risen significantly in recent times. Much of the increase relates to the last three calendar years, with increases of:

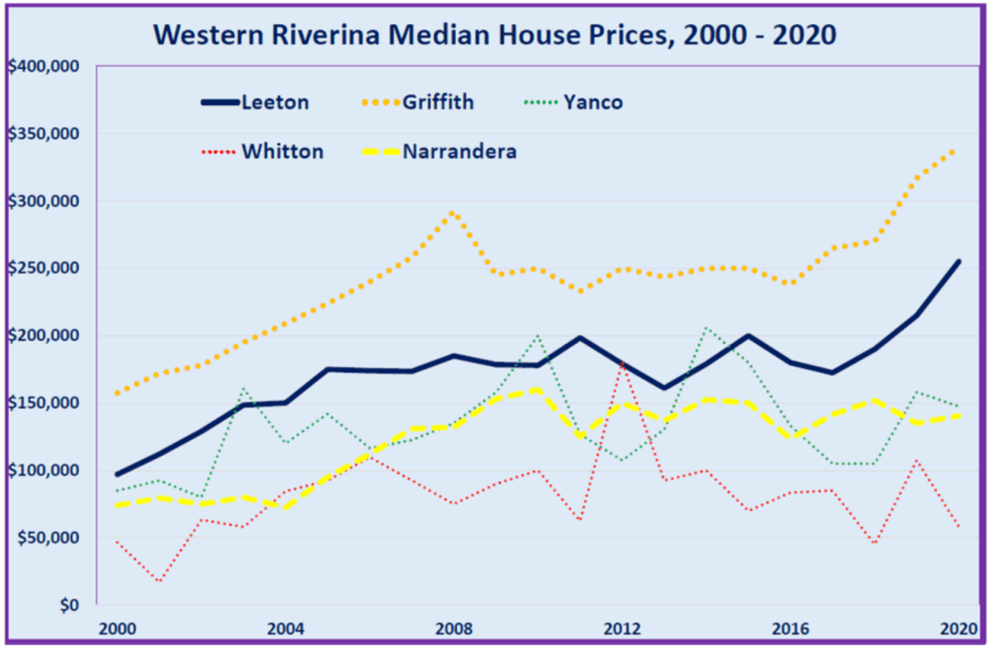
- +48 per cent in Leeton (+$82,500)
- +28 per cent in Griffith (+$75,000).

The increase in prices follows recent increases in population, with more than 700 extra residents arriving in the Leeton Shire and Griffith City local government areas in the three years to June 2019.

The figure right reflects the movements in median house prices across Leeton, Griffith, Narrandera, Yanco & Whitton over time.

While all markets in the Western Riverina tend to move together to some degree, there are also some distinct trends:

- Griffith consistently sees the Western Riverina's highest median prices, with the differential between Griffith and Leeton median prices relatively stable over time
- Leeton generally sees a substantial premium in prices relative to the other localities, with some evidence this premium may be growing in recent years
- while Leeton & Griffith have seen relatively sharp rises in demand recently, this is not the case in other locations. The region's two major population centres appear to be less closely related to the other sub-markets now than historically has been the case. This could imply buyers are increasing the emphasis they place on locations that offer a wider range of jobs, amenities & services
- Yanco & Whitton see relatively small volumes of sales annually and so reflect substantial volatility in median prices from year to year
- Yanco & Whitton medians appear to increasingly move more in keeping with Narrandera than with Leeton. This could suggest residents with reduced capacity to pay are increasingly trading off the three locations as alternatives.



Key Segments of Leeton's Housing Market

Amid the broader balance of supply, demand and development, some segments of Leeton Shire's housing market have special needs for more detailed collaboration and review.

Initial consultation with key stakeholders identified a number of issues requiring more detailed investigation.

Homelessness and social vulnerability

Consulted parties also emphasised the need to respond in a way that reflects:

- the way housing, housing affordability and broader social risks facing the vulnerable relate to one another
- the spectrum of income and housing outcomes (see right) that relate the transition from less secure housing tenures to more secure housing tenures and better social outcomes.

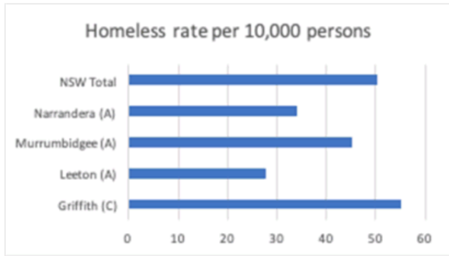
Consulted parties also emphasised that while homelessness is relatively low in Leeton Shire (the lowest among Western Riverina localities, see right), it can not be taken for granted, given the rising pressure on affordability and limited options available for non-market supply.

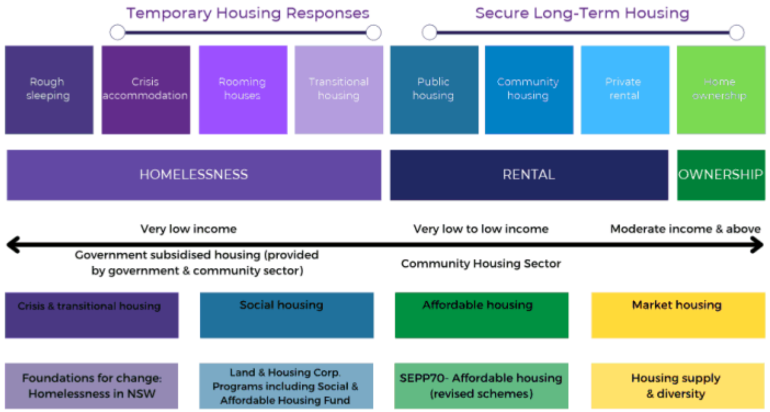
Disability living

The number of residents living with disability grew from 545 in 2011 to 586 (5.2 per cent) in 2016. The largest proportion of the community needing assistance is aged over 70.

The Council recognises the importance of social housing to maintain social diversity and to provide a pillar of stability to address a broader range of disadvantages and needs in the Shire.

Expected waiting times for social housing, FACS





Key Segments of Leeton's Housing Market

Social & community housing and broader affordability issues

Consulted parties emphasised the need to respond to housing affordability holistically, including the broader social consequences of reduced housing security for the vulnerable. Consulted parties strongly supported the view that a social & community housing strategy should complement the more general housing strategy.

Lower cost residential accommodation for seasonal workers.

Leeton experiences seasonal population growth from itinerant workers employed in industries such as fruit picking and processing.

Currently the Leeton LEP permits rural workers dwellings in rural zones and boarding houses in most residential areas. While low cost, these options are clearly at the low end of the spectrum of appropriate dwelling supply, with many of these workers inherently among our most vulnerable.

Respondents suggested Council establish clear development standards for accommodation options for these workers while protecting local amenity.

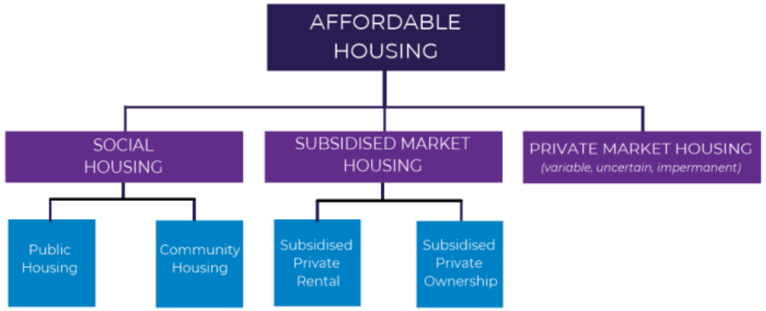
Development industry

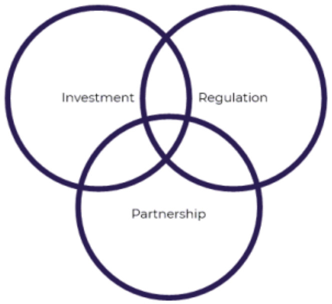
Consulted parties emphasised the need to test that housing outcomes are assessed as both socially desirable and commercially feasible to deliver. Respondents also identified that infrastructure contributions can have a disproportionate impact on feasibility. More generally, respondents emphasised the way in which the regulation, partnership and investment activities of government impact on feasibility.

Aged care accommodation

Respondents identified that limited retirement living options in town can force old members of our community into a situation where they either must:

- remain in a large house inappropriate to the requirements of their stage of life
- opt to be put in aged care prematurely
- move to neighbouring communities with a better retirement living alternatives.





Housing Supply & Housing Demand Balance

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Leeton Shire faces a critical challenge in planning for more dwellings better likely to suit the needs of its households.

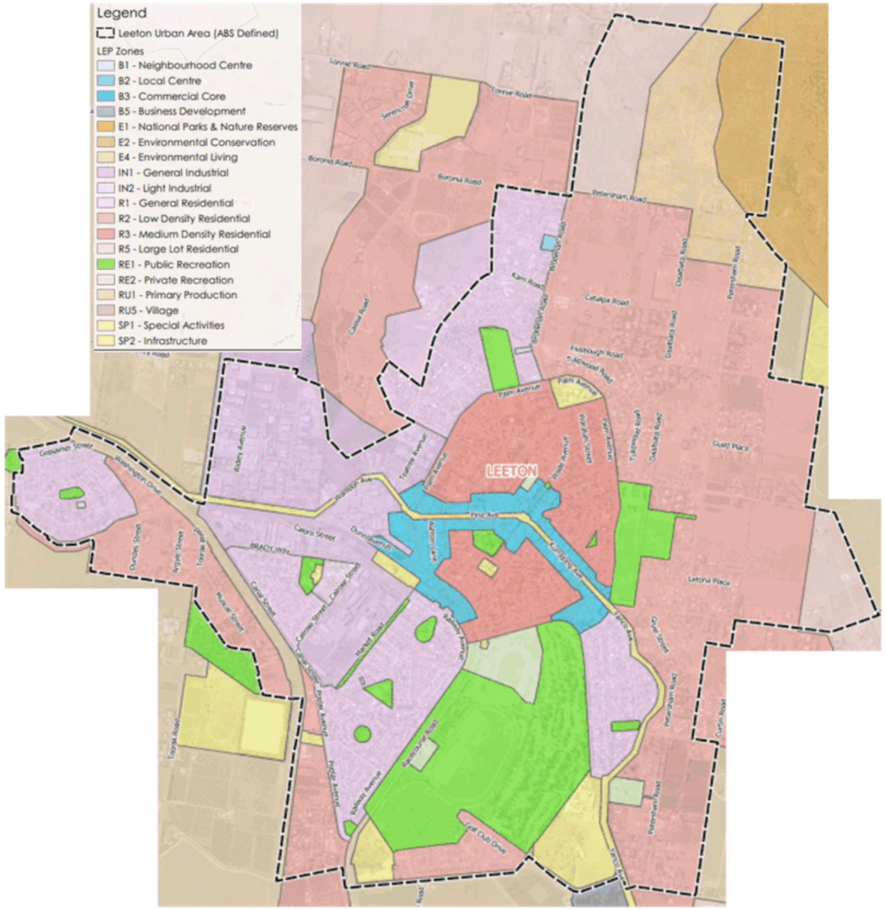
Analysis supporting this Strategy has suggested:

- the existing stock of supply has a relatively large footprint
- household size is projected to contract over time
- rents and prices are rising faster than household income
- social and community housing supply has contracted
- Council needs to work closely with potential providers of community housing, social housing, retirement living and low-rise, medium density dwellings to understand what is both desirable and feasible to deliver
- infrastructure is required in the right place and at the right time to support staged housing growth.

While Leeton Shire has a number of supply precincts already zoned, the current profile of development is unlikely to best match the unmet needs of households for smaller-footprint, more affordable stock.

Key directions for Council to consider as part of forthcoming Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan processes are to investigate opportunities for:

- smaller block sizes that reduce the total costs of development and prices of the property purchased
- increased supply of smaller configuration dwellings, including 'missing middle' low rise, medium density supply options
- development of new high amenity planned community precincts to the south of Leeton town centre, potentially including for retirement living, 'missing middle' dwellings and new community or social housing precincts
- potential re-purposing of publicly-owned or privately-owned sites that could provide medium density options.



Social Vulnerability due to Inadequate Rental Options

New population growth will continue to drive up demand for rental properties and social and affordable housing.

Housing stress is defined as being very low and low moderate households paying rent or housing repayments greater than 30 per cent of their household income.

Rental housing is a flexible option, especially for newly arrived households in our area.

Housing stress is low in Leeton as compared to elsewhere, indicative of our relative affordability.

Since 2006, the number of households renting privately has been growing.

In general, renters are less likely to suffer housing stress in Leeton Shire than home owners. However, it will be socially advantageous to see renters progress to more secure housing that reduces their exposure to adverse social outcomes.

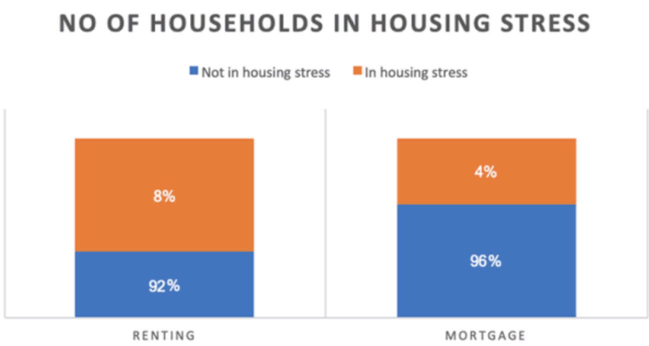
In 2016, 59 per cent and 22 per cent of migrants that settled in Leeton arrived over 10 years and 5 years ago respectively.

It is presumed that this cohort rented initially prior to purchasing a property.

Despite growth in supply over time, Leeton also continues to have a shortage of rental accommodation.

Skilled workers recruited from out of town are often reluctant to purchase homes immediately. Businesses indicate that they lose workers to other towns as they cannot easily find suitable rental accommodation in Leeton.

The Whitton Town Improvement Committee also reports that demand for rental accommodation outstrips supply in Whitton.




LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL
Part 5: Strategy & Implementation

Strategy 1

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

FACILITATE NEW SOURCES OF HOUSING SUPPLY TO SUPPORT POPULATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The NSW Government's main projections imply Leeton requires 950 extra dwellings by 2041 to accommodate 1,300 extra people - averaging 38 new dwellings a year.

However, Leeton Shire intends to facilitate a substantially greater increase in the rate of local dwelling supply at more rapid rates, as:

1. we want current residents to enjoy better housing options, sooner. Residents will enjoy greater affordability, liveability and suitability in housing if the local market realises more dwellings and more variety in locations and types available
2. Griffith is also growing strongly and many people may value a Leeton alternative
3. our needs may be greater than main projections imply - high scenarios suggest Leeton & Griffith's growth could be two-thirds above the main scenario projection
4. Leeton's economy is presently bearing the costs of insufficient flexibility and capacity in the housing market. Consultations suggest businesses have difficulty attracting skilled workers from elsewhere, with few rental market options, cutting opportunities for migrating workers to 'try before they buy' the Leeton way of life
5. greater supply should moderate price increases. Recent house price increases show a welcome rise in Leeton's popularity. However, the flip side of price increases is reduced affordability and a harder task of buying into the market
6. commuting patterns show many households live and work in two or more locations across the Western Riverina. Our Shire will strive to provide our own residents and those in neighbouring communities with more options for the best balance between home, work, recreation & services possible.

Leeton Shire already has many localities in place to accommodate additional dwellings, especially to Leeton's north and east. However, Council will go further and investigate new precincts & locations to source additional supply.

Potential sites between McQuillan Road and Yanco deserve close attention. Yanco properties have sold at significant discounts to Leeton in recent years and are away from the sensitive Fivebough Wetlands. With additional infrastructure servicing requirements limited, these areas could offer cost-effective supply if potential sustainability & liveability issues are addressed appropriately.

#	Action	Timing
1.1	Plan for increased housing supply to meet projected local & regional population growth	Immediate
1.2	Investigate potential new housing supply precincts between Yanco and McQuillan Road	Short Term
1.3	Undertake a strategic housing supply feasibility study to ensure intended development is likely to eventuate	Immediate
1.4	Identify sites that could be repurposed for housing supply	Short Term

Strategy 2

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

ENHANCE PLANNING FOR ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES THAT ENABLE NEW HOUSING SUPPLY

Many factors must be considered in developing new housing precincts to ensure our communities continue to enjoy the high-quality services, infrastructure and amenity they expect of Leeton Shire.

Planning & assessment frameworks focus on a 'triple bottom line' assessment of environmental, social & economic impacts on prospective development. Many considerations rest under these headings, with key issues including provision of:

- trunk water & sewer infrastructure to allow for connections to the new dwellings
- roadworks for access to new precincts and integration with the existing network
- impacts on stormwater flows and broader environmental considerations
- potential needs for more open space and community infrastructure & services, including libraries, sporting fields, playgrounds, footpaths & bikepaths
- child care facilities, which are critical to integrating new residents with our local economy, community and education pathways.

In recent years, Council has invested considerable resources in planning & delivering 'capacity building' investments, including:

- extensive improvements to parklands and footpaths
- significant new investments in community facilities like Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre, renovation of the Roxy Theatre and the Leeton Showground Grandstand
- the recently completed water smart meters project, which is already realising significant efficiencies across our water supply system.

With these enablers in place, most of the remaining costs and implications relate to direct costs of development - water, sewer, roads, stormwater & open space. Key directions for Council to enable new housing supply as rapidly as desired are:

- finalising new asset management plans for these asset classifications
- profiling infrastructure costs & timing in keeping with LEP & DCP implications
- reviewing Leeton Shire's infrastructure contributions policy, consistent with the forthcoming NSW Government response to the NSW Productivity Commissioner's review of infrastructure contributions.

#	Action	Timing
2.1	Ensure enabling infrastructure planning and delivery is aligned with the timing of housing supply to ensure new communities are highly liveable	Short Term
2.2	Complete current asset management planning processes to establish network-wide capacity and asset replacement requirements	Short Term
2.3	Use the strategic feasibility assessment outcomes to evaluate new requirements for network capacity arising from projected population growth or potential rezonings	Short Term
2.4	Profile infrastructure investment in keeping with Local Environmental Plan modifications	Short Term
2.5	Review, and if applicable, revise Council's infrastructure contributions policy	Short Term
2.6	Develop a Growth Infrastructure Funding & Servicing Strategy, inclusive of a revised infrastructure contributions policy	Medium Term

Strategy 3

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

INCREASE DIVERSITY AND CHOICE IN DWELLINGS TO BETTER MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Forthcoming Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) processes are key opportunities to re-balance Leeton Shire's housing supply.

Demographic trends suggest Leeton's average household size will continue to shrink over time. Strong demand for traditional, low density, freestanding houses will continue. However, Council also seeks to broaden the diversity of dwellings supplied to improve the choices available to our residents.

To respond to and recognise the variety of current and emerging needs among residents, the LEP and DCP processes will include review of our planning controls to encourage greater variety of dwelling types in appropriate locations.

Demand for dwelling diversity largely relates to specific segments of the housing market. Improving dwelling diversity intelligently requires richer information on:

- the nature and extent of residents' demands for greater diversity in housing stock
- potential obstacles to feasibility of supply options that can better suit their needs.

To address these emerging needs, Council intends to commission a number of studies for specific segments, including:

- a social & community housing study
- a retirement living & aged care study
- a low-rise medium density dwellings study (a 'missing middle' study).

Each study should include a snapshot of the current stock and operators in each segment, new activity levels in each segment, the supply-demand balance and outlook, inhibitors & constraints on growth and a high-level feasibility assessment.

Each study should be developed for Leeton Shire, but with a view to the region-wide perspective. In adopting a region-wide perspective, differences in availability of key services and residents' transport access should also be considered.

#	Action	Timing
3.1	Incorporate opportunities for increased dwelling diversity in appropriate locations into the revised Local Environmental Plan and new Development Control Plan	Immediate
3.2	Undertake a social & community housing study	Short Term
3.3	Undertake a retirement living & aged care housing study	Short Term
3.4	Undertake a low-rise medium density dwellings ('missing middle') study	Short Term
3.5	Develop a detailed proposal to re-purpose the Brobenah Road dog park, considering options for use either as community housing or low-rise medium density dwellings	Short Term
3.6	Identify small-scale opportunity sites that could support increased dwelling diversity, including in Yanco, Whitton and Murrami	Medium Term

Strategy 4

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOP A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO INCREASING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & ADDRESSING COMMUNITY VULNERABILITIES

Recent price increases - up close to 50 per cent in Leeton over three years - have increased the wealth of most households, but seen others suffer reduced living standards and increased exposure and vulnerability to related social risks.

Housing affordability and its consequences makes for a complicated social equation:

1. affordability itself reflects housing supply, housing demand and the income levels
2. greater supply tends to lower prices and higher affordability
3. greater demand tends to raise prices and reduce affordability
4. more economic activity generally leads to more job and income opportunities, increasing affordability
5. rising prices increase the wealth of some while also making home-ownership a more remote possibility for others
6. not all residents have the same financial interests or security of housing tenure. Most own their own home, but many of those still have mortgages to pay off, while others rent, or rely on other options. This means many residents see their housing security dependent on market conditions or the discretion of others
7. as well as increased exposure to rising prices and rents, reduced security of tenure increases vulnerability to a wide range of negative social consequences, including:

   - homelessness
   - reduced spending on nutritional or medical necessities
   - reduced access to social services
   - increased risk of mental health issues, drug abuse and domestic violence
   - reduced educational attainment, workplace productivity and income.

There are many things Council can influence to improve affordability. Increased local job creation; increased housing supply; increased supply of social or community housing; better networked, more accessible social services; and smaller block sizes and greater diversity of dwelling types are all in the influence of Council.

Council will draw together a holistic strategy to address housing affordability and vulnerability to negative social consequences. This strategy will reflect collaboration with key community stakeholders, informed by the best available evidence and special regard for vulnerable segments, including newly-arrived migrant workers.

#	Action	Timing
4.1	Ahead of the release of the 2021 Census data, prepare a Housing Affordability and Community Vulnerability Issues Paper	Immediate
4.2	Develop a holistic Affordable Housing Strategy following the release of the 2021 Census data	Short Term
4.3	Collaborate with state & federal government agencies to identify and extend opportunities to renew social and affordable housing supply options	Short Term

Strategy 5

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

ADOPT A PRECINCTS & PLACES APPROACH TO PLANNING NEW HOUSING & COMMUNITY SPACES

Adopting new approaches to collaborative community planning can establish our new housing precincts as highly-liveable, vibrant, well-serviced communities.

Good housing outcomes rely on drawing many things together effectively. Chance alone can see things right, but more often, good planning is essential to success.

Leeton Shire aspires to bring together a number of elements for our communities. These include ease of access between home and work, integration with our magnificent environmental, social and sporting spaces, and ready links to cultural, community infrastructure & services, open spaces and vibrant commercial centres. Traditional planning approaches have not always served multiple outcomes well.

In recent years, the NSW Government has made a number of enhancements to institutions, frameworks and practice for identifying, assessing and developing new housing, commercial and community spaces and precincts. Key elements include:

- creating **Placemaking NSW**, to:
    - lead creation of great places and experiences, plan for a changing and thriving NSW and inspire resilient communities and regions
    - help draw together the needs of & opportunities for people, places, economy and the environment through integrated planning approaches.
- the ***Better Placed*** integrated design policy, for evaluating & implementing better design for NSW's built environment; ***Practitioner's Guide to Movement and Place***, to integrate movement corridors and places effectively; and draft ***Urban Design for Regional NSW***, tailored for places beyond major metropolitan centres
- new growth- or place-based infrastructure compact planning processes. These compacts pursue more sustainable, liveable & productive places by bringing together government, community & industry to collaborate on potential new job or residential precincts
- enhancing liveability by integrating housing with 'green grids' of natural amenity.

To date, these elements have largely focused on Sydney's context. However, the aspiration is to see all of NSW enjoy prosperous, high amenity places & precincts. Council will both adopt these elements into its own practice and collaborate with NSW Government agencies to pilot their application in a regional context.

#	Action	Timing
5.1	Identify Crown lands and other sites that could be re-purposed to improve liveability and sustainability outcomes	Short Term
5.2	Apply the Better Placed policy framework and processes in Leeton Shire to enhance the sustainability, liveability and productivity of Leeton Shire's precincts	Short Term
5.3	Collaborate with and advocate to Placemaking NSW to adopt Leeton as a pilot for application of a finalised ***Urban Design for Regional NSW*** guide	Short Term

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The actions against these strategies are framed against three implementation horizons:

- Immediate
- Short Term: 0-2 years
- Medium Term: 3-5 years

Progress will be measured against actions resourced and then tracked through Council's integrated budgeting and reporting framework.

In addition, Council will provide an annual report on progress and outcomes in Leeton Shire.

REACH US

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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