

Leeton On The Go

Towards 2035

Community Strategic Plan



The Leeton On The Go – towards 2035

Community Strategic Plan has been developed for and by the community of Leeton Shire with the support of Leeton Shire Council.

It documents our community's shared vision as at November 2024 for where we'd like to be in 2035.



Leeton Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Wiradjuri Country and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal people and their cultures, and Elders, past, present and emerging of our Shire.

Wiradjuri People's connection to the land, sky and water is continual and unbroken.

Foreword

Our community believes that Leeton Shire has a bright future. We know that achieving this takes a clear vision, strong leadership and dedicated contributions by many to see our aspirations delivered.

The *Leeton On The Go - towards 2035* Community Strategic Plan describes our community's vision for its future and sets out the steps we can take towards achieving that vision, working together to make Leeton Shire the place we want it to be. Refreshed in November 2024, this Plan builds on previous Plans from 2016 and 2022, all of which were informed through extensive community engagement.

Through its delivery, *Leeton On The Go - towards 2035* Community Strategic Plan seeks to protect and strengthen what we value about Leeton Shire and enhance our future socially, economically, culturally and environmentally.

This Plan seeks to respond to the following important questions:

- Where are we at today?
- Where do we want to be in 10+ years' time?
- How will we get there?
- Who may be able to contribute to reaching our goals?
- How will we know that we're on track or that we have arrived?

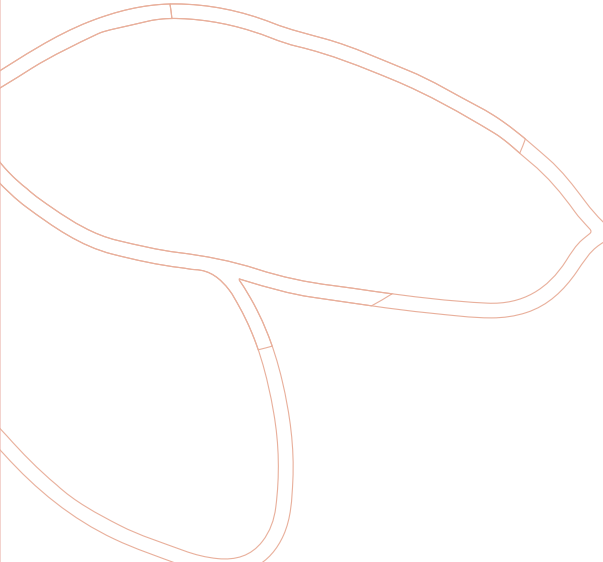
Leeton On The Go - towards 2035 provides an important evidence base for Council, other levels of government, non-government organisations, business and industry, and community groups and organisations about where the community would like to see valuable resources such as time, energy and money directed over the coming years to ensure our long-term wellbeing.

All of us have a role in contributing to our local community to enable it to be strong, healthy and prosperous.

Leeton On The Go - towards 2035 points us in the right direction to ensure our individual and collective contributions align with that goal.

Leeton Shire Council has helped to steward the collation of this Plan on behalf of the community. The Council is just one of the organisations that will consider what the community across Leeton Shire has said when it develops its own organisational plan (called a Delivery Program). Other organisations are asked to do the same as we collectively contribute to supporting the community of Leeton Shire to achieve its goals.

Let's continue to work together to ensure that the Leeton community's shared aspirational objectives are achieved.



If everyone is moving forward together, success takes care of itself. – HENRY FORD

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now. – ALAN LAKEIN



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Community Strategic Plan



1 Introduction

What is a Community Strategic Plan?

Leeton On The Go – towards 2035 is Leeton Shire's Community Strategic Plan. It outlines the community's aspirations and long-term vision for Leeton Shire.

This Plan is a community-driven plan. Its preparation has been supported by Council in collaboration with, and on behalf of residents, other levels of government, business and industry representatives, and community organisations. Responsibility for meeting the long-term community vision and desired outcomes rests with us all. When the Plan refers to 'we', it refers to all of us in the Leeton Shire community including Council, State and Commonwealth Government agencies, community organisations and groups, business and industry, and local residents.

A good plan is like a road map: it shows the final destination and usually the best way to get there.

– H STANLEY JUDD

Leeton On The Go – towards 2035 has been prepared under five focus areas:

- A connected, inclusive and enriched community
- A safe, active and healthy community
- A thriving regional economy
- A quality built and natural environment
- Strong leadership and civic participation.

For each focus area, a series of **goals** has been identified based on our community's vision for the future.

For each community goal there are **strategies** described for achieving the outcome, along with suggestions about **who in the community might contribute to delivering those strategies**.

In essence, the goals and strategies in each focus area are our road map: the goals are the destination we are striving for and the strategies are how we're plan to reach that destination.

Finally, there are **indicators** that will support us to measure our progress along the road, so that we can confirm that we are moving towards our destination.

Community groups, sporting organisations, other levels of government and individual community members can use this Plan to guide the way they deliver services, invest resources, prioritise actions and in other ways make contributions towards achieving the community's goals. Our community may also use this Plan as an evidence base to support applications for funding or encourage investment in activities that will support the achievement of our community's goals.

Every four years, on behalf of the community, Council prepares a State of the Shire Report to provide an update on how the implementation the Community Strategic Plan strategies are progressing. That Report gives a status update on 'where we are now' and informs the development of each future iteration of Leeton Shire's Community Strategic Plan. The most recent State of the Shire Report, which informed the development of *Leeton on the Go – towards 2035*, was completed in October 2024 after extensive community engagement and can be found [here](#).

How do we know the Community Strategic Plan truly reflects our views?

The 2024 Community Strategic Plan, *Leeton On The Go – towards 2035* was prepared with the input of many residents and organisations from across the Leeton Shire community.

A variety of community engagement activities in 2024 have contributed to informing the development of *Leeton On The Go – towards 2035*, including:

- Progress updates from the 2024 State of the Shire Report
- A community telephone survey by MicroMex of 400 residents
- Feedback from Town Improvement Committees in Whitton and Yanco
- Feedback from councillor community catch-up conversations in Whitton and Yanco
- Community participation in topic-specific focus groups in October/November 2024
- Engagement with community and developers about Leeton's Housing Strategy
- Engagement with the community for the Drought Resilience and Flood Study review
- Engagement with government departments about their priorities for our region
- The 2024 results from Canberra University's Regional Wellbeing Survey, as they relate to Leeton Shire.

In developing this Plan and the 2024 State of the Shire Report input was sought and received from a range of community groups, government agencies and other organisations identified as having a stake or a role to play in Leeton Shire, including:

- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- Adapt Community Services
- Argyle Homes
- Assumption Villa
- Birdyulang Animations
- Boys to the Bush Leeton
- Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder
- Country Universities Centre Western Riverina
- Creative Connection Riverina Inc
- Crown Lands
- CWA
- Destination Riverina Murray
- Fivebough Tuckerbil Wetlands Advisory Committee
- Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
- Get Set Inc
- Gralee Public School
- Griffith Post School Options Leeton
- Miil Miil Productions
- Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd
- Murrumbidgee Land Care
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District
- Murrumbidgee Police District
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- Murrumbidgee Valley Food and Fibre Association
- My Plan Connect
- Nurranurra Support Service
- National Institute of Dramatic Arts
- NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- NSW Irrigators
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- OCTEC Leeton (TTW)
- OneSchool Global Leeton
- Jumpstart
- Kurrajong
- Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Leeton Art Society Inc

- Leeton Bidgee Classic Committee
- Leeton Business Chamber
- Leeton Community Care Development Inc
- Leeton Connect
- Leeton Eagles
- Leeton Early Learning Centre
- Leeton Eisteddfod Society
- Leeton Family and Local History Society
- Leeton Golf Club
- Leeton Health Advisory Committee (LHAC)
- Leeton High School
- Leeton Historical Society
- Leeton Local Aboriginal Education Consultative
- Leeton Men's Shed Inc
- Leeton Multicultural Support Group
- Leeton Museum & Art Gallery Volunteers
- Leeton Netball Association
- Leeton Parkrun
- Leeton preschools
- Leeton Public School
- Leeton Rainbow Pride Collective Inc
- Leeton Soldiers Club
- Leeton VRA Rescue Squad
- Leeton/Yanco Swimming Club
- Lions Club
- Local arts organisations
- Local hotel/motel operators
- Local Emergency Management Committee
- Local property developers
- MS Society
- Multicultural NSW
- Murray-Darling Association (MDA)
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority
- Parkview Public School
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Plymouth Brethren
- Rapid Relief Team Leeton
- Regional Development Association Riverina
- Reviva Recycling Shop Leeton
- RFBI Leeton Masonic Village
- Ricegrowers Association of Australia
- Riverina & Murray Joint Organisation
- Riverina Local Land Services
- Riverina Writing House

- Rotary Clubs
- Roxy Institute of Performing Arts
- Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution
- Rural Fire Services
- Safe Work NSW
- Salvation Army Leeton
- Sporting organisations and clubs
- St Francis High School
- St Joseph Primary School
- St Vincent's De Paul Leeton
- TAFE NSW
- The Personnel Group
- U3A
- Valmar Support Services Ltd
- Visit Riverina Inc
- Volunteering Australia
- Wamoon Public School
- Western Riverina Arts
- Western Riverina Community College
- Whitton Museum
- Whitton Town Improvement Committees
- Whitton-Murrumbidgee Primary School
- Workforce Australia
- WR Connect
- Yanco Ag High School
- Yanco Agricultural Institute
- Yanco Powerhouse Museum
- Yanco Public School
- Yanco Town Improvement Committees

Just over 400 residents from across the Leeton Shire participated in a telephone survey run by MicroMex. The results of this survey can be found [here](#).

Around 80 Leeton residents provided input into Canberra University's Regional Wellbeing Survey, with a further 100 residents from the across the Leeton-Narrandera district responding to that Survey. The latest report can be found [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this Plan. We hope you're inspired to support its delivery and be part of achieving our Shire's vision for its future.

2 Where are we today?

We continue to describe our Shire as one of the most innovative, inclusive and progressive places in inland Australia.

Located in the Riverina 584km from Sydney, 470km from Melbourne and 371km from Canberra, Leeton is the birthplace of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and was purposely built by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission as part of a nation-building project funded by the NSW Government at the turn of the last century to drought-proof Australia and feed the nation.

We are also proudly known for being the home of Australia's rice industry and the Art Deco Capital of Regional Australia.

Leeton Shire is 1,167km² in size and includes the towns of Leeton, Yanco and Whitton and the villages of Murrami and Wamoon. Leeton is the second largest regional centre in the Western Riverina region and plays an integral role in agriculture, value-added agricultural processing, education and research, transport and logistics.

Leeton Shire's population in 2021 was 11,480. As at November 2024, the population was projected to increase annually by 0.2% with a forecasted population of 11,996 by 2041.

It is predicted that the age structure of the population in Leeton Shire will change over time. The proportion of the population of children (aged 14 and under) is forecast to decrease by 8.6% and the working age population (15-64 years) is also forecast to decrease by about 5.7%. However, the proportion of people of retirement age (65 years and over) is set to increase by about 45.7% by 2041. The main drivers of influencing this population change have been noted to be natural which includes births and deaths.

It is important to note that the official population counts for our Shire might not be accurate as it



is believed that there are many itinerant migrant workers living in the Leeton Shire who are not currently well captured in population estimates.

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.

Situated within the environs of the Murrumbidgee River and the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park, water is central to Leeton Shire.



The Ramsar-listed Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands also play an important part in the region's ecology by hosting migratory birds, some from the northern hemisphere, during the warmer months, with approximately 170 bird species being recorded.


The Shire continues to enjoy a strong economy with the Gross Regional Product valued at \$723 million in 2022/23.


11,431
Population
(ABS estimate 2023)



Average number of children per family for families with children
1.9


2,819
families in 2021

 **49.3%** males
 **50.7%** females

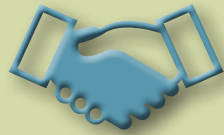

The median age is
38

Top five countries of birth of residents

Australia (80.5%)
India (1.4%)
Italy (1.3%)
Philippines (1.2%)
New Zealand & United Kingdom (1.1%)


 **5,386**
Rateable properties
as at June 2024
Source: Leeton Shire Council

Top five languages spoken at home (other than English)

Italian (2.2%)
Punjabi (1.5%)
Mandarin (1.0%)
Filipino (0.6%)
Tagalog (0.3%)

5,274 
in the labour force in 2021

3.8%
Unemployment rate in 2021
NSW average is 4.9%

Median weekly income per household
 **\$1,417**
(compared to \$1,829 in NSW in 2021)

Gross Regional Product valued at
\$723M
Source: .id (informed decisions)

More than
980 
local businesses
Source: .id (informed decisions)

 **409km** of local sealed road
490km of local unsealed road
Source: Leeton Shire Council

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics unless stated otherwise

Our Challenges & Issues

As community we are grappling with a number of key issues, and we believe that our biggest challenges to overcome for the next ten years are:

- How to deal with the impacts of further water buybacks on our socio-economic sustainability
- How to close the housing / housing affordability gap
- How to shore up a reliable workforce for current businesses and new ones
- How to ensure the range of health services we need and deserve are available to us
- How to support our population to continue to grow'
- How our local Council can run more efficiently and become financially sustainable.

A snapshot of Leeton Shire in 2024

The following pages discuss these and other challenges and issues in more detail and provide a summary of where we are in 2024. Snapshot information is provided for the following topic areas:

- Our community
- Our health
- Our physical activity
- Our safety
- Our housing
- Our education
- Our arts, culture and history
- Our irrigation economy
- Our jobs and growth
- Our visitor and events economy
- Our built environment
- Our natural environment
- Our leadership – government
- Our leadership – community/active citizens



Our community

Many of us consider one of the best things about living in Leeton Shire is being part of a community that is friendly, caring and inclusive. People who move here for a short-term job often decide to stay. And those who leave often return because they appreciate everything the Shire has to offer.

Leeton Shire is enriched through the diversity of its population. According to the 2021 Census, 7.2% of our population is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 19.5% of our population was born overseas, originating from countries including India (1.4%), Italy (1.3%), Philippines (1.2%), and New Zealand and United Kingdom (1.1%).

Every year we hold a NAIDOC event which is open to all, celebrating the history, culture and achievements of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Parkview School's children routinely contribute with their lovely dancing and a local Aboriginal elder raises the Aboriginal flag. We are starting to talk more about what is required to "close the gap" in the Leeton Shire.

As a Refugee Welcome Zone and accredited member of Welcoming Australia, Leeton welcomes migrants and refugees, and many of us work actively to promote mutual trust and understanding so that everyone can love living in Leeton. We find sharing food and cultural experiences helps to bring about togetherness and respect, with an annual highlight being Fiesta La Leeton.

The Leeton Multicultural Support Group (LMSG) actively helps people who are culturally and linguistically diverse to settle in, make connections, deal with language issues and navigate visa queries. The demand for this service is far greater than the capacity of the LMSG volunteers, especially due to systemic issues with PALM (Pacific Australia Labour

Mobility scheme) which, while a good idea and supported in principle, has some system failures that need to be addressed. So far, government has not responded to calls for further government investment in much-needed local support services.

Our New Residents' Kit, aimed at helping people to settle in quickly to our community, is now online, via the Leeton Living website. Through initiatives like Localise You and The Welcome Experience Leeton (a new initiative by the NSW Government and RDA Riverina for settling in key workers), we are striving to ensure all newcomers quickly feel a sense of home and belonging. It is important that we offer support systems to new residents to ensure our population continues to grow

In 2024, there were more than 210 community groups in Leeton Shire including sporting groups, support groups or organisations, religious groups and service clubs. This represents a range of opportunities for people to get involved in community life, make friends and have a sense of belonging. We greatly value our volunteers and the community leadership section of this report highlights further the need to grow our volunteer base.

We also value our community facilities including our local halls, parks and reserves as these provide us with opportunities to meet, discuss, celebrate, entertain and hold events.



Community
of Anticipatory
Action

In 2024, 85% of residents agree that living in Leeton Shire gives you a sense of living in a community.

Some of us live with a range of disabilities (in 2021, 6.2% of our population reported needing assistance with core activities such as bathing and feeding) and while an increasing number of our facilities and services have improved their capability to cater for some types of disability, there are still opportunities for further improvements in order for us to achieve full inclusiveness. We are delighted the refurbished Roxy has been built with universal access in mind but there are still some shops' access and footpath improvements needed to address access for people with physical disabilities.

The Community Transport Program provides transport support for the frail aged, people with disabilities and their carers, people with special needs and those who are transport disadvantaged throughout the Leeton Shire. Community Transport needs more volunteer drivers to keep up with demand.

In terms of public transport, our local taxi company ceased operation of its wheelchair accessible vehicle some years back because it was no longer financially viable. There are increasing calls for additional public transport services in Leeton for the general public, not only within the Shire but also between towns and villages and to main centres like Griffith and Wagga Wagga.

While providers have changed, for 55 years now older people in our community in need of support have been able to access Meals on Wheels, Home Modification and Maintenance Services, and Social Support. We value greatly these services and their dedicated local staff and volunteers.

Our young people make good use of our sporting facilities and excel at sport and, from recent surveys done by students of St Francis and Yanco High School, we know they are very excited about the re-opening of the refurbished Roxy Theatre for cultural, recreational and educational purposes. As a community we know how important it is to provide of a broad range of youth-related facilities, services and events if we are to encourage our young people to plan a future in Leeton Shire.

There are several organisations set up to support families in need – be it emergency food supplies, financial support and advice, health crisis support or emergency housing.

The Leeton Living website has been established so that residents can find what they need quickly and discreetly. The website can be found at leetonliving.com.au

In 2024, 68% of residents agree that the community in Leeton Shire is harmonious, cohesive and inclusive.



Our health

As a community we know that our health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) is closely linked to the conditions into which we are born, grow, live, work and age. Having access to appropriate housing, a secure early life, good education, nutritional food, opportunities for physical activity, job certainty, social networks and affordable healthcare all help to keep us healthy.

Leeton Shire sits within the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. Across this region there is a higher prevalence of a range of health issues, compared to NSW and Australia. These include risky alcohol consumption, smoking, insufficient physical activity and obesity, as well as preventable diseases such as coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cancers, and chronic diseases such as poor mental health, arthritis and asthma.

Across the region there is also a greater proportion (compared to NSW and Australia) of the population in the very young (0-4 years) and older (65+ years) age groups. There is more socio-economic disadvantage in our region, more incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault, more incidents of suicide, a higher youth mortality (for 16-24 year olds), a higher incidence of prostate, breast and pancreatic cancer, and a higher proportion of people living with multi-morbidities (that is, more than one chronic condition at the same time).

We need these statistics to change for the better and acknowledge we have to do our part. As community members, we can improve our health through lifestyles that reduce preventable hospital admissions for chronic and acute health conditions; we can attend GPs, specialists and allied health care providers to manage health issues as they arise; and we can participate in health screening activities, such as cervical screening. However, the reality

is that we are facing an increasing shortage of GPs with unacceptable wait times. In fact, some of us can't even get into a GP as they have 'closed their books'. This is unacceptable for a community of our size and should be considered a critical need to address. Dentists are in short supply too.

As a consequence, residents often attend the new Emergency Department at the Hospital for non-emergencies. While we greatly appreciate the new facility and vastly improved access to a duty doctor in ED compared to a few years ago when there were none, we would prefer the Emergency Department be kept for real emergencies with adequate GP access in the community.

In 2024, only 21% of residents believe we have access to a good range of health services.



Community of Trust gives Us



We are still hesitant about Telehealth as a community but increasingly are starting to appreciate its sophistication and potential. However, our ultimate goal would be to have all our medical doctors permanently resident in Leeton. It is extremely frustrating when we have regular approaches by immigrant doctors living in Leeton or wanting to move to Leeton to work in our Hospital, but there is no apparent pathway locally for them to be supervised as registrars. The Commonwealth Government needs to do better to help us harness these opportunities.

Our maternity service now operates under a midwife-led model of care, although many parents, even for 'low risk' births, are choosing to go to Wagga or Griffith instead. This means that many new mothers, including those who return to Leeton Hospital for recovery after a caesarian birth, report feeling isolated when recovering in hospital and miss the collegiality of being in a maternity ward with other new parents.

As a community we appreciate having a range of health services both in our Shire and regionally, including base hospitals in both Griffith and Wagga Wagga however, there are still concerns for the amount of travel required to see specialist services.

There are strong concerns for the lack of domestic violence and mental health support services in the local area, however, there appears to be a range of services that are delivered in Leeton that many of us don't know about, including mental health services and support services such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Alanon. We are hoping the new Leeton Living website will help solve this information gap too. We also want to make sure organisations that are funded to outreach to Leeton are actually delivering services on the ground in our community – we are looking for greater levels of accountability to ensure that occurs.

We worry that if we don't improve confidence in our health services, we will continue to lose new retirees (an important cohort for our volunteer sector) to the bigger centres instead of having them remain in the community they love.

After persistent advocacy, Leeton has recently been selected by NSW Health and the NSW Rural Doctors Network to participate in the Collaborative Care Program, over two years, funded by both the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. The Program's aim is to identify and prioritise community health care needs in Leeton and facilitate subject matter experts to develop solutions to issues or opportunities. It commenced in late 2024 and is still in the establishment phase. This is good news and we hope the Collaborative Care Program will deliver positive results for our community.

To support healthy lifestyles, Leeton is well served by a range of commercial and public sporting facilities that promote physical activity, fitness and health. Local schools also support important messaging around healthy food, staying active and being sun smart.

There is still room improve by promoting healthy eating through community gardens, nutrition programs encouraging our community to eat more fruit and vegetables and encouraging local festivals to offer healthy food options.





Our physical activity

Sport has been a feature of Leeton Shire's community for a long time, and we are very proud of that. The Shire has been home to many great athletes over the years, and we enjoy celebrating their international success via our Leeton Sporting Walk of Fame, which also serves as an inspiration to our young people.

Some people play sport to stay fit or have fun with family and friends. Playing organised or social sport helps us to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and more connected as a community.

In 2024, there are 40 registered sporting clubs across the Shire that cater to a range of sports, including rugby league, union, AFL, basketball, netball, swimming, touch football, cricket, pickleball, soccer and karate.

We have some great areas for recreation such as the Leeton and Whitton pools, Leeton Indoor Stadium, the golf course, ovals, bike trails, bowling greens, showgrounds, pony club grounds, the Murrumbidgee River, Gogeldrie Weir, Fivebough Wetlands, parks, netball courts and gyms.



In 2024, 75% of residents say sporting facilities in the area meet their needs.

The Leeton ParkRun Committee hosts a free, fun and friendly weekly 5km community park run around the Sport and Recreation Precinct. Also, the NSW Office of Sport partners with Leeton Shire Council to deliver the Gamechanger program aimed at fostering sports participation and enhancing wellbeing among disadvantaged school students across the seven schools in Leeton Shire.

Many of our sports grounds and venues offer quality facilities, but others require improvements to bring them up to a standard that meets the community's expectation (eg the tennis courts and clubroom on Palm Ave, amenities at the MIA sports fields, and the squash facilities at the Stan Axtill Centre).

There remains a strong desire locally to see the Leeton Stadium expanded to better accommodate current demand with at least two basketball courts, new squash courts and the upgrade of the outdoor netball and basketball courts. At the present, netball and basketball user groups are more inclined to use neighbouring towns facilities.

Women's sports are increasingly being better accommodated locally with a new women's changeroom recently completed at the Yanco Ovals and changeroom facilities upgraded three years ago at Yanco-Wamoon Football Club.

We think we need to discuss either enhancing under-utilised facilities for multi-use purposes or expanding our offerings as new interests emerge. This could be achieved through the development of a sporting precinct plan' which would require thorough engagement with sporting groups such as the Leeton Eagles and Leeton Netball Association. Futsal, pickleball and croquet have increased in popularity in recent years, whereas the tennis club folded, as did cricket for a while. However, Leeton has recently been able to field a senior cricket team again, as well as start a social tennis competition and junior tennis coaching sessions, conducted by an accredited tennis coach. This reminds us that sports can be cyclical, with their success often driven locally by volunteers with the time and energy to invest. It is important not to make rushed decisions about closing or altering facilities.

Many of our sporting clubs and organisations are run by wonderful volunteers and we need to help them to keep doing that. Our local schools

are also important places for introducing children to organised sport and retaining membership across our sporting clubs.

There is community concern about access to qualified sports instructors (eg learn-to-swim instructors) and coaches to support new participation. Also, the cost of participating in some sports or accessing venues (such as the swimming pool) can be prohibitive for some families. This can lead to some children not being able to learn the basics, such as being able to swim 50 metres. There has recently been a call for free basic swim lessons for young children, and also for further lessons for adults (including migrant women) who did not learn to swim as children.

Leeton's Aquatic Centre is regarded as the regional swim centre for the Western Riverina. The Aquatic Centre recorded 32,419 entries through its gates during the 23/24 swim season, including school swimming carnivals and regional competitions. A twin slide was recently installed at the Aquatic Centre, expanding the options for water play, and is very popular with young patrons.

A community aspiration remains for a heated, indoor swimming facility to expand exercise and therapy options across the winter months. The Council has deemed this unaffordable. According to the results of a survey carried out in 2021, 77% of the population believe they would use a heated pool at least once a year. More than 50% of those residents think they would attend more than 25 times a year.

We like that newcomers will be able to check out the different sports on offer via our new Leeton Living [website](#).





Community Fitness & Fun



Fun

Our safety

It is important that our local community (residents and visitors alike) feel safe in our homes and on our streets. Generally we feel that our communities are safe places to live and move and raise a family.

Our police station sits under the Griffith Local Area Command. While generally our community is satisfied with our policing service, the level of policing is not satisfactory, with no 24-hour service available in Leeton, and the time it takes to respond is sometimes not satisfactory. We are particularly unhappy when Leeton's local police are used to transport prisoners to and from other centres, leaving our Shire without service for many hours at a time. We don't believe this is their job.

There has been a lot of turnover in police staffing locally in recent years and we are hopeful that the new "Be A Cop In Your Home Town" campaign will give interested people confidence that they can return to work in Leeton. We are not yet sure how effective that campaign will be.

In 2024, 23% of the community felt that Police services in Leeton are responsive and effective.

While our community generally feels safe, local crime statistics point to a number of issues of concern that impact our community's safety. For example, in 2023-24, Leeton Shire ranked in the top ten local government areas in NSW for abduction and kidnapping (ranked 8th), robbery with a weapon that was not a firearm (ranked 2nd), dealing and trafficking ecstasy (ranked 8th), pornography offences (ranked 6th) and other offences against justice procedures (ranked 7th). Ten-year trends indicate (to June 2024) that domestic violence related assaults have increased by 5.3%, intimidation, stalking and harassment offences have increased by 6.8%, prohibited and regulated weapons offences have increased by 7.6%, breaches of apprehended violence orders have increased by 14.4% and breaches of bail conditions have



increased by 9.6%. However, dwelling break and enters have decreased by 7.3% and stealing from motor vehicles has decreased by 2.7% over the same ten-year period.

Despite the crime statistics quoted above, the actual number of incidents is generally low (a total of 318 incidents across all offence categories in 2023-24), which is seemingly why Leeton is not treated as a crime 'hot spot' by the Police. Communities sometimes perceive that young people with not much to do are responsible for criminal activity in the community. However, in 2023-24, young people (10-20 years of age) accounted for less than 14% of all offences in the Leeton Shire.

We are glad our local Mayor meets regularly with Police to advocate on behalf of the Shire.

Leeton has CCTV coverage in busy public areas, and an increasing number of businesses and homes are installing video systems. Leeton's streets are generally well lit, which enhances community safety.

In 2024, 90% of residents feel safe during the day and 55% reported feeling safe during the night.

Our community also wants to be safe on the roads and that includes making sure people aren't speeding or hooning, that the roads and streets are in good condition and that vehicles are safe to drive. This is especially important around schools.

The relentless motorcycle activity late at night, often on unregistered bikes and with no lights, is both a nuisance and a danger to the general public. The community is frustrated that the

traffic police seem to be doing little to nothing about this despite many complaints.

Transport for NSW crash data shows that Leeton Shire had 31 motor vehicle crashes in 2023, which resulted in four fatalities and 33 people injured (including 15 seriously). A serious injury crash is when at least one person identified in the police crash report data is matched to a hospital admission record on the same day or the day after a crash and no one was killed. Four serious accidents were recorded in the Leeton town circle, with no crashes recorded in the surrounding villages. Of the 31 crashes, 8 involved speeding (25.8%) and 6 involved fatigue (19.4%).

Driver safety awareness is important to us and we appreciate and want to support the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program that is run annually for young drivers.

We also appreciate that older citizens get the opportunity to refresh their driving skills through initiatives run by Council's road safety team, as well as support for new parents who may have questions about the use of child restraints.

We enjoy our footpaths and cycleways as they keep us separate from traffic. The shared pathway network has been extended slightly in recent years, but there are some areas where the paths are of a low standard, don't connect well or are absent altogether. This can be challenging for people with physical disabilities, parents with prams and older frail residents.

We have zero tolerance for dogs running loose and attacking people, pets or livestock. Our hard line is paying off. In 2014/15, 57 dog attack incidents were reported, in 2020/21 there were 30 dog attack incidents reported, and in 2023-24 there were only 8 dog attack incidents reported. All pet owners are responsible for ensuring their pets are registered and microchipped, and prevented from harming people or other animals.

Leeton Shire has been fortunate not to have suffered natural disasters in recent years to quite the degree some other NSW communities have endured. However, it is important that we continue to plan for being a disaster-resilient community and take action collectively and individually to reduce our exposure to and the risks arising from natural disasters.



Our housing

As a community we are becoming increasingly concerned about access to housing, housing affordability and ensuring that there is a range of housing options available to support the needs of everyone including tiny houses. Housing costs are usually the most significant expense we each have across our lives, so housing costs impact our ability to afford food, utilities, clothing, education and health care.

It disturbs us greatly when we hear of vital health workers declining job offers in Leeton because they couldn't find a decent house to live in, or of workers/managers of major businesses or organisations setting up home in neighbouring Shires because they can't find a suitable place to live in Leeton.

In 2021, Leeton Shire had 4,296 private dwellings. The official statistics report that approximately 330 (or 7.7%) of private dwellings were unoccupied in 2021. It should be noted that if the owner of a dwelling was not home on census night it is reported as vacant. This also applies if a tenant of a rented property was not home on the night which includes AirBnB properties

Most dwellings (85.3%) are detached separate dwellings (houses), with 3.3% of dwellings being semi-detached terrace or townhouses, 7.8% being flats or apartments, and 3.6% being other dwellings (such as caravans). Our dwellings have an average of 3.3 bedrooms with 2.5 people per household.

In 2021, the median monthly mortgage payment in Leeton Shire was \$1,300 (compared to \$2,167 in NSW generally), and the median weekly rent payment in Leeton Shire was \$250 (compared to \$420 in NSW generally). Across Leeton Shire, 35.5% of households experienced housing stress in 2021 (compared to 52.8% in NSW generally), meaning that the cost of their mortgage or rent

accounted for more than 30% of their income. We know mortgage and rental costs have increase significantly in the period to 2024, and it is likely that many more households across our Shire are experiencing housing stress now.

Leeton Shire experiences similar housing challenges to other parts of NSW. In 2021, 106 households reported needing extra bedrooms, however 3,151 households reported having spare bedrooms.

In 2021, 31 people in Leeton Shire were recorded as being homeless (a similar number to 2016, and up from 19 in 2011).

Housing prices across the Shire have been rising steadily, with the median price of houses rising from \$239,000 in 2018 to \$385,000 in 2023. The median price for attached dwelling (townhouse, units, apartments etc) has risen from \$167,000 in 2018 to \$276,000 in 2023.

In 2021, 36.1% of Leeton Shire dwellings were owned outright, 32.3% were owned with a mortgage, and 27.8% of dwellings were rented.

Most people feel that there are too few rentals and that landlords are charging a premium because of that shortage. There is occasional evidence of itinerant workers being charged rental on a per-room basis with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, yielding the landlord far in excess of the market value of the house had it been rented to a single family. We frown on this sort of exploitation of itinerant workers on low wages.

In 2024, Council undertook a survey of social housing in the Shire with a total of 182 properties, 9 of which were unoccupied. There are four housing providers in the Leeton local government area being Aboriginal Housing Office, Leeton and District Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Land and Housing Corporation and Southwest Community Housing.

Community Strategic Plan





The Aboriginal Housing Office has 9 properties, and Leeton and District Aboriginal Land Council has 32 within the Leeton town area. These two housing providers ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have access to affordable and quality housing. There is Crown Land behind Eventide that could be used for further social housing in the future.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation owns 141 properties and Southwest Community Housing 6. They offer a range of housing from 1–2 bedroom units to 3–4 bed houses to cater to the different needs of the community.

Additionally, Argyle Housing, managing body of EventideHomes (owned by Leeton Shire Council), provides 14 one-bedroom units for the aged, located in Yanco.

The wait list for social housing in our area is between 2 to 5 years.

Leeton Shire Council has recently developed a Housing Strategy. Several sites within the Leeton local government area have been identified as suitable for affordable housing development. However, conversations with developers 18 months ago suggested they were doing developments in Griffith instead as they got a better return on investment there.

For freehold land it owns in Leeton and Whitton, Council is continuing to seek funding for enabling infrastructure in order to facilitate affordable housing (medium density). It is endeavouring to explore options with a

range of potential partners such as Landcom, community housing providers, private parties, and government departments, where Council contributes the land and the providers build the houses. Work on this proposed housing solution continues in earnest.

Increasingly, organisations such as the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) have opted to lease houses to reliably accommodate their staff. The MLHD has also recently installed 4 'pod homes' on the hospital site to accommodate locum doctors and nurses. Perhaps more of these pre-built 'pod homes' could be explored for other locations in Leeton.

Our community also aspires to increase the volume of affordable housing available to older people and people with a disability, as well as increasing options for single-person households. As discussed earlier, our population is ageing, with 27% of our population forecast to be 65 years and older by 2041 (up from 19% in 2021). Therefore our need for housing suitable for older people will only increase over time – housing that is accessible, well-located, secure, low maintenance and affordable to meet the needs of seniors and the frail aged. While some people will remain in the family home until they need some form of retirement or aged care accommodation, others will want to downsize from the family home to smaller more manageable properties that are closer to services. It is likely that there will be an increase in the number of 'granny flats' being built.





We value our aged care facilities in Leeton as important places for elderly residents to live, and want to ensure they continue as quality services and that bed numbers and service levels are not diminished in any way in the future.

MyPlan Connect is now offering social and supported housing for people with disabilities, as well as other local NDIS providers such as Kurrajong.

There is an identified need for lifestyle-type villages in Leeton to accommodate new retirees who still want to live independently but within a managed set up where they can lock up and travel without worry and they can easily socialise within the complex when they are in Leeton. The Leeton Soldiers Club has some spare land that may be a suitable place to explore the establishment of a lifestyle village (close to the Club, bowling green, golf course, medical facilities, main street etc).

The Yanco and Whitton communities have identified that more housing development will enable these towns to grow their population and enhance their sense of community.

Leeton Shire owns freehold land in Whitton and there is the option of some housing in Yanco in partnership with the Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council.

If Leeton Shire's economic aspirations are realised, an increasing number of medium- to large-scale businesses will require a significant increase in the workforce to achieve their business goals. Leeton will need to continue to focus on land and housing availability across the spectrum of type and price range to attract and grow our local workforce.

Leeton Shire experiences seasonal population growth from itinerant workers across a range of industries including fruit picking, manufacturing, and processing. These workers require low-cost temporary accommodation. The current Local Environment Plan (LEP) allows for rural workers' dwellings in rural zones and boarding houses in most residential zones. To address growing concerns, our community must ensure that the accommodation and working conditions provided to this itinerant and seasonal workforce meets their human rights needs and complies with the expectations of government. Without this workforce our economy will suffer.





Our education

Leeton Shire has a strong education network. For our children, this includes three major high schools (two of which offer boarding facilities that draw students from across southwest NSW and other states), six primary schools, an independent school, a support school, two long- day care centres, one pre-school and several family day care providers.

There are two new long day care centres under construction which will help enormously with the severe undersupply of childcare places. We note these new facilities will need to be staffed and there is already a short supply of childcare educators and teachers in this highly regulated sector. Further, last year, the government announced two new pre-schools for Parkview and Leeton Primary Schools, but we have not heard further as to their development timeframes. There has continued to be a need identified for an After School Care service in Whitton.

TAFE NSW Leeton campus offers a variety of vocational training choices locally for the community and the Country Universities Center (CUC), which is located in the Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library, provides access to university courses. Moves are afoot by the Western Riverina CUC Board to provide dedicated staff in Leeton from 2025 in an effort to increase participation rates which have been lagging compared to the hugely successful Griffith campus.

The Yanco Agricultural Institute also offers, as part of Tocal College, short-term training courses for primary producers and the highly regarded Aboriginal Rural Training Program.

According to Census data, in 2021, 72.3% of Leeton Shire's population was attending an educational institution:

- 6% of the population attending pre-school
- 26.6% attending primary school
- 28% attending high school
- 11.7% attending a tertiary institution (including vocational education, private training providers, universities or other higher education institutions).

While a higher proportion of Leeton's population are attending school (including pre- school, primary school and secondary school) compared to the rest of NSW, Leeton Shire has a significantly lower proportion of the population (compared to the rest of NSW) attending tertiary institutions.

In 2021, only 29% of Leeton Shire residents had attained post-school qualifications (compared to more than 42% across all of New South Wales).

Level of highest educational attainment People aged 15 years and over	Leeton	%	New South Wales	%
Bachelor Degree level and above	974	10.8	1,838,502	27.8
Advanced Diploma and Diploma level	514	5.7	616,322	9.3
Certificate level IV	358	4.0	216,768	3.3
Certificate level III	1,496	16.5	771,009	11.7
Year 12	1,007	11.1	954,987	14.5
Year 11	420	4.6	212,538	3.2
Year 10	1,796	19.9	698,390	10.6
Certificate level II	8	0.1	4,703	0.1
Certificate level I	0	0.0	764	0.0
Year 9 or below	1,156	12.8	487,855	7.4
Inadequately described	219	2.4	184,252	2.8
No educational attainment	60	0.7	64,827	1.0
Not stated	1,037	11.5	549,965	8.3

The snapshot above shows the highest level of education attained by Leeton residents (aged over 15 years) compared to the rest of NSW. It shows that a lower proportion of our residents have Advanced Diplomas, Bachelor degrees or above, but a higher proportion of our residents have Certificate III and IV qualifications.

Our community enjoys and values our local Library service that caters for all ages with programs that offer children’s story times, programs for people from diverse cultures or languages, resources for the home-bound, and online resources. The Library also offers residents computer access so that everyone can benefit from modern technology.

Part of the vision of the new Roxy Community Theatre, is to set up a new Vocational Education and Training Program for rural/regional students wanting qualifications in the performing arts

(from script and screen writing, performance, set design, costume design, back of house, front of house, technical sound and lighting etc). A successful trial with NIDA (the National Institute of Dramatic Art) was undertaken last year, via RIPA (Roxy Institute of Performing Arts). It is hoped to be able to continue to deliver and grow these opportunities in partnership with a range of key national organisations. We realise we may need to do this incrementally.

Local community members facilitated the establishment of a University of the Third Age (U3A), which offers intellectually stimulating courses for the retired and semi-retired.

Leeton Shire Council offers free community wi-fi access, available in the main street, the Library, the Visitor Information Centre, and other facilities including the Stadium and Mountford Park.



Our arts, culture and history

Leeton Shire has a deep **appreciation for the arts**. With more residents actively participating in artistic events and programs each year, this growing engagement strengthens community bonds and enhances cultural expression. We think an active arts scene makes Leeton a more attractive place to live.

Many different cultures, individuals and other significant contributions have helped shape our rich history as a Shire and as a community, and we acknowledge and celebrate their contribution.

The Traditional Owners of the land on which Leeton Shire is located, the Wiradjuri people, have lived in the area for thousands of years and continue to influence our identity as a community. There are opportunities for our local Aboriginal heritage, cultural values and assets to be better understood, communicated and celebrated with pride by all community members. This can be done by developing Aboriginal visitor experiences to help communicate Wiradjuri storytelling for the region.

People such as Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion, who influenced the design of our town, and poet Henry Lawson have left an indelible mark on Leeton, will be remembered for generations to come. The development of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) from 1906 and the establishment of a fruit factory, which became the renowned Letona Cannery, also created indelible marks on this region and our community.

The MIA story of how the area was transformed from an arid landscape into a lush and profitable agricultural area is a fascinating one of which we are very proud. It is this story that is showcased in *Water by Design: The Leeton Water Story*, a permanent exhibition in the **Leeton Museum**

and Art Gallery (LMAG) that tells of Leeton's role as the birthplace of the MIA.

The gallery at LMAG brings delightful variety, from local arts exhibitions, including the Leeton Art Society Inc's annual Penny Paniz Acquisitive Arts Exhibition (the artwork awarded the Penny Paniz Art Prize is transferred to Council and kept in perpetuity for the community), through to regional and national exhibitions. We enjoyed having access to exhibitions such as the Anne Frank story in 2024, with families and schools from around the region travelling to Leeton to view it.

The versatility of LMAG makes it a hub for creativity and community – hosting workshops, meetings, and even string quartets in a setting that is both beautiful and thought-provoking. With the planned lift installation in 2025, LMAG will soon open its second floor to further exhibition spaces, including the much-anticipated Wiradjuri Water Story, told through local First Nations voices. Murrumbidgee Irrigation has also committed to enhancing the downstairs exhibit to highlight modern irrigation alongside its historical roots, offering a compelling blend of past and present.

We are excited to hear that the installation of a lift at LMAG is planned for next year, which will open up the second floor to be accessible for further exhibition spaces, including the much-anticipated Wiradjuri Water Story by local First Nations voices. Murrumbidgee Irrigation has also signalled that it will contribute to updating part of the downstairs Leeton Water Story at LMAG to showcase modern day irrigation alongside its history from the early 1900s, providing a balance of the old and the new.

In 2019, the Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton was relaunched and, except for the COVID years, is continuing to prove a popular destination event

that draws in visitors from far and wide. There remains an opportunity for this event to grow as a major destinational event for regional NSW. There remains an opportunity for this event to grow as a major destinational event for regional NSW.

Across Leeton Shire there are cultural treasures displayed and celebrated. Along with the LMAG, the Yanco Powerhouse Museum and the Whitton Museum showcase local history and heritage. Both facilities need solid investment in their structures and both governing bodies are looking for a fresh boost of volunteers.

Leeton is fortunate to have the magnificent **Roxy Community Theatre**. With Stage 1 of the refurbishment recently completed and the commissioning period now underway, the Roxy will provide our community with many opportunities for a regular program featuring special events, performing arts and film, both for the pleasure of audiences and also for the development of people wanting to pursue careers in the performing arts sector. We are very much looking forward to the official launch in March 2025 and the set up of the Roxy Institute of Performing Arts (RIPA).

Local and regional youth talent is also nurtured and showcased during the annual Leeton Eisteddfod, which includes speech and drama, music and instrumental, ballet and revue, and line dancing performances. The Eisteddfod has a long and proud history and we very much hope it will continue to be delivered in the region for many decades to come.

Leeton benefits greatly from **Western Riverina Arts (WRA)**, an organisation based at LMAG and servicing the wider region. We appreciate how WRA facilitates so many opportunities for us, through leveraging their networks and their fundraising capabilities. WRA is strong on collaborating with others and was instrumental in helping Leeton Shire Council achieve the new projection art on the Leeton water tower. Continuing to work together on shared projects is definitely a strength we want to continue in Leeton Shire.

The community is also fortunate to have the **Leeton Family & Local History Society Inc.** who operate out of the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery building. The group which is made

up of valuable volunteers, aims to preserve and record our community's heritage by digitising the collection of local historical documentation.

Other initiatives that contribute to our community's arts and culture experience include the Leeton Writers Collective (which is now well established and has published books of poems) and Creative Connection Riverina Inc (which has delivered booked-out local performances at the annual Leeton Art Deco Festival). Leeton has several independently run dance studios with a focus on traditional ballet and tap dancing which are especially popular with our local young people.

The **Wiradjuri community has a rich history of artistic expression** in the region, complemented by a growing contemporary presence through Miil Miil Productions. This collaborative First Nations-led initiative, housed at LMAG and supported by WRA and the Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council, produces and curates diverse works, including animated films, educational language videos, museum exhibitions, poetry, paintings, and more.

The Leeton Town Band, which caters for all ages, has grown from strength to strength in recent years and is a regular performer at a range of community events. Its Outback Band Spectacular is an important opportunity for smaller regional towns to learn from more experienced bands and to perform en-masse to an enthusiastic audience.

Our **settler history and heritage** is shared in public art including statues of the Letona Lady at the Leeton Visitor's Centre and Sir Samuel McCaughey in Yanco. The Lyrics, Landscapes and Lintels Art Heritage Trail, established in 2019, continues to be popular with locals and visitors alike. Details of the trail can be found [here](#). Excitingly, SunRice has signalled an interest to tell the story of the history of rice on Cannery Corner on Wamoon Avenue, with murals being a main feature, which will add to the suite of public art offerings on the Trail. Details of the trail can be found [here](#).

With Henry Lawson having been a famous historical resident in the Shire, we celebrate the literary arts in association with the Henry Lawson Cottage, at least once a year.

In 2024, 71% of residents agreed there is a good range of opportunities for cultural and artistic activities and expression.





*Community of Strangers
Dance*

Our irrigation economy

Leeton Shire and its economy was founded on irrigation, and water remains the lifeblood of our region. The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) is a progressive and changing landscape with a range of innovative farming enterprises, a diversity of crop types and a dynamic value-adding processing sector. Our water, together with our soils and climate, makes us part of Australia's premier irrigation area, with the Western Riverina arguably the "food bowl of the nation".

We are very proud of our Shire's industries, many of which rely heavily on irrigation water. They contribute enormously to our region's economy, export earnings for the nation, and provide local jobs. In the 2022-23 financial year, our gross regional product was more than \$720 million, up 3.2% from the previous year.

To ensure our irrigated economy continues to thrive and support local and national outcomes, it is essential that Government water policy sensibly finds a balance that addresses environmental, economic and social goals for our communities.

Over many years our local business and government leaders have endeavoured to respond constructively to the Murray Darling Basin Plan, which has sought to return 2,750 GL of water back to the environment. The Southern Basin, which Leeton Shire sits within, has done much of the 'heavy lifting' to support this outcome. This has included on- and off-farm efficiency programs that have seen a rise

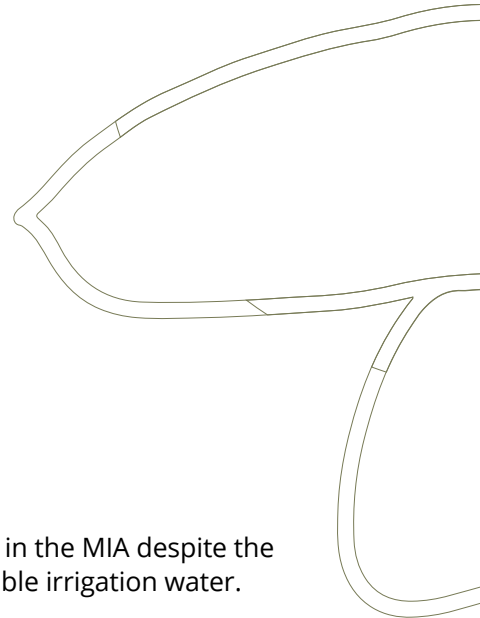
in agricultural production in the MIA despite the overall reduction in available irrigation water.

A change in Federal Government in 2022 introduced the Restoring our Rivers legislation which reneged on a previously agreed cap and suggested even more water be recovered from irrigation (up to 450GL). This new legislation also removed any requirement for comprehensive socio-economic neutrality testing and assurances. We continue to have concerns that the Commonwealth Government does not fully understand the impacts of its legislation on communities like ours, including long-term flow-on financial impacts to processing plants and the related impact on local jobs.

We believe there are many systems issues that can be addressed to make the rivers healthy again, including dealing with carp and re-scheduling water releases, rather than simply recovering water from the consumptive pool when its delivery to South Australia cannot be assured anyway due to many constraints. We also feel more can be done to support local efforts such as planned, informed watering to improve biodiversity at the Fivebough/Tuckerbil Wetlands.

We anticipate that annual croppers who grow rice and cotton will be hardest hit by buybacks as average water prices will increase exponentially in future dry years as permanent croppers get pushed to pay higher prices to keep their trees watered. Stated differently, the farmers' general security water might yield them greater returns by selling it to permanent croppers, negating the

In the 2022-23 financial year, our gross regional product was more than \$720 million, up 3.2% from the previous year.





need to grow an annual crop. These decisions - to not grow or to reduce production - will, of course, flow through to the likes of food and fibre processors such as SunRice and Southern Cotton in our Shire. SunRice is one of our major employers and is supported by a significant tertiary sector.

As a community we need to understand the likely local impacts of water policy on our irrigation economy and be ready to respond with well-formed ideas. We want to be sure the 'structural adjustment' money that has been announced by the Commonwealth is targeted at shoring up jobs directly linked to impacts of the water buybacks. This is in order to ensure the major employers in our Shire continue to thrive and our population does not decrease, as that will have far reaching impacts on our

overall long-term socio-economic wellbeing. We also don't want the funding to go to projects that would have been or should have been eligible for other traditional funding from government.

Ricebreeding Australia and Cotton Australia are both investing heavily in research programs that will see crops grown with less water and more drought resilience. Ricebreeding Australia is located in Leeton and is seeking new infrastructure, including a large glasshouse, to accommodate their program. Rice growers in Australia already use, on average, half the water used anywhere else in the world.

Cotton Australia already achieves 52% more lint with every ML of water compared to the late 1990s and aims to improve on average by 2% each year.



Community Strategic Plan



The total gross value of agricultural production in 2021 was \$217.6 million.

In general, as a community we find water policy difficult to navigate. It is extremely fragmented and there is an abundance of consultation from many different State and Commonwealth bodies, often overlapping. We would prefer a one-stop shop for water engagement with government. We acknowledge that some Government departments have endeavored to show support by stationing teams in the regions, but these officers generally have very little power and influence and are considered by some to be tokenistic attempts at making the community feel its voice is being heard.

Despite our concerns with the Restoring Our Rivers legislation, we believe that the MIA has a bright future. We are an innovative, entrepreneurial and resilient community. Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd (MI Ltd) is a modern company with strong leadership. They have put forward alternative SDLAM (sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism) proposals related to the Mid-Murrumbidgee Wetlands for feasibility testing to the NSW Government.

MI Ltd has recently completed a 5,000 ML off-river storage reservoir at Roaches Escape and has plans for another one near Gogeldrie. They are also undertaking a major pipe renewal program within Leeton town to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation, funded by the Federal Government.

In 2023-24, MI Ltd installed solar panels at one of their pump stations in the Leeton area, as part of a project to determine the efficacy of solar panels to supply power within the system, including consideration of greenhouse gas emissions and reductions, and cost savings associated with power supply and maintenance.

MI Ltd's Irrigation Automation Project has allowed greater efficiencies in water delivery and decreased water losses through seepage and evaporation.

Narrandera Shire Council has recently asked the NSW Government to investigate or fund the feasibility of off-river storage at Lake Coolah/Mejum, which is just upstream from Leeton. This project enjoys in-principle endorsement from the MDA (Murray Darling Association) and RAMJO (Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation of Councils).

We are concerned about the steady demise in research activities at the Yanco Agricultural Institute (YAI), which we consider a jewel in Leeton's crown. Once a proud bastion for irrigation research, such work has steadily moved to Griffith and Wagga over the last decade. Scientists and technicians numbered over a hundred nine years ago, but today there are only 15 or so people left. We are keen for the research station at YAI to have a strong future, and hope that strategic planning to ensure its long-term future will become a priority, enabling an agile and flexible response to new research opportunities in the future.

The community recognises that achieving continued growth in irrigated agriculture will also depend on robust digital connectivity.

High-speed internet and mobile coverage are becoming essential infrastructure, comparable to water and electricity. These technologies enable farmers to adopt precision agriculture practices, automate irrigation, and monitor crops and livestock in real time.

Essentially, we need to achieve ubiquitous mobile coverage across the entire Local Government Area (LGA), ensuring that farmers and agribusinesses can reliably access mobile networks to support operational needs and emergency communications.

We also need to deliver fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) connections in urban areas capable of speeds exceeding 500 Mbps, and high-speed fixed wireless connections exceeding 400 Mbps in rural areas, ensuring equitable access to modern digital services.

This type of infrastructure will enable farmers and agribusinesses to implement precision farming, automated irrigation systems and remote monitoring and analytics.

Our jobs and growth

According to National Institute of Economic and Industry Research there were 5,231 jobs located in Leeton Shire in the year ending June 2023. Manufacturing was the largest employer, generating 853 jobs in 2022/3. Other major industries included:

- Manufacturing: 853
- Education and Training: 636
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing: 573
- Health Care and Social Assistance: 475
- Retail Trade: 413
- Construction: 411
- Accommodation and Food Services: 296
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing: 287.

In 2021, the workforce comprised:

- 19.2% labourers
- 15.1% managers
- 13.7% technicians and trades workers
- 13.2% professionals
- 11% clerical and administrative workers
- 10.3% community and personal service workers
- 8.8% machinery operators and drivers, and
- 6.9% sales workers.

In 2021, Leeton Shire's unemployment was 3.8%, compared to 4.9% in the rest of NSW, and 5.1% in Australia.

Of Leeton's 987 businesses in 2023, 316 are in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 149 are in construction, and 65 are in rental, hiring and real estate services. In 2023, 27.7% of businesses employed fewer than 5 staff, 10.3% employed between 5 and 19 staff, and 2.7% of businesses employed more than 20 staff. A significant number of businesses employed no staff.

Since 2020, there have been more new business entries than businesses exiting the Leeton Shire, with a steady growth in the net effect (9 in 2020, 26 in 2021, 35 in 2022 and 5 in 2023).

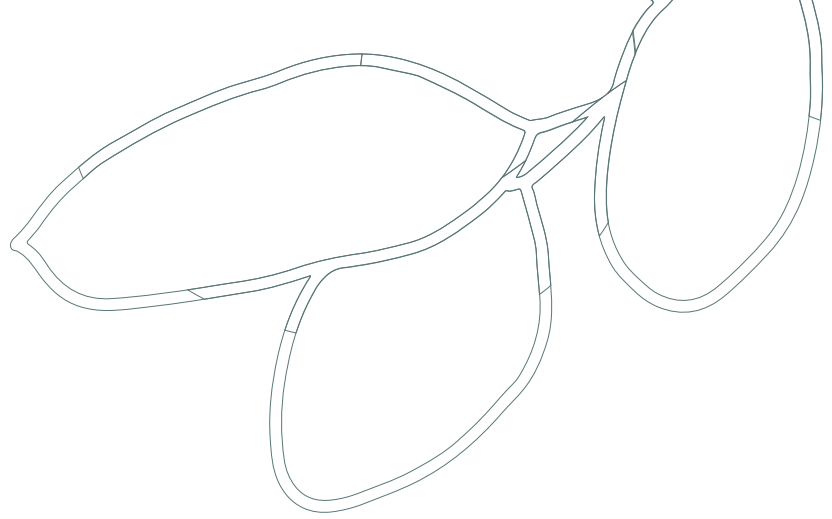
Challenges for our business sector include workforce shortages and access to skilled labour, as well as housing challenges that make it difficult to bring in additional workers and their families into our Shire. This may be exacerbated by an ageing workforce (in 2021, 24% of our working age population was aged between 50 and 64 years) which sees more people retiring from the workforce in the coming years.

A strategy for 'growing our own' workforce is to encourage our local school leavers to take up employment opportunities locally, including traineeships and apprenticeships, and to return to the area following completion of their tertiary education. Leeton Shire offers diverse opportunities for youth employment as well as for recent graduates to develop their careers which are promoted on the Leeton Living Website.

As a community we contribute significantly to Australia's export earnings. In a normal year more than 18,000 containers leave Leeton for the Port of Melbourne. Currently JBS Riverina Feedlot processes 153,000 head of cattle each year. Walnuts Australia processes 13,000 tonnes annually at its Leeton facility, with 4,000 tonnes of those walnuts coming from Leeton. In an average crop year in excess of 600,000 paddy tonnes of rice is harvested across the Riverina with at least half processed and value-added at the SunRice plant in Leeton. All of these businesses, and several others, have expansion plans which speaks to their success.

In 2021, there were 98,476.8 hectares of agricultural holdings in the Leeton Shire. The total gross value of agricultural production in 2021 was \$217.6 million, of which \$179.9 million derived from crops and \$36.4 million derived from livestock.

To facilitate cost-effective freight movements, we aspire to having more freight leave the Shire



on rail, rather than road. The WRConnect freight intermodal, located on the border of Leeton and Griffith local government areas, is a regionally significant project that will interface with the Inland Rail.

To date the NSW Government has strengthened the rail-line to take heavier loads and faster trains. A siding is due to be built at WRConnect during 2025 by Transport for NSW. Medlog (who bought Linx) has announced it will be moving from Griffith to WRConnect during 2025. For the WRConnect site to reach its potential, substantial State and Federal Government support will be required to ensure enabling infrastructure is built that brings the full WRConnect vision to fruition.

The expansion of Vance Industrial Estate (Phase 3) has commenced and will yield 20 new industrial lots, four of which have already been sold off the plan. Closer to town than WRConnect, Vance Estate caters for light industrial activity. The development will be completed in the first half of 2025.

For Leeton Shire, the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, which took effect in April 2022, has been a vital source of workers. Businesses had been finding the recruitment

of low- to medium-skilled agricultural workers, forklift workers, factory floor workers, and labourers increasingly challenging. Growing numbers of PALM workers are also being engaged in aged care and health care settings. The PALM scheme helps close these workforce gaps, making PALM workers vital to local economic sustainability and growth. It is a win-win arrangement when it works. Unfortunately there are some systems issues (often generated in other parts of Australia) and we find many disengaged workers heading to the MIA to find work. The need is so great they easily find work here, but they are deemed 'illegal' from a visa perspective and lose all their medical benefits. Local volunteer groups, like the MultiCultural Support Group, are key to supporting these workers to address a range of social welfare issues. Leeton has been instrumental in setting up a Mayoral Alliance to advocate to the Federal Government for transitional visas for these people, provision of Medicare access, and protections from exploitation. Locally, we can't afford for the PALM scheme to fail as the workers are vital to our farmers and major processing plants in Leeton. However, the scheme would benefit from a review to ensure the workers, the employers and host communities are all fully informed about their obligations and rights.

High-speed broadband is essential for Leeton's growth and connectivity. With the rise of remote work and digital business operations, reliable internet supports local businesses, attracts investment, and enables residents to work and learn from home. However, the recent closure of the 3G network has left some areas with reduced coverage, highlighting the need for better mobile phone infrastructure. The community must also focus on improving digital literacy to address the gaps left by the 3G closure, ensuring everyone can benefit from modern connectivity.





Prioritising broadband internet infrastructure and digital skills will future-proof Leeton's economy and enhance the quality of life for all.

Ready access to a regular airline service is important for our businesses, health and tourism. We value our airport partnership with Narrandera Shire Council, and we want to support the Regional Express airline (REX) to ensure its regional network remains sustainable.

While REX offers regular flights to Sydney, our community would also value the option of flight travel to Melbourne, which is currently not available locally. The recent challenges faced by REX have been concerning, and we want our local leaders to continue to advocate for strong regional airlines that meet the needs of our Shire's and our region's residents. We aspire to a return to previous service levels, but if that can't happen, our community would benefit from an





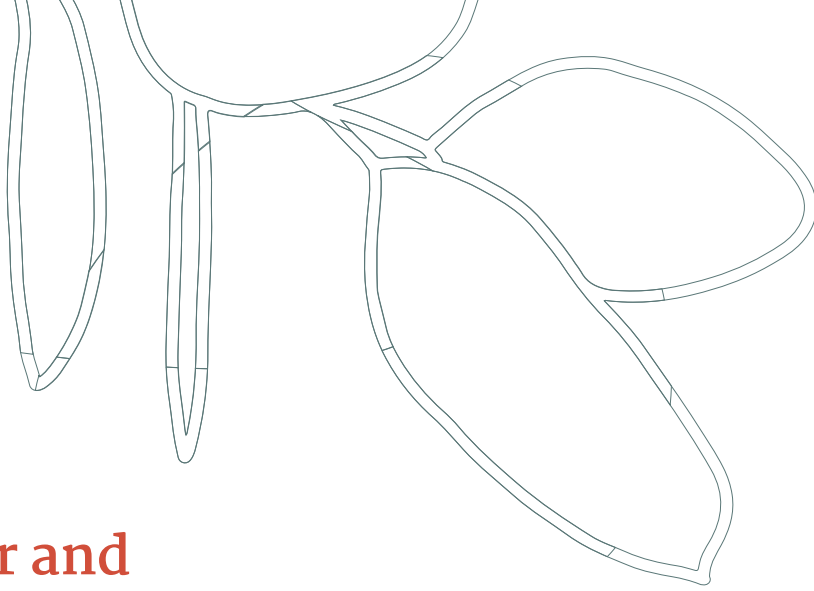
amended flight schedule that provided an early morning flight out of Narrandera/Leeton and an evening flight back from Sydney.

Leeton businesses are one of the largest users of power in the Riverina. The rising costs of energy is a concern to local businesses. Across the Shire between 2021 and 2023, an additional 453 small scale solar panel arrays were installed (including for domestic premises).

An indicator of the strength of our economy and local businesses is the number of empty shops in the central business district. Despite all the on-line shopping, Leeton's main street is fuller than it has been for the previous six years. Some concerns have been raised that due to shop closures there is a gap in certain markets such as linen and shoes.







Our visitor and events economy

Leeton Shire is positioned as the Art Deco Capital of regional Australia, creating a key point of difference to other rural towns. The Art Deco Way Touring route, established about two years ago, extends through Darlington Point, Whitton, Gogeldrie Weir, Leeton, Yanco and Narrandera, and seeks to lure travellers off the Sturt and Newell Highways. The marketing of this route will be strengthened in the new [Murrumbidgee Trails guide](#), which was launched in November 2024, a collaboration between four local councils including Leeton.

To enrich Leeton's night-time economy and make art more accessible, the Chelmsford Place water tower was transformed in 2024 with a projection art installation. This dynamic public artwork enhances placemaking, fostering a vibrant and safe environment that invites residents and visitors to connect with Leeton's culture and community.

It's important to remember that the visitor economy is more than just the traditional tourism holiday market; it includes business travellers and workers, visitors staying with friends and relatives, and those stopping in town while passing through on a road journey.

Some of our more popular destination events include the Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton, the Leeton Outback Band Spectacular, the Leeton SunRice Festival and Balloon Glow (held biannually), the Leeton Show, the SunRice Golf Pro-Am, the Leeton Chill 'n Grill and the Leeton Eisteddfod. The Bidgee Classic has not been held in recent years but was always a great success, so we hope it may return.

We believe more should be made of our Art Deco Festival which can be a hero-event supported annually by Destination NSW.

Regular community events that are enjoyed locally include Light Up Leeton, Australia Day, Henry Lawson Open Day and a variety of youth-based events, including the Riverina Skate Championships.

The Farmers and Makers Market, which are held in Mountford Park, and the Yanco Village Markets and annual Twilight Markets, which are held in and around the Yanco Community Hall, are also popular.

The value of sporting events to our economy is becoming more appreciated, particularly rugby league, basketball, swimming, lawn bowls, golf and motor sports.

It makes us feel proud to see people from out of town taking the time to visit and explore Leeton and we have especially noticed this since Chelmsford Town Square was redeveloped. Visitors also appreciate our beautiful Visitors Centre and friendly service.

Most non-business visitors to Leeton are family and friends of locals or visitors who come to experience our art deco heritage, our agriculture or our heritage-listed Wetlands (Fivebough and Tuckerbill), as well as the Whitton Malt House. We also attract visitors to the Roxy, the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery, our new triple-storey double-tube water slide at the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre, and Gogeldrie Riverside Park.

We think that a light show similar to the one in the Tocumwal forest, but in the Wiradjuri walk area of Fivebough Wetlands, would be an amazing addition to our tourism product in Leeton.

Agriculture in our LGA, provides an opportunity for our community to develop unique agritourism products in collaboration with businesses such as Whitton Malt House, Southern Cotton, Riverina Agriculture Tours.



Around 2,000 people go through the Leeton's Visitor Information Centre each year. Narrandera's Visitor Information Centre, which is located close to where the Newell and Sturt Highways meet, gets about 26,000 visitors a year. We actively encourage visitors to Narrandera to detour into Leeton Shire.

A Masterplan for Gogeldrie Riverside Park – a popular camping and recreation spot along the Murrumbidgee River – has been developed to guide upgrades to facilities and make the area more accessible and family-friendly, including better connections and interactions with the adjacent Murrumbidgee Valley National Park. There is definitely much more potential to showcase the beauty of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park between Narrandera and Darlington Point. More walking/cycling trails along this length of the river, and options for overnight accommodation along the way, would enhance visitors' experience of this local natural attraction.

We love the digital notice board in Whitton and on Irrigation Corner near Vance Estate. We think we should have more of these digital notice boards in Yanco and near the Golden Apple, Parkview and the Hospital so that everyone in the community can get to see what is on.

Destination Riverina Murray helps support the development and growth of the visitor economy in our region, including Leeton Shire. Council and local businesses help market the Shire and

encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more.

The spending from visitors to local businesses within the LGA for the year ending 30 June 2024 was \$26.2 million (a 5.8% increase in annual visitor spend from the previous year), which came from 154,000 people who visited the area in the 23/24 period. This equates to \$72,000 spent by visitors across our Shire every day. Tourism Australia Research estimates that over the past five years, Leeton Shire was visited by an average of 43,700 day trippers per year.

According to the most recent Census data, 104 of the 982 businesses operating in Leeton Shire are visitor economy-related businesses such as accommodation, food & beverage, fuel/ service stations, and discretionary retail. They all regularly service visitors and, together, employ 615 staff locally.

Of people employed in Leeton Shire, 11% are in jobs supporting the visitor economy. The visitor economy contributes to Leeton Shire and its communities much more significantly than we might realise.



Community Street





Our built environment

Having access to **clean, safe drinking water** to keep us healthy is one of our community's highest priorities. Having a modern and **well-maintained sewerage system** to keep us safe from disease is very important too.

We source town water for Leeton, Yanco, Whitton, Wamoon and Murrami from Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited, which is treated by Leeton Shire Council so that it is safe to drink. There are water treatment plants in Leeton, Murrami and Whitton with 4,457 properties (residential and non-residential) connected to 197 km of public water mains.

Having a reliable water supply is also an attractive incentive for new businesses. Our sewerage system accepts some pre-treated industrial wastewater which is important for attracting new manufacturing businesses to our town.

There are sewer treatment plants in Leeton, Yanco and Whitton. There are 3,667 properties (residential and non-residential) connected to the 109 km of public sewer mains.

As a community we value our local environment and are happy that our treated sewerage from Leeton is released into the RAMSAR listed Fivebough Wetlands, supporting biodiversity in our Shire.

Wamoon residents are now benefiting from the Wamoon Sewerage Scheme, a \$3.154 million investment that has connected over 60 residential properties and a school since its construction in August 2023. However, there are still small block residential areas across the Shire that are being serviced by septic systems (such as parts of Amesbury, Wattle Hill and Dalbaata Road) and it is a priority to connect these properties to the sewerage network.

Whether commercial, private or not-for-profit, it is important that we all use our water and sewerage systems responsibly.

Leeton is the biggest town in the Shire and if population growth continues as it has recently, our water supply should meet the community's needs for another 15–20 years. This is currently being tested by Council and NSW Public Works who are preparing an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan. There is also some room for growth for trade waste in the sewerage treatment system, pending approvals from the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

In 2024, the average annual residential water usage in Leeton has been 337 kL per household. This is very high compared to the rest of NSW (which uses an average of 155kL per annum per household). While Leeton Shire's high water consumption may be explained by the climate, our geographic location and that many of us use evaporative cooling in summer, there are opportunities for us all to use less water and become more water wise for example by promoting alternatives to lawns and planting native vegetation in public spaces.

In 2024, 89% of community respondents reported at least some satisfaction with water supply and services.

Having access to **safe roads, cycleways and footpaths** is important to us.

We consider roads to be of the highest importance but we are least satisfied with the quality of our roads. For those of us who are farmers, we'd like roads to be re-gravelled and graded more frequently as they are vital for moving our produce to market. We'd also like line markings on rural sealed roads to be clearer at night.

A few of us remain concerned about the safety of the intersection of Murrami Road and

In 2024, 60% or more of residents mentioned that roads need more investment, and 32% stated 'maintenance and upgrades of roads' is a priority in the next 4 years for Leeton.

Irrigation Way. Even with the new judder bars and lights to slow traffic down, there have been accidents at this site. We think there should be a speed limit change and some additional works done to prevent another fatal accident. Concerns were also raised regarding the safety along Railway Avenue.

Some of us are concerned that some rural roads run too close to irrigation channels or drainage ditches, with increased risk for injury if a car is to veer off the road. Others of us would like all dry-weather roads to be upgraded to become all-weather roads, making them usable regardless of the weather.

While some of us want to keep large/heavy vehicles out of town centres, others of us want all vehicles to be able to go everywhere and anywhere.

There remain concerns about safety around schools, with Wilga Street identified as a road to potentially be included in a School Zone.

We'd like our footpath networks to be fully joined up and are still hoping for a safe walkway for school children along Almond Way in Leeton.

In Leeton, we are concerned about the risk of people crossing at the Sycamore Street wombat crossing while mesmerised by the water tower and new plantings, and we'd like more zebra crossings in the main street so that pedestrians can cross safely. We like the idea of Pine Ave becoming a Council road so that Council has more control, including for crossings and event closures.

In Whitton, we'd like a pedestrian crossing for children to safely cross MR 539 between the park and residential area.

We'd like to understand better how Council makes decisions about what roads to maintain or renew and have more opportunity to

participate in prioritising decisions and explain what we think.

We love our upgraded CBD and work hard to **protect our built heritage**. The new plantings and layout, as well as Council's façade painting program, have led to a major refresh of Leeton's CBD. Chelmsford Town Square is particularly welcoming, impressive and pedestrian friendly, and makes a bold statement about Leeton. The CBD is fortunate to have a magnificent display of Art Deco architecture which, together with the trees and plantings that soften the main street, make for a pleasant shopping and working atmosphere.

Having attractive main streets is important because it makes us feel proud of our towns. It sends a strong signal that we are doing well as communities. Also, visitors are more likely to stop and spend money and locals will spend more time there.

We are very glad our built heritage is protected ***In 2024, 69% of residents believe we are preserving an attractive urban landscape and protecting our heritage.***

through local and State heritage listings, as well as through Council's Development Control Plan.

In Leeton, our main street features a **celebrated collection of art deco buildings**, many of which have been lovingly restored and maintained. Over time, and with the support of heritage grant funding, our community hopes that even more of our facades can be restored to their former glory.

Our most well-known art deco building is the Roxy Theatre, one of only two in NSW. As a community we love our "grand old lady" and are delighted that she has been refurbished in a way that has been sympathetic to her original design and heritage listing.

In our towns and villages, services such as the local Post Office, corner shop, pub or club are considered key to community wellbeing.

Our visitors often comment on our beautiful, flowered garden beds at the entrances to Leeton, including at the traffic light on Irrigation Way. We love them, too. They give a bright and cheery welcome to the town, as do the lovely

plantings of street trees which not only beautify the town but also make the area cooler and more liveable.

Whitton's main street has had a tidy up and an art deco mural now extends across a number of the buildings. However, both Yanco and Whitton's main streets could benefit from further revitalisation. Extending programs like the CBD Façade Project to towns like Yanco and Whitton would enhance visitors' first impressions of the Shire through these key entry points.

Having a clean, neat and tidy CBD is important and most people play their part to keep it that way. Sometimes graffiti and litter like chewing gum and cigarette butts spoil the look and feel of our main streets. It is great to see where shop owners take pride in their shopfronts, washing down their windows and pavements on a regular basis. Some community members have expressed that they would like to Council to be more proactive in cleaning the CBD.

The charm of Leeton's CBD and our sense of safety in the CBD is sometimes compromised when large trucks drive through. We'd like our Council to have full control of Pine Avenue. This control is currently under Transport for NSW which

prevents us from making some of the changes we'd like to make.

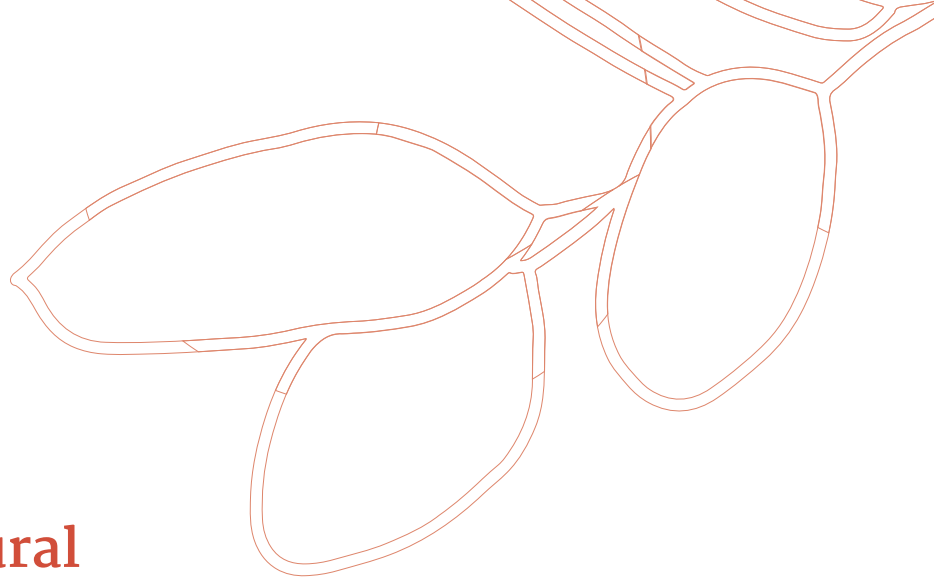
The townships of Yanco and Whitton each have a Town Improvement Plan, with implementation almost completed. It is time for a review of them both to continue to plan for improvements for these towns into the future.

We are generally satisfied with our **cemeteries**. Expansion plans for the Leeton Cemetery are starting to be implemented. The Whitton cemetery has been refurbished and looks good, and there is a desire to develop a lawn cemetery on part of the site.





Community Strategic Plan



Our natural environment

We know that a healthy environment is important for our social, cultural and economic wellbeing. Rich soil, fresh water and clean air are the foundations for a good quality of life today as well as for future generations, and as a community we are committed to leaving a positive environmental legacy for the future.

Some of the ways we do this is by dealing with our waste responsibly (reduce, reuse, recycle) and using energy more efficiently including increasing our use of renewable energy such as solar energy and hydroelectricity.

Leeton Shire Council treats sewage and wastewater to a level that can be safely released into the Fivebough Wetlands. The Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands were listed as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 2002. We are proud that treated effluent is being used to support biodiversity at Fivebough. There are over 170 bird species recorded in Fivebough. Many people visit the wetlands daily or weekly to observe the changes and many beautiful bird photos are regularly posted on local social media. The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water – Crown Lands has oversight of these wetlands and delivers programs including sustainable grazing, bushfire management and weed control. There is an Advisory Group set up including local community representation and they work to an agreed and adopted strategic plan, which is currently being reviewed. The Riverina Local Lands Service provides strategic pest management control measures at these important sites. The impacts of feral cats on the Wetlands remains a real concern. A wetlands website provides users with information to enhance their enjoyment of the site. The website can be located at www.fiveboughwetlands.org.au/

We live in a region with a highly variable climate which in the last decade has been steadily warmer on average. As a community we recognise that we need to face up to climate change by preparing ourselves for its affects and contributing where we can to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our agricultural sector, so important to our economic and community wellbeing, contributed almost 56% of the total 215Kt of CO₂ emitted in the Shire in 2021. Transport and waste are the next biggest sources of CO₂ emissions locally, accounting for a further 27% of all emissions in 2021. Through FOGO collection (food organics, garden organics), sourcing green energy and tree planting strategies, our Council is taking steps to reduce our local impact. As a community we need to work out how much further we need to go to make a real and lasting difference. In the meantime, we also need to prepare ourselves for the impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather events, and build community resilience to respond to these impacts.

As we are an irrigated area, we tend to have a greater weeds problem than the rest of NSW. Left unchecked, weeds can reduce productivity on our farms and choke our waterways. The species of weeds of most concern locally are Silver Leaf Nightshade, Spiny Burr Grass, African Box Thorn, Prickly Pear and Indian Fig (cactus). We need to do more to keep weeds in check.

Farming is the backbone of our economy. Many research projects are underway aimed at finding new ways to manage pests in an environmentally responsible way and to farm in a water-wise manner. Since 2012, RGA (Rice Growers Australia) has continued to lead a community wide project to save the Australian Bittern or Bunyip Bird (an endangered bird species) proving that farming and the environment can work in harmony. The results have been very

In 2024, 75% of residents believe the natural environment is respected and protected.

rewarding with over 750 bitterns now supported by 3,630 ha of Riverina rice fields that are farmed in a bittern-friendly way. Community scientists particularly enjoy tracking several of the birds, especially [Robbie](#) who has a habit of flying to diverse places and meeting up with all sorts of people throughout his travels.

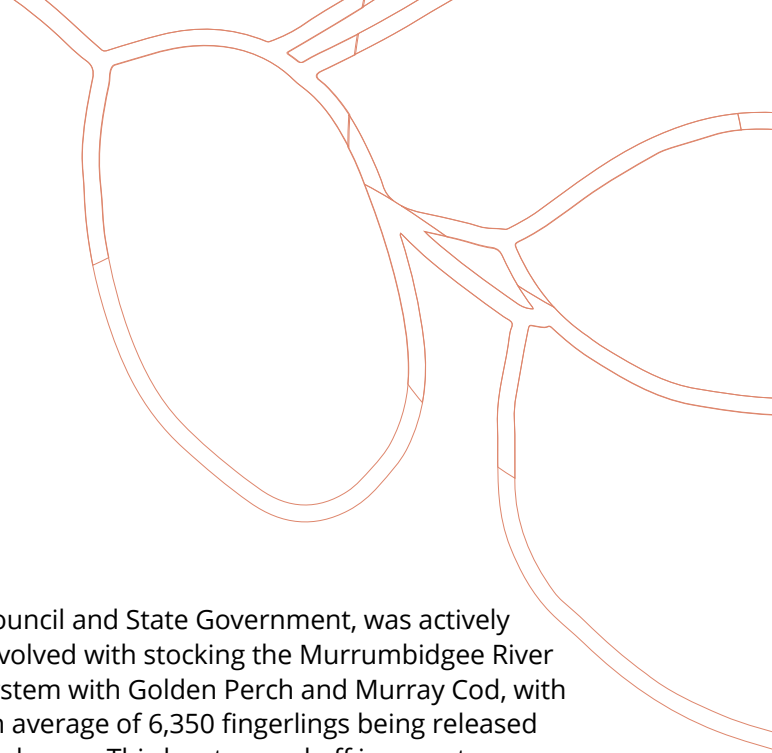
Introduced European Carp continue to be a problem in the Murrumbidgee River. The National Carp Control Plan, supported by research conducted by the CSIRO and others, seeks to address the impacts of this pest, including in the Murrumbidgee River system. We are frustrated that it hasn't started yet.

The local community, through the Bidgee Classic Committee and with sponsorship from the

Council and State Government, was actively involved with stocking the Murrumbidgee River system with Golden Perch and Murray Cod, with an average of 6,350 fingerlings being released each year. This has tapered off in recent years and we would dearly like the project to continue, preferably with the involvement of local schools.

Leeton Shire also enjoys natural features that are special to our area such as the Murrumbidgee River and the Red Gum forests. The Murrumbidgee Valley National Park, established in 2010, includes stretches of the Murrumbidgee that run through Leeton Shire and features what is now the largest continuous tract of river red gum forest in the world. The red gum forests provide enjoyable opportunities for recreation such as walking, cycling and bird watching. Many of us use the area to swim, fish, kayak, camp, water ski and nature walk. The river provides opportunities for the development of more and better quality recreation activities, including initiatives which might contribute to the local economy. We note that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service seems to be resource-challenged when it comes to managing this large area. We don't like that people sometime use the National Park to burn out cars and dump rubbish and how long it takes the authorities to clear things up.

The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was established more than 100 years ago. It has created habitat for many birds, animals and fish, making the waterways a valued natural feature for residents and visitors alike. We are open to but cautious about Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd's new plans to pipe the open channels in our towns as we will miss the native birds who visit the channels that we have come to enjoy as part of living in Leeton.





Our leadership

Government

Leeton Shire is in the Commonwealth electorate of Farrer and in the State electorate of Murray.

Generally speaking, we feel that we have a strong and approachable Council and State and Federal Members of Parliament.

We believe open, transparent, honest and responsible decision making will benefit the Shire and is one of the most important factors in our future success and sustainability.

It is very important that the voice of the community is heard and considered before important decisions are made or new laws are passed. We expect our leaders to give serious consideration to how their decisions will affect us before making their decisions. This means that they need to work from a strong evidence base, and be mindful of the short and long-term impacts of the decisions they make today.

In our local government area, the Leeton community is governed by nine councillors including the Mayor. We are fortunate to have a Council that has a wide breadth of skills and, relative to NSW, we enjoy a good diversity including age and gender. We hope that our future elected leaders reflect better the multi-cultural diversity of our community.

Our Council regularly reviews and updates its long-term plans to ensure it is responding appropriately to the needs and aspirations of the local community. Resource availability is always challenging for local councils, particularly those smaller rural and regional councils. Leeton Shire Council is no different and continues to discuss with the community options for ensuring the future financial sustainability of Council in order that it can continue to deliver the services that our community needs. While we reluctantly may have to consider some form of rates increase, we want to first be sure our

Council has done everything it can to reduce costs and manage projects effectively. Some in the community have raised concerns about Council's management of recent major projects, including the Roxy Theatre refurbishment and the slide upgrade at the Aquatic Centre, though acknowledge that contractor errors also contributed.

A Youth Advisory Council was established in 2022 in an effort to provide advice to Council, assist with the development and delivery of local initiatives and programs aimed at young people, and be an inclusive space where all views are respected. The group is made up of members from the three local High Schools.

Leeton Shire is part of the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), a regional body of local councils. An initiative of the State Government, joint organisations were formed so that strategic planning could be done at a regional level and in partnership with State agencies. Initially Joint Organisations were funded by the State Government, but this funding has now ceased, making it challenging for Joint Organisations to fulfill all of their potential funded only through member councils' contributions and occasional grants.

Community/Active Citizens

We do so well in Leeton because we have leaders of every kind making a difference across our community. They are our everyday heroes. Our aim is to be effective, sustainable, self-reliant and resilient and to work from our strengths. Whether it is local sporting organisations, local schools, local clubs, local businesses, not-for-profit organisations, local interest groups or local charities, our community leaders are successful in creating a vision, taking action through mobilising people and getting everyone to collaborate in achieving a shared vision.



We have a wide variety of associations, community and non-government organisations, informal networks and social movements where people come together, by choice, to work on common goals. At last count there were more than 210 community groups in Leeton Shire including sporting groups, support groups or organisations, religious groups and service clubs.

Our community-based organisations have great scope for making a difference because they are not constrained by the same regulations and bureaucracy faced by governments, and so are often able to explore and implement new ideas quickly.

Since 2020, our community not-for-profit sector has benefitted from a \$1 million investment from the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal's Investing in Rural Community Futures program. The aim of the project was to invest in building collective not-for-profit sector capability for small rural and regional communities such as ours. The program has delivered strong outcomes locally to support employment, leadership development and mentoring, volunteering, grant writing and governance for community organisations. Local organisations benefiting from the program include Leeton Connect, Leeton Jump Start and the Multicultural Support Group. Other community organisations that participated in elements of the project include the Leeton Op Shop, Leeton Rotary and Leeton Business Chamber. Whilst the funding has ceased,



momentum has continued and valuable capacity building across the community has remained ongoing. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

We would like our young people to take up more leadership roles within our community and are looking for ways to grow and develop their leadership skills. Council has successfully established a Youth Council, comprised of students from the three high schools, to represent the opinions, issues and concerns of young people across the Shire, and provide another avenue for local young people to develop their leadership skills and experience.

Volunteers play a fundamental role in leading and sustaining our Leeton community. We are concerned that our volunteer base is ageing and reducing in number, mainly because of the busy lives so many of us lead. We often find that the same people volunteer for several organisations and while this is appreciated, it may well be an unfair burden on a few. Bringing new volunteers in to step up and help would support our organisations and bring more diverse contributions to these roles.

Organisations such as Leeton Connect foster partnerships and support groups seeking grant funding opportunities. They also train volunteers and increase their capability to support community organisations and activities across the region.

In 2021, 16.4% of Leeton Shire residents reported that they had done voluntary work for an organisation or group in the past twelve months.

In 2024, 78% of community respondents reported at least some satisfaction with Council's efforts to inform residents

As active citizens we do many things to improve the lives of others such as voicing our concerns, building effective networks and acting in ways that promote fairness and social justice.

However, there is sometimes a disconnect between the breadth of opportunities provided for community participation and community perception about options available for participation. Local conversations to further discuss how local people prefer to receive information and provide feedback to all levels of government about policies and programs to be implemented locally will help to bridge that gap.

Leeton Shire Council is making a real effort to hear from its residents and ratepayers before making big decisions. The Have Your Say Leeton website (<https://haveyoursay.leeton.nsw.gov.au/>), is a place where community members can give feedback on important projects or hot topics if they choose. Using the internet in this way means we can be more involved at times that suit us, regardless of our health, work or family commitments.

In 2024, 68% of community respondents reported satisfaction with Council's efforts to consult and/or involve residents

Council also consults with a range of advisory committees and action groups made up of community leaders who are passionate about the future of Leeton Shire and are well placed to give current advice about local priorities.

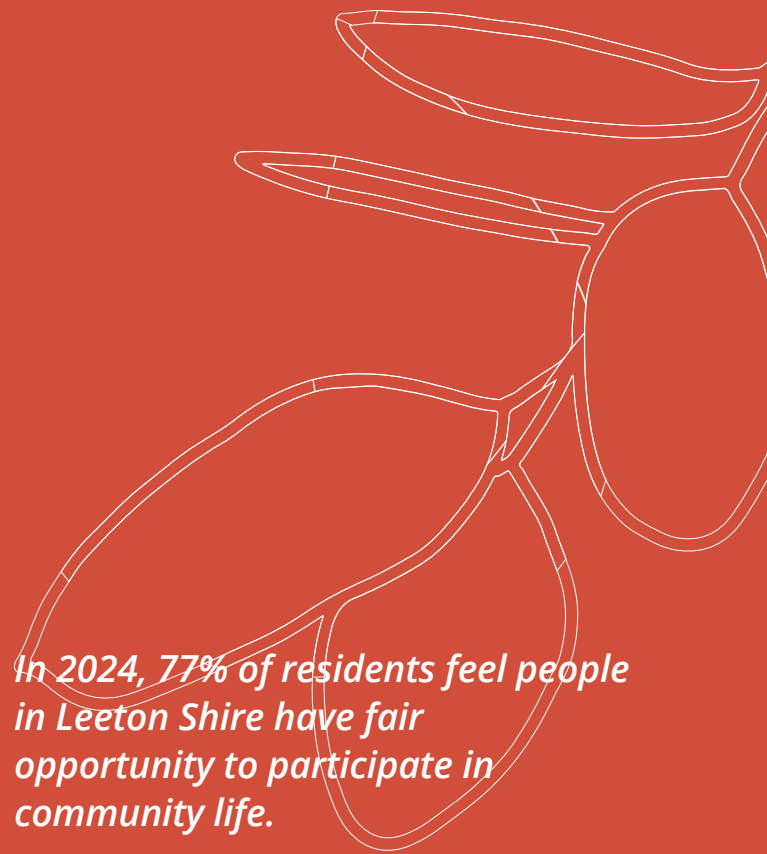
To maximise the effective and efficient use of available community resources, it is important that we make and take up opportunities to talk to one another (in formal and informal forums), so we don't duplicate effort and we pool our ideas and energy.

As the level of government closest to us locally, we rely on Leeton Shire Council to advocate on our behalf to other levels of government, and, with our local Members of Parliament, to keep us informed and get us involved in matters affecting our Shire.

In 2024, community respondents reported that they were happiest with our Council when it:

- ***Made an effort to respond to residents***
- ***Made good decisions***
- ***Kept residents informed***
- ***Involved residents***
- ***Demonstrated sound financial management***

In 2024, 77% of residents feel people in Leeton Shire have fair opportunity to participate in community life.





3 Where do we want to be in 2035?

Our vision

We are a healthy, safe and connected community that respects people and the environment, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy underpinned by quality, accessible infrastructure, reliable water supplies and strong leadership.

Our goals

We want to:

- Work together in Leeton Shire as a community informed and engaged in its future
- Enhance and protect the natural environment of Leeton Shire
- Sustain Leeton Shire as a caring and supportive community
- Evolve Leeton Shire’s culturally rich and vibrant community
- Progress Leeton Shire as a prosperous community for all
- Position Leeton Shire as a liveable place where we can all continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

What we value

What we value most about Leeton Shire is our:

- Sense of community and friendly people
- Rural country town lifestyle
- Peace and quiet.

Our priorities

Our major priorities, in order of importance are:

- Services and facilities, especially health care
- Infrastructure and development
- Community safety
- Roads and transport
- The natural environment.

Our guiding principles

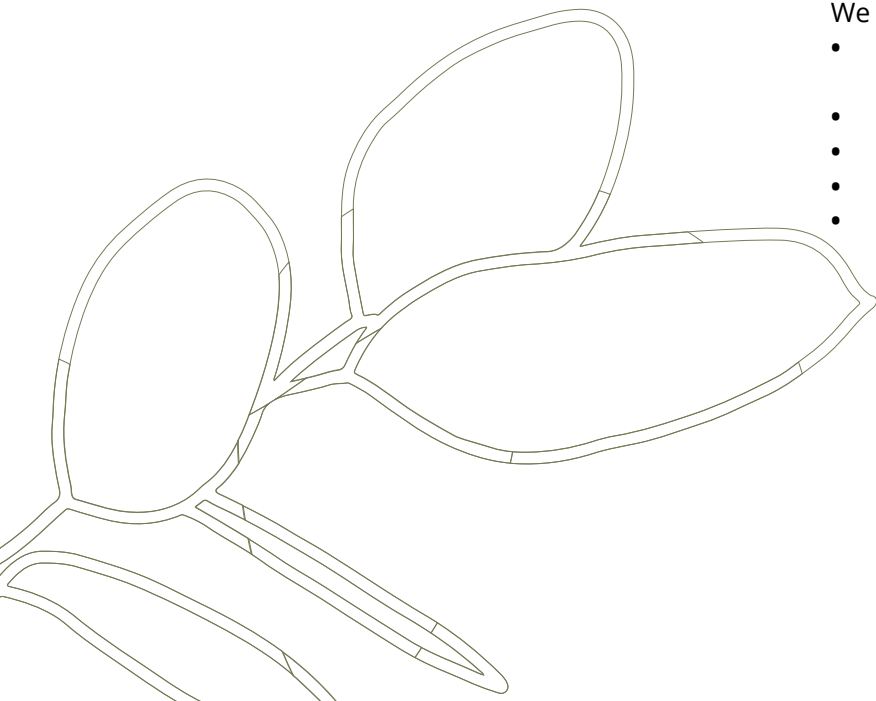
We want a community guided by the following social justice principles:

- **Access** – available resources are distributed fairly across our community
- **Equity** – everyone has access to goods and services, regardless of ability, age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc
- **Participation** – individuals and groups are empowered to take part in making the decisions that affect their lives
- **Diversity** – cultural, religious, gender, age and other differences are valued and respected
- **Rights** – the civil, economic, political, cultural, and legal rights of individuals and governments and organisations are respected and protected.

Our areas of focus

We will focus on being:

- A connected, inclusive and enriched community
- A safe, active and healthy community
- A thriving regional economy
- A quality environment
- Strong leadership and civic participation.



The outcomes we want to achieve

In each focus area, there are several outcomes we want to achieve:

FOCUS AREA 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community

- 1.1** We are friendly, inclusive and connected
- 1.2** We value and celebrate our local history and our diversity
- 1.3** We are rich in arts and culture
- 1.4** We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities

FOCUS AREA 2. A safe, active and healthy community

- 2.1** Our community is safe to live in and move about
- 2.2** We participate in active sports and leisure
- 2.3** We have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs
- 2.4** We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members

FOCUS AREA 3. A thriving regional economy

- 3.1** Our local businesses are prospering
- 3.2** We attract and retain new businesses and residents, and our population is growing
- 3.3** We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy
- 3.4** We have the skills and knowledge to undertake the work available
- 3.5** We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of short- and long-term residents
- 3.6** We have diverse employment opportunities
- 3.7** We are a popular tourist destination

FOCUS AREA 4. A quality environment

- 4.1** We enjoy a protected natural environment and quality agricultural land
- 4.2** We live sustainably, use our resources responsibly and have adapted to climate change
- 4.3** Our built environment is attractive and serviceable
- 4.4** We balance the needs of our natural and built environments

FOCUS AREA 5. Strong Leadership and civic participation

- 5.1** We are well informed and engaged in decision-making
- 5.2** Our leaders speak out for the good of our community
- 5.3** We work together to achieve our goals
- 5.4** We are active community members who recognise we all have a role to play
- 5.5** Our Council operates efficiently and effectively
- 5.6** We demonstrate leadership in the face of disaster

4 How will we get to where we want to be and who can help us?

This chapter of *Leeton On The Go - towards 2035* describes how Leeton Shire might achieve the goals it aspires to, and who in the community might be able to contribute to achieving those goals.

The development of these strategies has been informed by suggestions collated during community and stakeholder engagement activities. A summary of the suggestions heard during the planning process is provided at the beginning of each of the five focus areas of this chapter.

Leeton On The Go - towards 2035 also identifies who might help deliver the strategies and includes measures to help us monitor over time if we're on track.

The information in this chapter is presented under the **five focus areas**:

- 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community**
- 2. A safe, active and healthy community**
- 3. A thriving regional economy**
- 4. A quality environment**
- 5. Strong leadership and civic participation.**



What you said about a connected, inclusive and enriched community

*A jazz festival would be a great addition to the
Art Deco Festival*

Establish a community garden

We need integrated social housing

Wayfinding signage to promote local history

*Employ a local historian, and capture oral
histories before it's too late*

*More music, drama and writing workshops for
all ages*

*Establish a cultural heritage fund to support
diverse projects*

*Keep up the Movies on the Water Tower –
great for families doing it tough*

*Find options for transporting the elderly to local
events or host events in aged care facilities*

*More dementia care education in the
community*

*Address safety issues at Whitton Courthouse and
Historical Museum to allow more visitor access*

*Encourage young people to stay –
provide training that develops life skills*

More signage explaining local history

**A giant chess game in Mountford Park,
also tic tac toe**

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

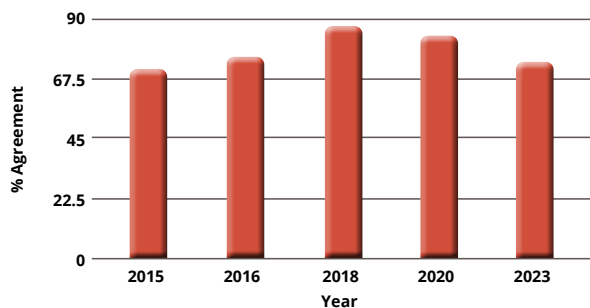
Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
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Cc 1.1 We are friendly, inclusive and connected

1.1.1	Build and support connections and relationships within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Connect • Leeton Shire Council • Community groups, eg Leeton Multicultural Support Group • Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council • Department of Communities and Justice • Department of Social Services • Local service providers and interagencies, eg Leeton Connect, Rainbow Pride Collective and Localise You • Multicultural NSW
1.1.2	Provide facilities and opportunities to enable people to connect, including opportunities for people to volunteer in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Community groups, eg Leeton Multicultural Support Group • NSW Department of Planning and Environment (Crown Lands) • Leeton Museum and Art Gallery • Leeton Roxy Theatre • TAFE • Leeton Connect • Leeton Living website • NSW Community Connectors Coordinator

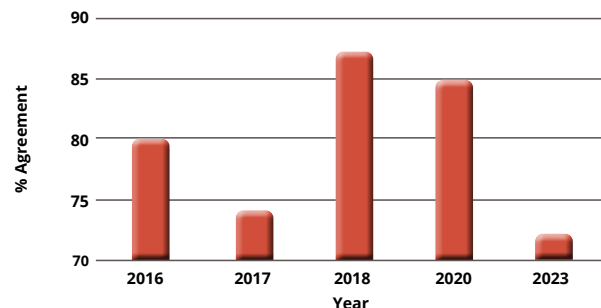
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Community Perception – Percentage of Residents Who Feel Part of the Community



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Community Perception – I Feel Welcome in My Community



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Our target for 2035: 85% or more

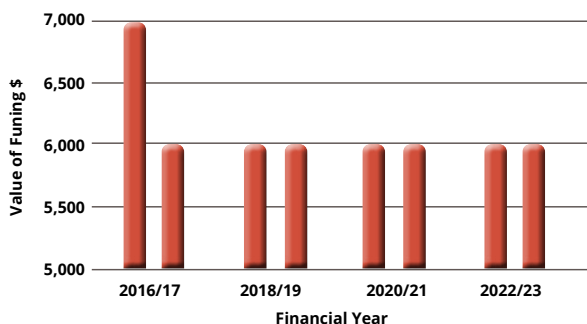
Our target for 2035: 85% or more

Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Cc 1.2	We value and celebrate our local history, culture and diversity	
1.2.1	Honour and celebrate our history, and our Aboriginal and multicultural heritage, and encourage local organisations to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Leeton Museum and Art Gallery • Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library • Whitton Courthouse and Museum • Yanco Museum • Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council • Leeton Family and Local History Society • Heritage NSW • Museums and Galleries NSW • Leeton Shire Council Heritage Committee and Heritage Advisor • Multicultural Support Group

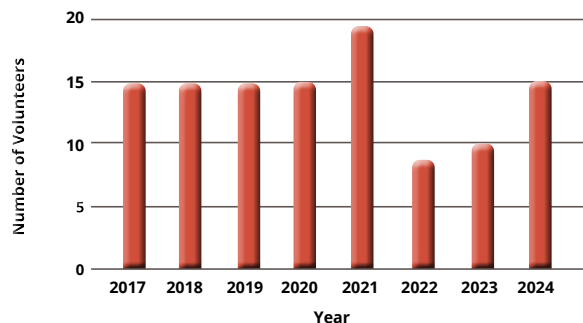
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Leeton Shire Council Heritage Advisor Funding



Source: Leeton Shire Council

Number of Volunteers - Leeton Family and Local History Society



Source: Leeton Family and Local History Society

Our target for 2035: Not less than \$6,000

Our target for 2035: More than 15

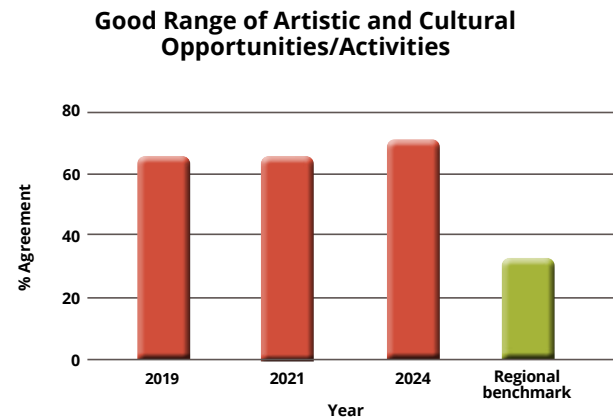
Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Cc 1.3	We are rich in the arts and culture	
1.3.1	Encourage appreciation of and participation in the literary and visual arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Museum and Art Gallery • Create NSW • Western Riverina Arts • Leeton Art Society • Leeton Writers Collective • Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council • Miil Miil Productions • Birdyulang Animations
1.3.2	Provide a program of theatre, dance, music and cinema that caters to a range of audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roxy Community Theatre • Dance and music teachers • Local hotels • Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council • Leeton Soldiers Club
1.3.3	Provide vocational education and training in the performing arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roxy Institute of Performing Arts • Miil Miil Productions • Birdyulang Animations

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Leeton Shire Council



Source: Leeton Shire Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2019, 2021 and 2024

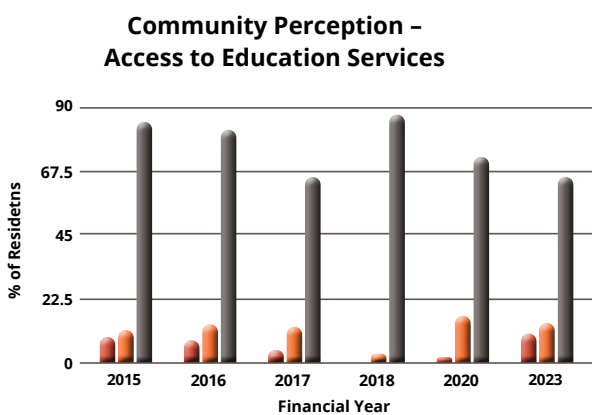
Our target for 2035: More than 3,200 active members

Our target for 2035: At least 70% agree satisfied

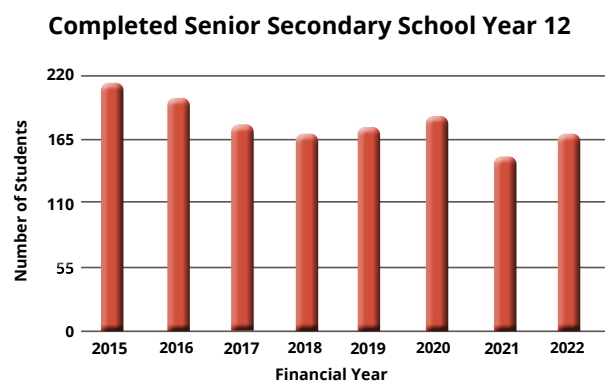
Focus Area 1. A connected, inclusive and enriched community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Cc 1.4	We have access to a range of local educational opportunities for students of all ages and abilities	
1.4.1	Provide quality childcare and early learning to pre-school-aged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare providers including Leeton Early Learning Centre NSW Department of Education
1.4.2	Provide quality education to local school-aged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local schools Leeton Out of School Hours Care NSW Department of Education
1.4.3	Provide local access to tertiary and further education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Universities Centre - Western Riverina TAFE NSW Leeton TOCAL College Yanco Other Registered Training Organisations NSW Department of Education Universities such as Deakin & Charles Sturt Australian Apprenticeship Support Network
1.4.4	Provide opportunities for informal lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U3A Leeton & District Local Aboriginal Lands Council Historical Society Leeton Museum & Art Gallery Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library
1.4.5	Provide Library services to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Major Dooley Library

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey



Source: myschool.edu.au

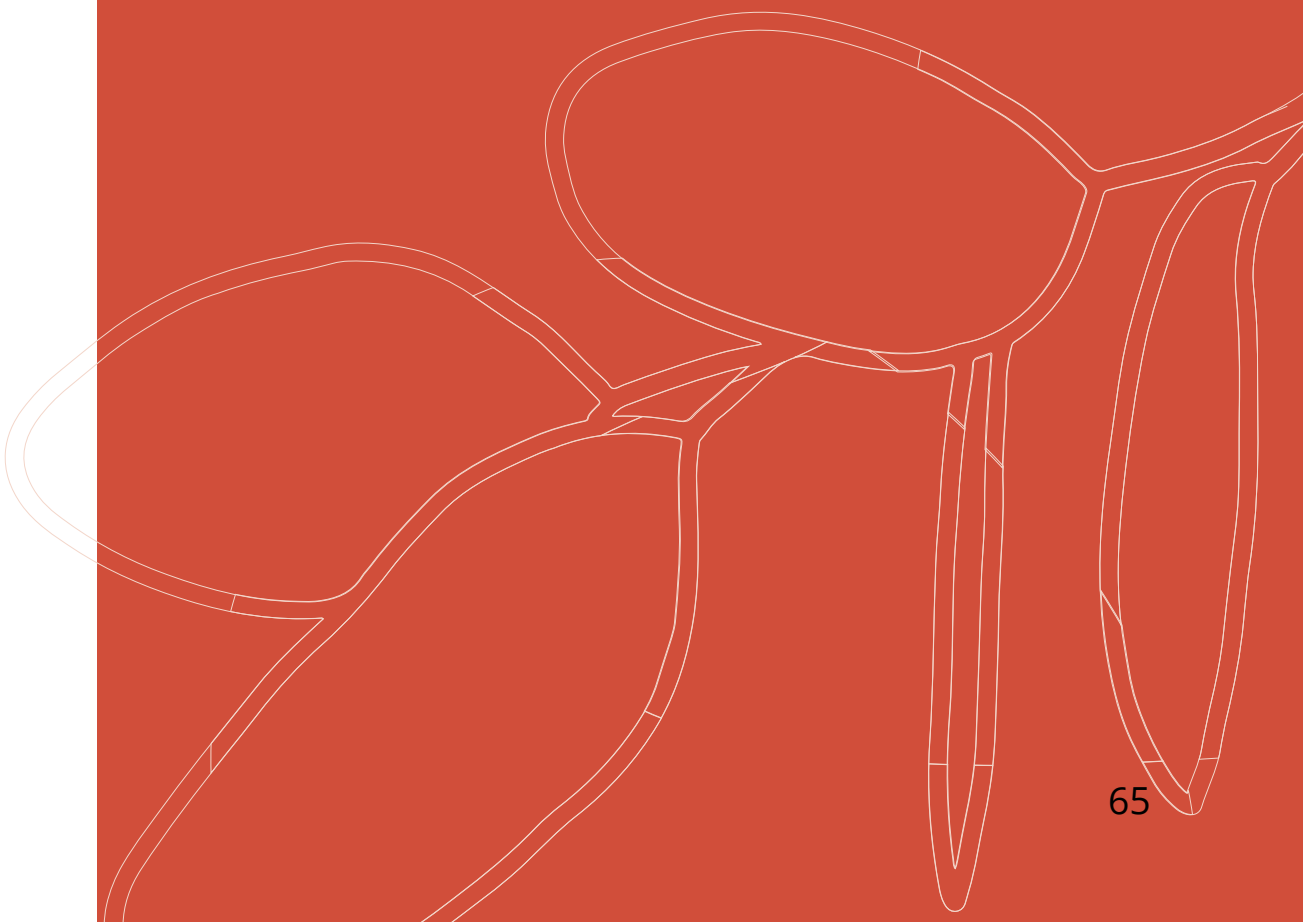
Our target for 2035: At least 85%

Our target for 2035: At least 175



What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Attend events
- Help to welcome new residents
- Maintain the heritage items in our custody
- Take advantage of the educational opportunities available
- Join a community group
- Make properties accessible to the aged and people with disabilities
(if a business or property owner)





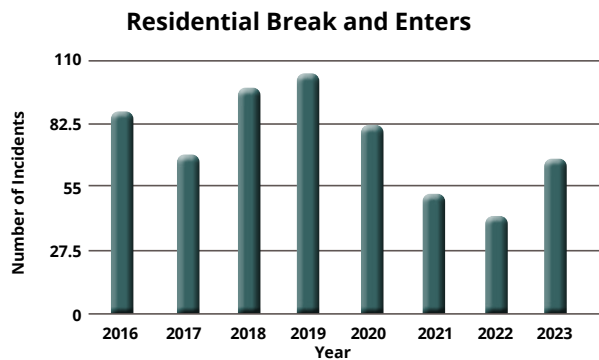
What you said about a safe, active and healthy community

- Improved access to better netball and basketball facilities*
 - Investigate feasibility of collocated health services at the hospital*
 - More places for exercising to reduce obesity*
 - Offer discount vouchers to encourage cat desexing*
 - Education about dog registration and microchipping*
 - Tennis – activation of events and improve facilities*
 - More swimming instructors to help people learn to swim*
 - Continue to improve health care services*
 - Need more GPs locally*
 - Improve safety at school bus drop-off points*
 - Keep our great sporting facilities going*
 - Whitton Pool is a valued community facility*
 - Need permanent doctors at the hospital*
 - Better mental health services, especially for young people*
 - Provide shared pathways to improve safety*
 - Provide spaces for safe cycling*
 - Promote active transport options, like cycling*
 - Shade cloth over the main pool in Leeton*
 - Improved street lighting at Ramponi Park*
 - More low impact, over 60s sports*
 - A roundabout at Railway Bridge/Melaluca Ave/ Railway Ave*

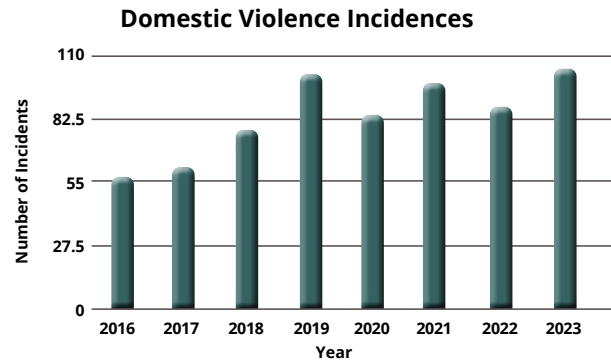
Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community (Sc)

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Sc 2.1	Our community is safe to live in and move about	
2.1.1	Support programs and services that promote the safety of residents and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Police Force • Transport for NSW • Leeton Shire Council • Murrumbidgee Local Health District • Flourish • Disability support services
2.1.2	Take action to safeguard public health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Police Force • Transport for NSW • Leeton Shire Council • Local businesses • Sporting clubs

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



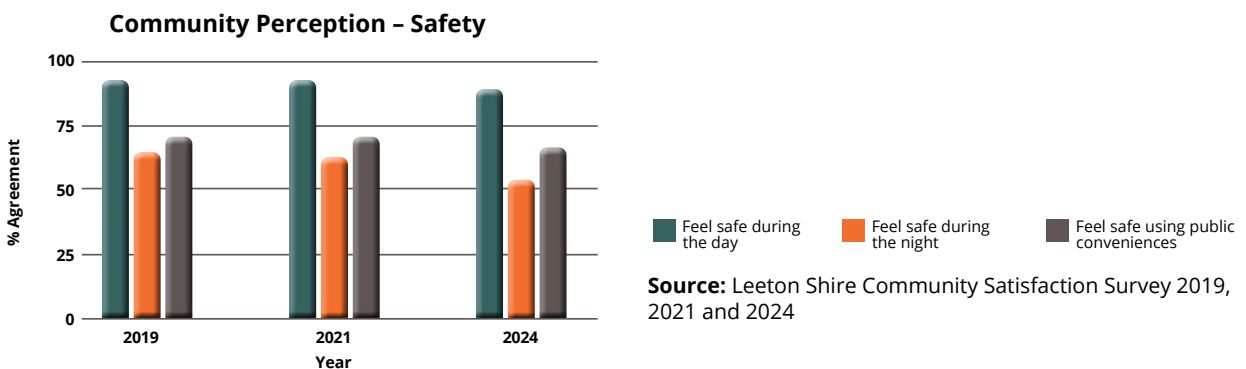
Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Our target for 2035: Less than 40 incidents p.a

Our target for 2035: Zero, and not more than 50 incidents p.a



Source: Leeton Shire Community Satisfaction Survey 2019, 2021 and 2024

Our target for 2035: 95% - during the day 70% - during the night 75% - using public conveniences

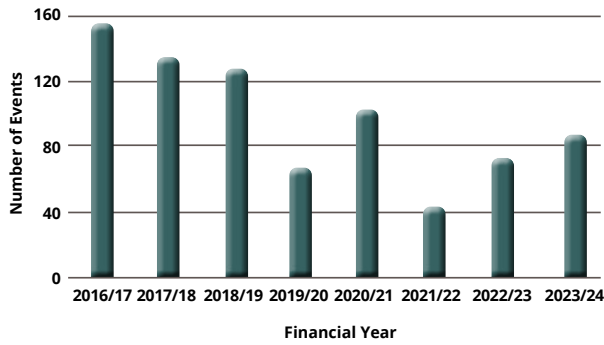
Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Sc 2.2	We participate in active sports and leisure	
2.2.1	Create, maintain and improve inclusive playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • NSW Department of Planning and Environment
2.2.2	Provide, maintain and improve a network of footpaths and cycleways for leisure and active transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council
2.2.3	Offer sporting, recreational and leisure activities catering for people of all ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting clubs • fitness and recreation businesses • Leeton Shire Council • Local schools • NSW Office of Sport • State and National sports bodies

Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community cont.

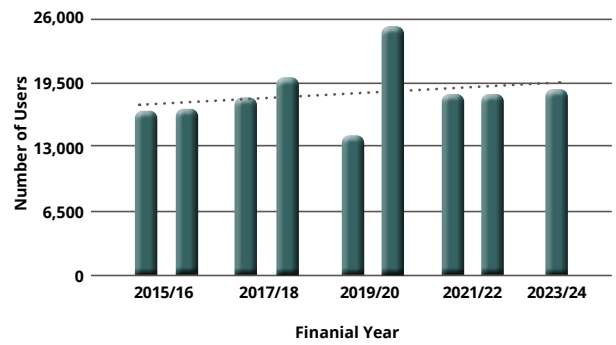
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Sporting Events on Shire Ovals



Source: Leeton Shire Council

Usage Numbers for Leeton Indoor Stadium

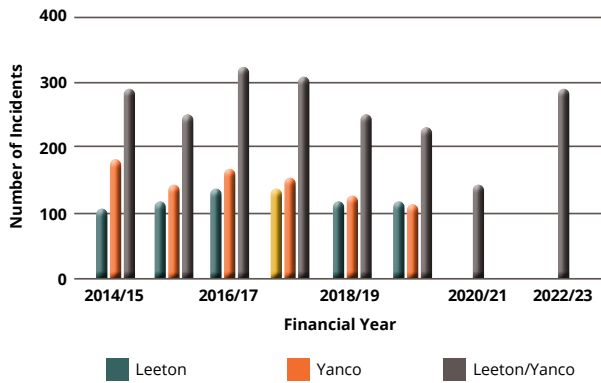


Source: Leeton Shire Council Open Space and Recreation

Our target for 2035: 120 events annually

Our target for 2035: 19,500 annual users

Swimming Club Memberships

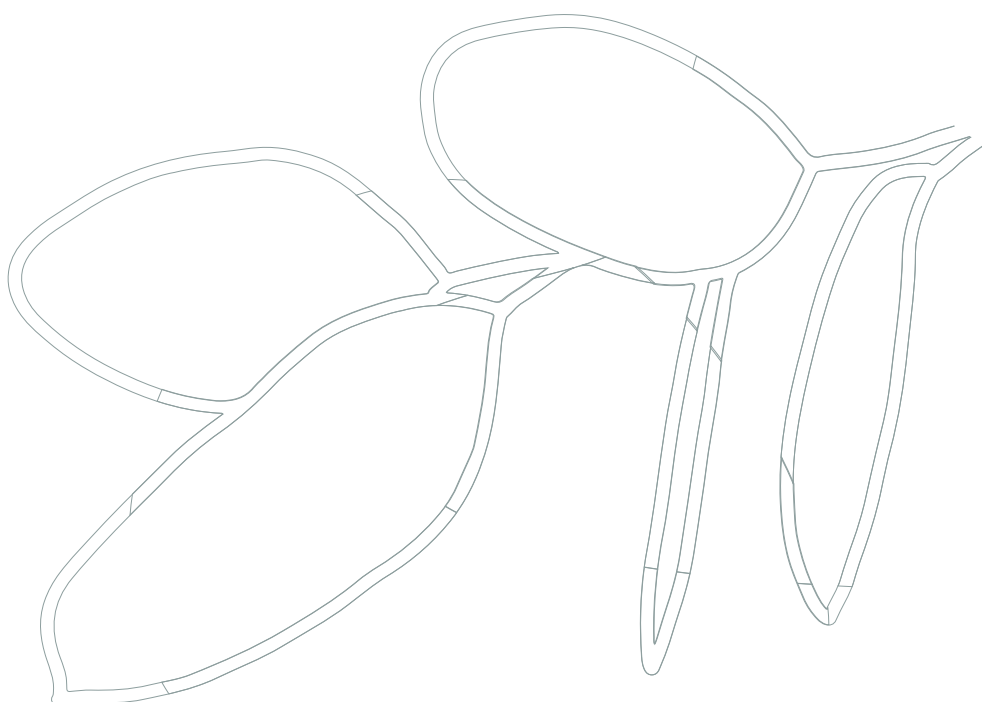


Source: Leeton Yanco Swim Club, Leeton Shire Council via Leeton Yanco Swim Club

Our target for 2035: 400 memberships

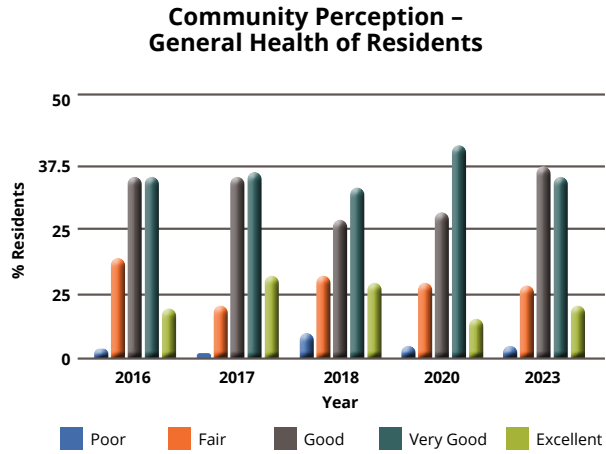
Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Sc 2.3	We have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs	
2.3.1	Provide and support health, community and emergency services that meet community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local health service providers • Leeton District Hospital • NSW Health • ACON outreach partner: Leeton Rainbow Pride Collective • Federal Government • Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network • NSW Ambulance • Rural Fire Service • NSW Fire Brigade • Leeton Jump Start
2.3.2	Proactively recruit and retain general practitioners, hospital staff and on-call doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton District Hospital and Leeton Health Service • Murrumbidgee Local Health District • NSW Health • Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network • Local Health Advisory Committee • Leeton Shire Council • Leeton Health Services Crisis Committee

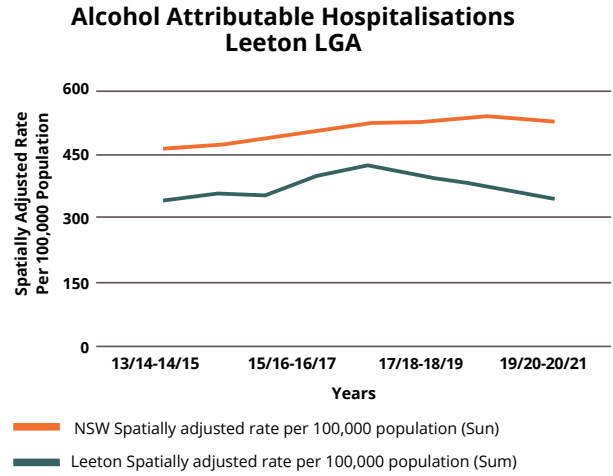


Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community cont.

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



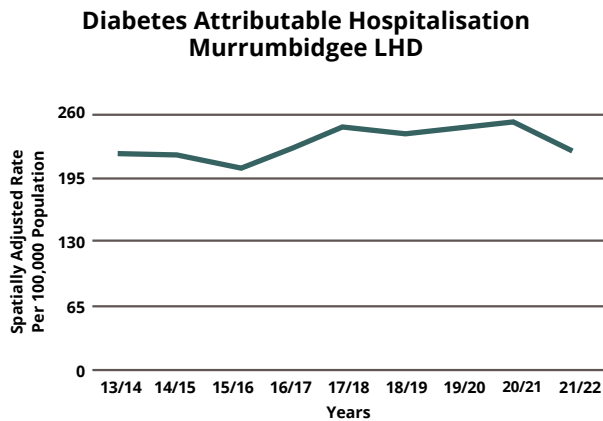
Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey



Source: HealthStats NSW

Our target for 2035: 90% rate good/very good/excellent

Our target for 2035: Continue with rate at least 150 per 100,000 lower than NSW average



Source: HealthStats NSW

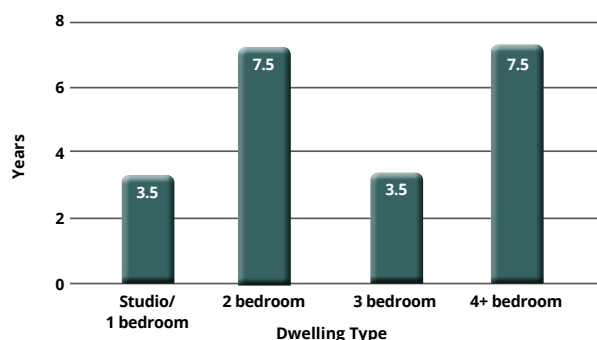
Our target for 2035: Rate less than 190 per 100,000

Focus Area 2. A safe, active and healthy community cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Sc 2.4	We have supported accommodation that meets the needs of all community members	
2.4.1	Support social housing in suitable locations across the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Department of Communities and Justice • Government and non-government social housing providers including Argyle Homes • Leeton Shire Council
2.4.2	Provide live-in aged care facilities, services and accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged care facility owners and service providers, including Home Care providers • My Aged Care • NSW Health • Leeton Shire Council • Property developers and investors • Southern Cross • Masonic Lodge • Argyle Homes
2.4.3	Provide housing and support services suitable for the aged and people with disabilities to enable them to live independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Aged Care • NDIS • Non-government social housing providers • Property developers and investors • Disability service providers • Accommodation providers such as Argyle Homes • Landlords
2.4.4	Provide crisis housing for those in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local accommodation providers • St Vincent de Paul • Salvation Army

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Waiting Times for Social Housing at 30 June 2023



Source: Waiting Times for Social Housing at 30 June 2023

Our target for 2035: Less than 2-year wait for all social housing types



What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- Report hazards
- Keep physically and socially active
- Rent out vacant premises (if a property owner)
- Make rental properties more accessible to the aged or people with physical disabilities (if a landlord)
- Register, microchip and desex cats and dogs, and keep them under control (if a pet owner)





What you said about a thriving regional economy

- Develop local mentoring opportunities**
 - Encourage large corporation into town to create more jobs*
 - Provide education opportunities to reflect the region's key industries*
 - Business expos and seminars to enable networking*
 - Work more with local businesses to promote and support a variety of events to attract visitors to the area*
 - Affordable quality housing for seasonal workers, families and professionals*
 - Support our villages to prosper*
 - Keep up the CBD rejuvenation*
 - Reliable water and higher security allocations*
 - Retain water on the farm*
 - More value-add industries*
 - Recognise the importance of agriculture to our area*
 - Make more of tourism opportunities and coordinate regional tourism with other areas*
 - Need a snack bar and refreshment area in the Roxy*
 - Provide more diverse training and course opportunities*
 - Promote more diverse employment opportunities*

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy (Ec)

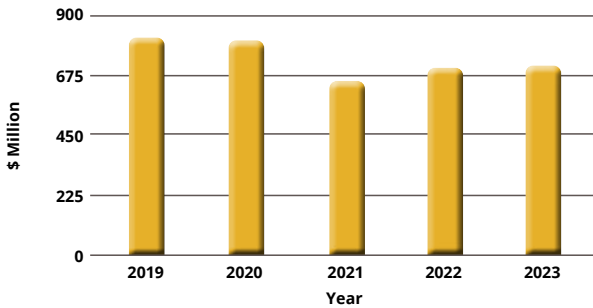
Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.1	Our local businesses are prospering	
3.1.1	Support local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Business Chamber • Business Enterprise Centre • Leeton Shire Council
3.1.2	Improve and expand telecommunications capacity and capability across the Shire (NBN, mobile phone coverage and digital literacy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications providers • NBN Co • Federal Government • Local MPs • Leeton Shire Council
3.1.3	Ensure Federal and State water policy frameworks enhance productivity in the region, and structural adjustment funding (Sustainable Communities Program) is targeted appropriately and delivers sustainable jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Department of Planning and Environment – Water • Water NSW • Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) • Murray Darling Association • Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd
3.1.4	Facilitate access to labour, both skilled and unskilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Regional Development Australia – Riverina • Multicultural NSW • Employment agencies • Skills NSW • International Settlement Services (TBC)



Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

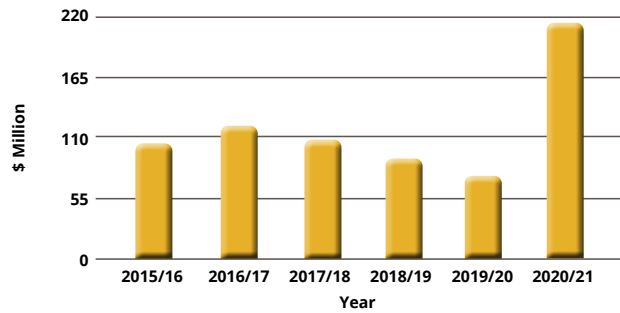
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Gross Regional Product of Leeton Shire



Source: Economy.id

Gross Value of Agriculture in Leeton Shire



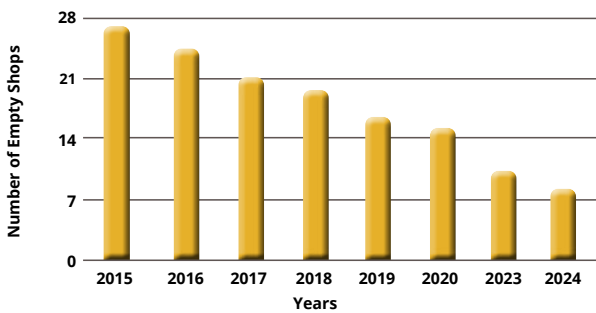
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

* Note: The 2020–21 Agricultural Census was the last Agricultural Census to be conducted by the ABS. No information at LGA level. Data not available 2021/22.

Our target for 2035: \$790+ million per annum

Our target for 2035: \$220+ million per annum

**Number of Empty Shops in Pine Avenue
(between McDonalds and Roxy Theatre)**



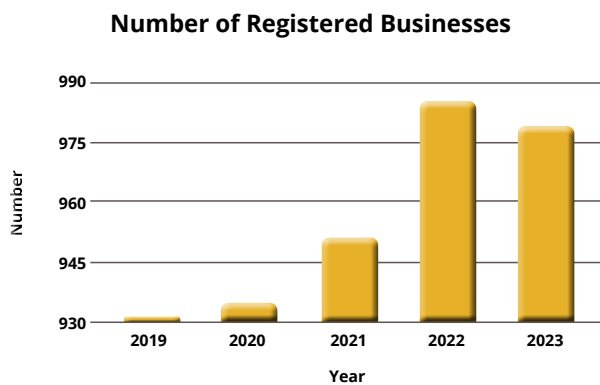
Source: Leeton Shire Council

Our target for 2035: Less than 5

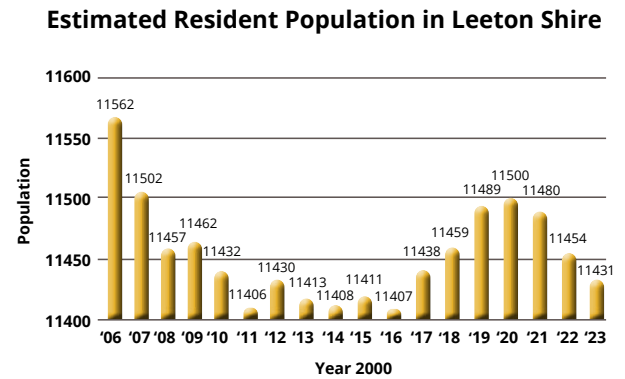
Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.2	We attract and retain new businesses and residents, and our population is growing	
3.2.1	Promote Leeton Shire as an attractive business location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council Leeton Business Chamber
3.2.2	Support business development opportunities throughout the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council
3.2.3	Support ideas and programs that will expand the number and variety of local jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council Leeton Business Chamber Local businesses Regional Development Australia – Riverina

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Data by Region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0). Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)

Our target for 2035: More than 980 businesses

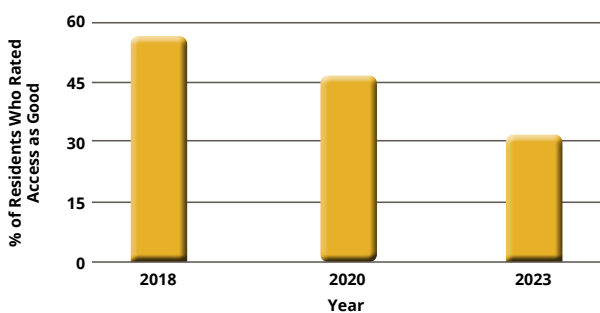
Our target for 2035: 12,000 resident population

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.3	We have the infrastructure we need to support our economy	
3.3.1	Provide a transport network that meets the Shire's transport needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Transport for NSW • Neighbouring councils • Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) • State and Federal Governments
3.3.2	Improve freight and logistics capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • NSW Government • Federal Government • Griffith City Council • Grainlink Storage • Linx Cargo
3.3.3	Provide enough appropriately located commercial and industrial land to allow for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council
3.3.4	Provide enough parking for easy access to shops, services, events and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council

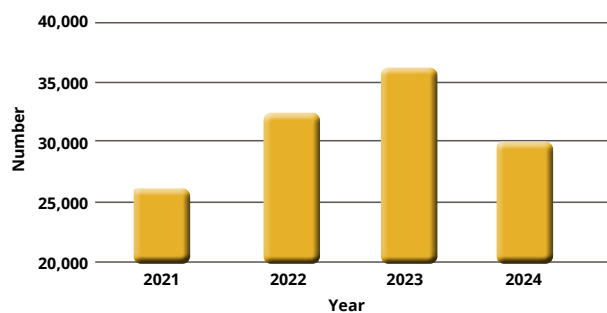
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Community Perception of Access to High Speed, Reliable Internet



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Number of containers from Western Riverina to Port of Melbourne for export



Source: Port of Melbourne

Our target for 2035: At least 50% of residents rate internet access as "good"

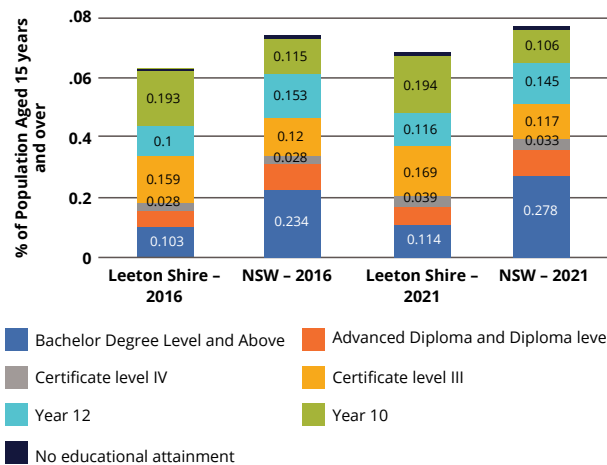
Our target for 2035: At least 50% of residents rate internet access as "good"

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.4	We have the skills and knowledge required to undertake the work available	
3.4.1	Increase access to a range of vocational education pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE NSW Leeton • Registered Training Organisations • Group Training Organisations • NSW Department of Education • Local Apprenticeship Centre
3.4.2	Expand skills and knowledge in sectors of local skills shortage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE NSW Leeton • Registered Training Organisations • NSW Department of Education • Local Apprenticeship Centre • Employers

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

**Levels of Education in Leeton Shire vs NSW
(% of Population Aged 15 years and over)**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

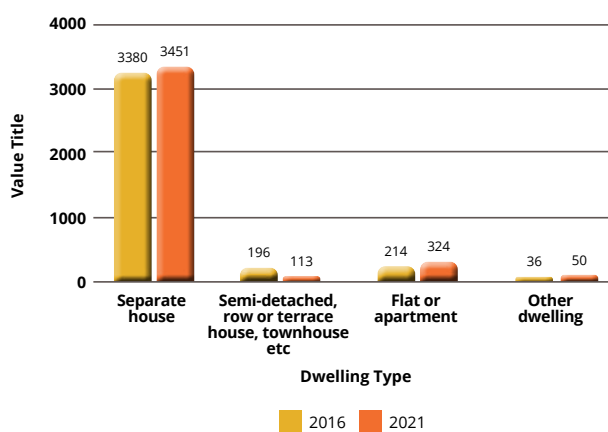
Our target for 2035: At least 65% of population aged over 15 years with post-school level qualifications

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.5	We have access to a range of housing options that suit the needs of short- and long-term residents	
3.5.1	Encourage and facilitate the development of land for affordable housing in suitable locations across the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property developers and investors Leeton Shire Council
3.5.2	Provide lifestyle housing for retirees in Leeton Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retirement village developers Leeton Soldiers Club
3.5.3	Support quality and timely planning and development across the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council NSW Department of Planning and Environment Private certifiers and planners

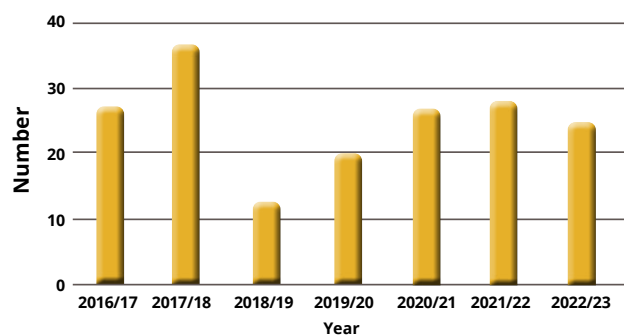
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Number of Types of Dwellings in Leeton Shire



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

Number of Building Approvals for New Dwellings in Leeton Shire



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

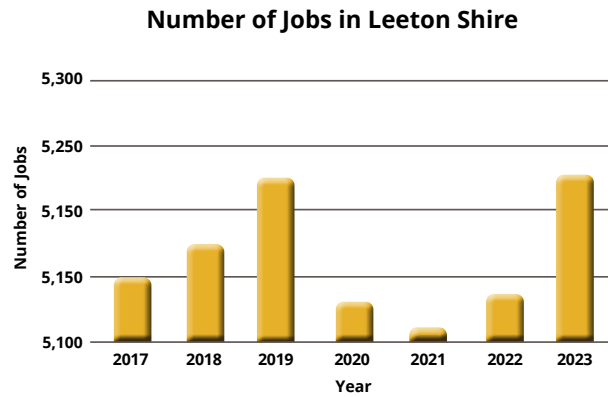
Our target for 2035: At least 4,275 total dwellings

Our target for 2035: At least 40 new dwellings per annum

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.6	We have diverse employment opportunities	
3.6.1	Provide jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local businesses Leeton Shire Council
3.6.2	Provide traineeships and apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local businesses Leeton Shire Council (Local Government Apprentice, Trainee and Cadet Program: A fresh start) Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Grow Our Own Western Riverina

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour force survey catalogue number 6202.0, and Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions)

Our target for 2035: Less than NSW rate; less than 4%

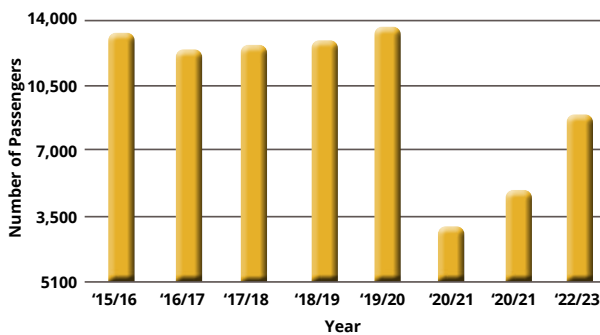
Our target for 2035: 5,250

Focus Area 3. A thriving regional economy cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
Ec 3.7	We are a popular and active visitor destination	
3.7.1	Promote our towns, villages and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Riverina • Destination NSW • Leeton Shire Council • Murrumbidgee Trails Marketing Collective • Local businesses
3.7.2	Provide a range of accommodation options to visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation providers • Campground providers
3.7.3	Host events, festivals and activities that attract visitors to the shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Community groups • Hotels • Sporting organisations • Local businesses • Hospitality outlets

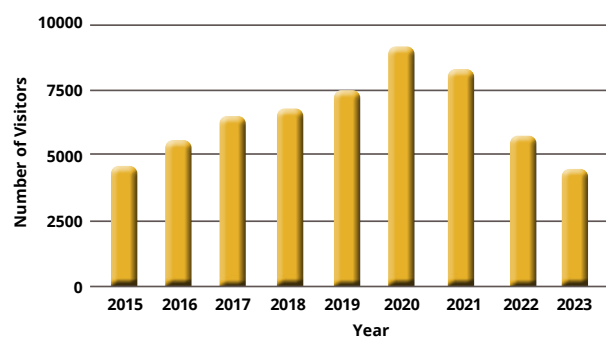
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Airport Passengers To and From Sydney



Source: Rex Airlines

Visitor Numbers – Fivebough Wetlands



Source: NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment – Crown Lands

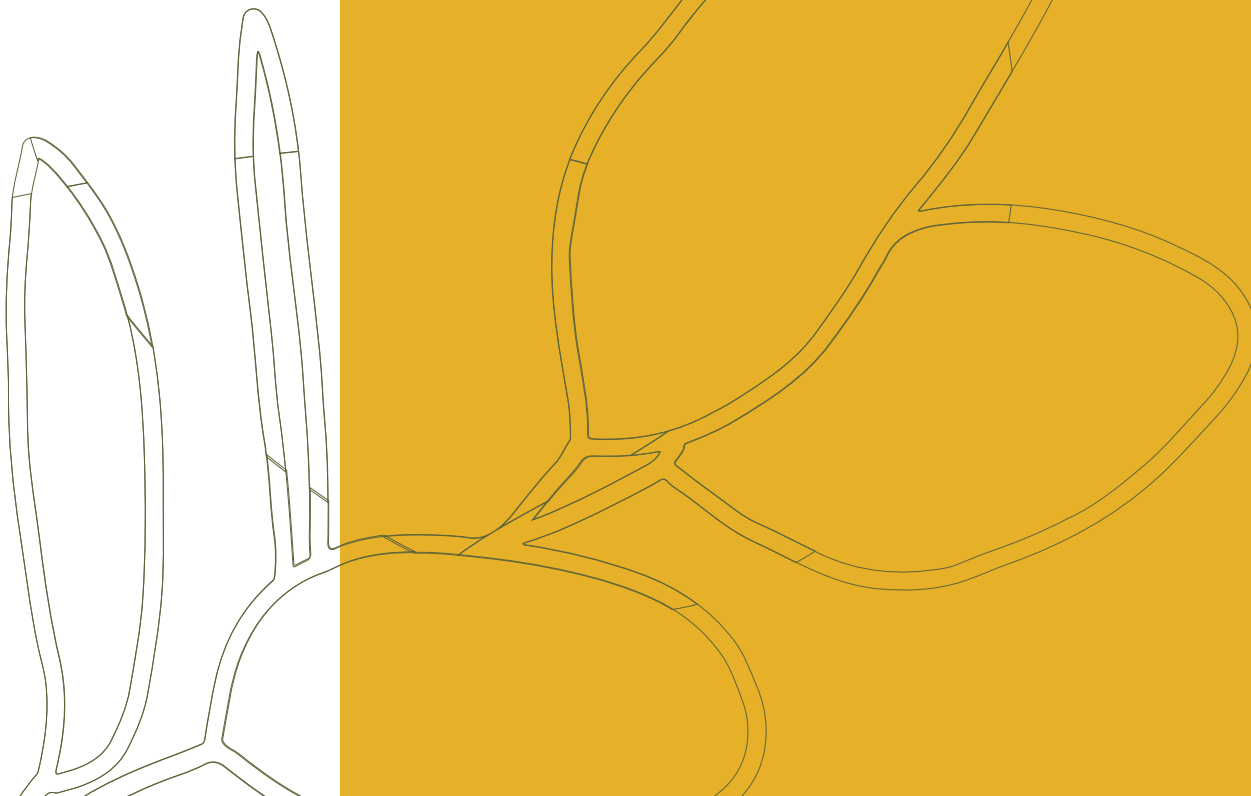
Our target for 2035: 13,000 passengers per annum

Our target for 2035: 8,000 visitors per annum



What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- **Buy local**
- **Talk up Leeton Shire as a great place to live, work, stay and play**
- **Help host an event by volunteering your time**
- **Observe parking restrictions in front of retail premises**
- **If you're an employer, take on an apprentice or trainee**
- **We would like to encourage our local businesses and agencies to use local trade services**





What you said about a quality environment

More solar installations on government buildings and over shaded carparks

Join Narrandera Koala Regeneration Committee

Put Cockitrough bird waterers and dog drinking stations in local parks

Mosquito repelling systems in public areas like Chelmsford Place

Educate people about what to put in bins and toilets

Street cooling projects and expanded tree planting

More seating in our parks

Pull out the wild olive trees at the river

Improve sewerage system access for all residents

A lake for recreational activities would be great

Educate people about backyard pests like fruit fly and gall wasps so all can help protect our agricultural industry

Develop a climate change adaptation plan

Focus on and support regenerative farming

Become a net energy producer

More control of noxious weeds in parks

Bird nesting housing to help repopulate native birds

Reduce use of cars in CBD and make it more people centric

Protect native vegetation and increase enforcement

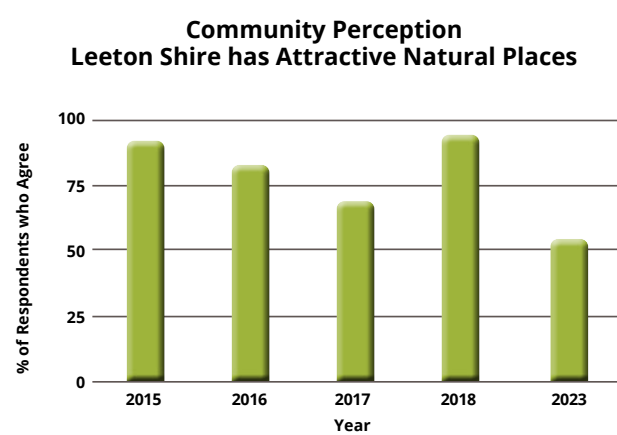
Educate community about more sustainable food alternatives

Promote community gardens

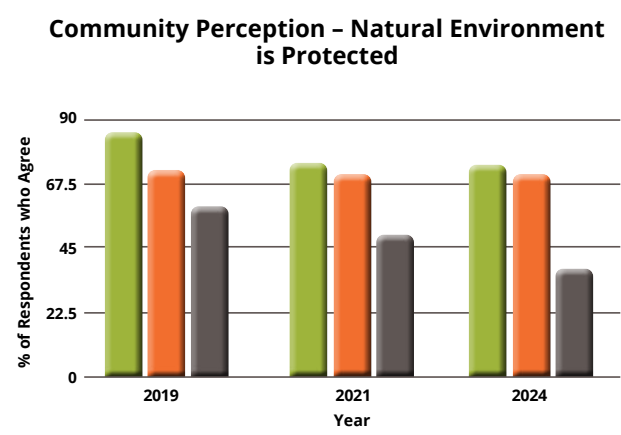
Focus Area 4. A quality environment (En)

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
En 4.1	We enjoy a protected natural environment and quality agricultural land	
4.1.1	Support the healthy function of our ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverina Local Land Services • Department of Planning and Environment • NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service • Forestry Corporation of NSW • Leeton Shire Council • Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd • Fivebough Tuckerbil Wetlands Advisory Committee • Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists • Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc • Leeton and District Local Aboriginal Land Council
4.1.2	Provide the access and facilities required to enable community members and visitors to enjoy our natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks and Wildlife Service • Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Land • Forestry Corporation of NSW • Leeton Shire Council

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey



Source: Leeton Shire Community Satisfaction Survey 2019, 2021 and 2024

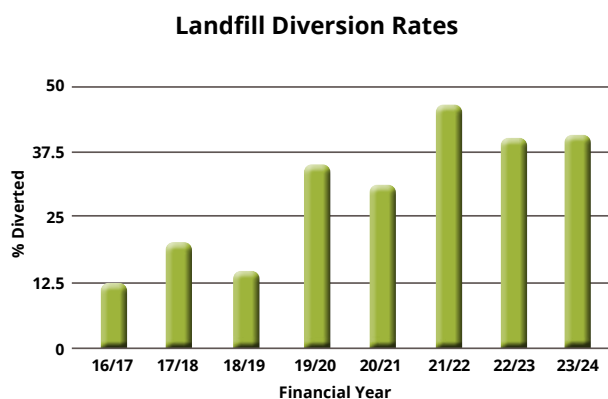
Our target for 2035: 80+% respondents agree

Our target for 2035:
 85% agree natural environment is respected & protected
 70% agree renewable energy is important for community
 60% agree weed incursions are adequately managed

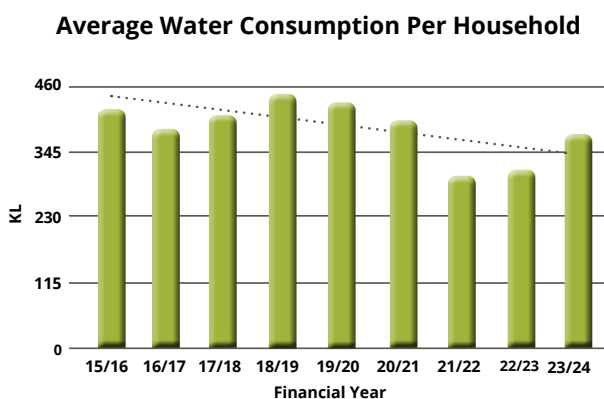
Focus Area 4. A quality environment cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
En 4.2	We live sustainably, use our resources responsibly and have adapted to climate change	
4.2.1	Reduce resource consumption, recycle and minimise waste, and manage residual waste responsibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Businesses • Community members • Local businesses and industries
4.2.2	Mitigate the impacts of climate change reduce our carbon footprint and apply sustainable energy solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Local businesses • Farmers • Department of Planning and Environment
4.2.3	Use town water responsibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Community members • Department of Planning and Environment – Water

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Source: Leeton Shire Council



Source: Leeton Shire Council Water and WasteWater

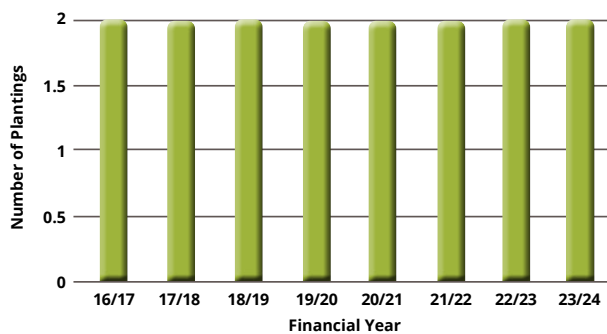
Our target for 2035: Less than 290 KL per household per annum, and continuing to move towards Australian average of 175 KL

Focus Area 4. A quality environment cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
En 4.3	Our built environment is attractive and serviceable	
4.3.1	Maintain and improve the appearance of our streetscapes, parks, gardens and other open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council
4.3.2	Provide reliable town water in urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd
4.3.3	Provide sewerage systems and services in urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council
4.3.4	Maintain local cemeteries, enlarging them as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council
4.3.5	Provide reliable stormwater drainage systems in urban and rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd

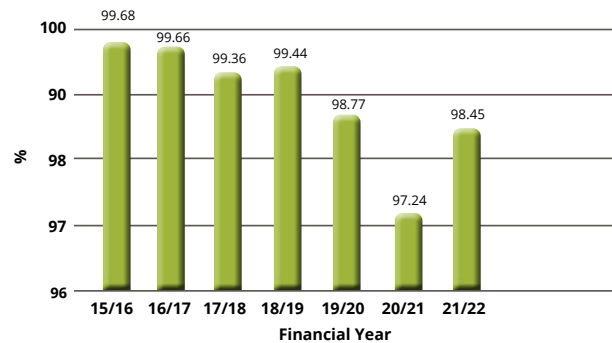
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Annual Flower Plantings in the CBD District



Source: Leeton Shire Council Open Space and Recreation

Water Quality Compliance



Source: Leeton Shire Council Water and Wastewater

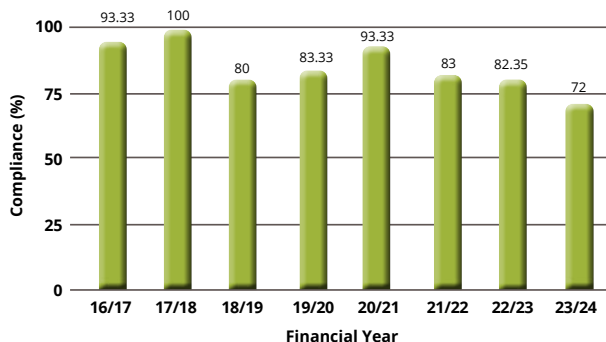
Our target for 2035: At least 2 annual plantings in CBD

Our target for 2035: 100%

Focus Area 4. A quality environment cont.

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Sewerage Effluent Discharge Compliance



Source: Leeton Shire Council

Our target for 2035: 100%

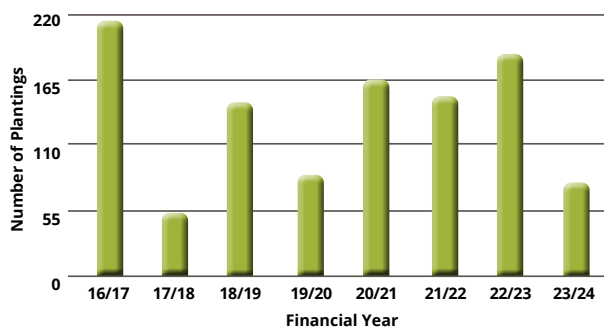
Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
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En 4.4 We balance the needs of our natural and built environments

4.4.1	Intelligent land use planning and utilities planning to meet the needs of a growing population, with consideration for the environment and future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Department of Planning and Environment • Developers
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Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Tree Plantings in Leeton Shire



Source: Leeton Shire Council

Our target for 2035: Average 130 tree plantings per annum



What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- **Sort your waste and recycle correctly**
- **Compost food and green waste**
- **Start up a worm farm**
- **Call 02 6953 0911 to report issues with town water and sewer services**
- **Use water wisely in the home and at work**
- **When you're out and about, put your rubbish in the bin or take it home to dispose of (don't litter)**
- **Manage garden pests, such as fruit fly, to protect horticultural enterprises**





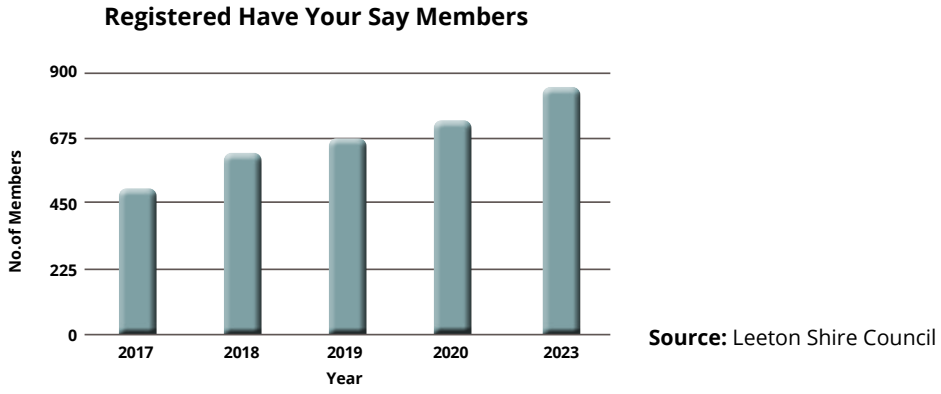
What you said about strong leadership and civic participation

- Promote volunteering opportunities*
- Communicate in a variety of ways so information reaches more people*
- Use the water tower to publish community notices*
- Use local organisations to disseminate information to more people*
- Council meetings in local villages*
- Council pay to unlock local online newspaper article access for community*
- Improve customer service*
- A debt-free Council in ten years with only minimal rate increases*
- All of us need to be proactive and contribute to improving our local area*
- Encourage more First Nations input into decision making*
- Mentor young people and seek Youth Council's advice about impact of Council decisions*
- More intergenerational events*
- Advocate for water and irrigated agriculture*
- Put pressure on government to provide integrated social housing*)

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

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
L 5.1	We are well informed and engaged in decision-making	
5.1.1	Provide clear, accessible, relevant information to our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • State and Federal Governments • Media outlets
5.1.2	Actively engage with and seek direction from our community and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • State and Federal Governments • Community members

Measuring our progress: What we will measure



Our target for 2035: 1,000 registered HYS members

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation cont.

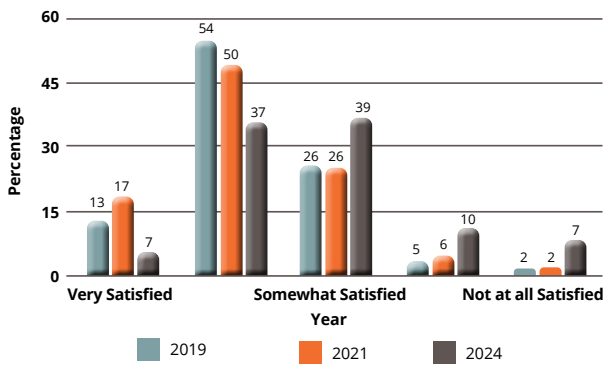
Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
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L 5.2 Our leaders speak out for the good of our community

5.2.1	Advocate on behalf of the community to ensure the long-term sustainability of our region and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Local Members of Parliament • Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) • Leeton Connect
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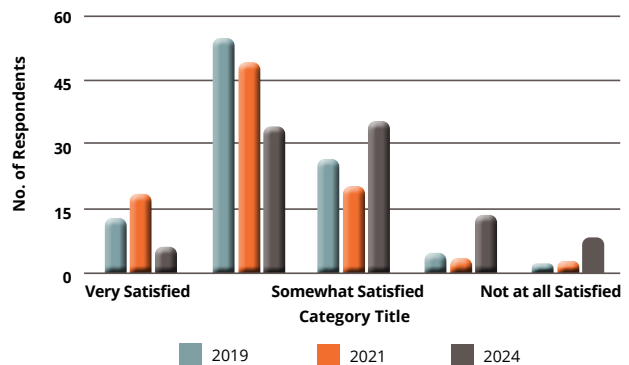
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Community Satisfaction with Performance of Councillors



Source: Leeton Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2019, 2021 and 2024

Community Satisfaction with Council's Administration



Source: Leeton Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2019, 2021 and 2024

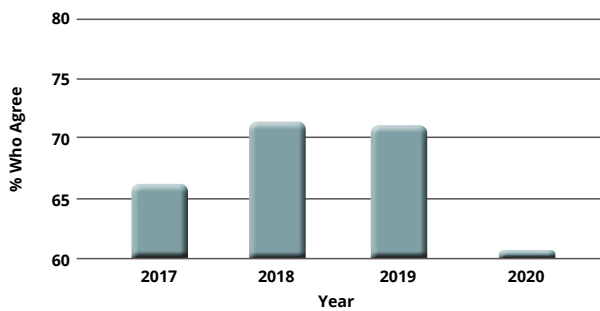
Our target for 2035: 75% satisfied or very satisfied with councillors' performance **Our target for 2035: 90% somewhat to very satisfied with Council's administration**

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
L 5.3	We work together to achieve our goals	
5.3.1	Develop and maintain relationships and partnerships for the benefit of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • State and Federal Governments and their agencies • Local businesses • Community groups • Department of Planning and Environment – Crown Lands • NSW Parks and Wildlife • Interagency Forums

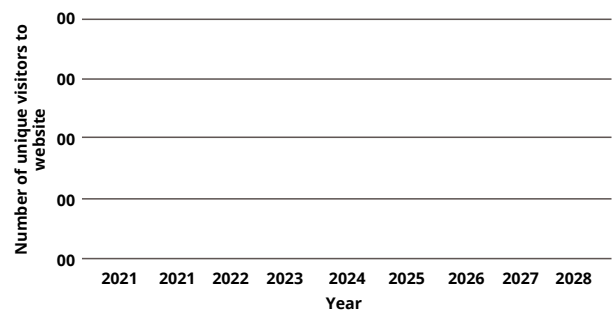
Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Community Perception – Degree of Leadership and Collaboration



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Leeton Living website TBA



Source: Leeton Shire Council

Our target for 2035: 70% agree there is community leadership and collaboration

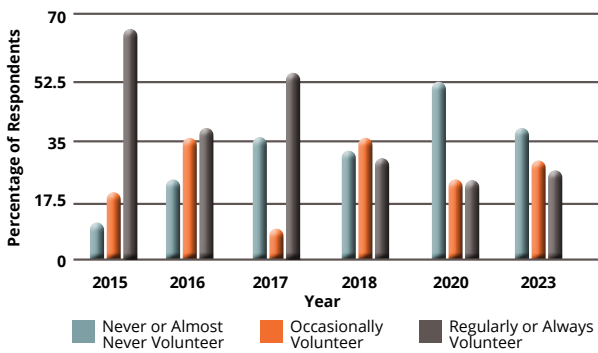
Our target for 2035: New measure: baseline and target to be established

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
L 5.4	We are active community members who recognise we all have a role to play	
5.4.1	Provide and promote opportunities for community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • Community groups and community members • Leeton Connect • Disability support services • Sporting clubs • Service clubs
5.4.2	Support, operate and participate in volunteering programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Connect • Community groups and community members
5.4.3	Provide and facilitate access to grant programs and funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeton Shire Council • State Government • Federal Government • Corporate sponsors • Philanthropic organisations • Leeton Connect

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Level of Volunteering in the Community



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

Our target for 2035: 85% of residents regularly or occasionally volunteer

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
L 5.5	Our Council operates efficiently and effectively	
5.5.1	Practice sound financial and resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council
5.5.2	Maintain a framework of up-to-date plans, policies, procedures, systems and service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council NSW Office of Local Government
5.5.3	Sustainably manage our assets and infrastructure to ensure they are fit for their current purpose and are maintained for future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council
5.5.4	Effectively manage risk, quality assurance, and work health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Safe Work Australia
5.5.5	Deliver high quality customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Council's Operating Ratio and Debt Servicing Ratio – performance over time

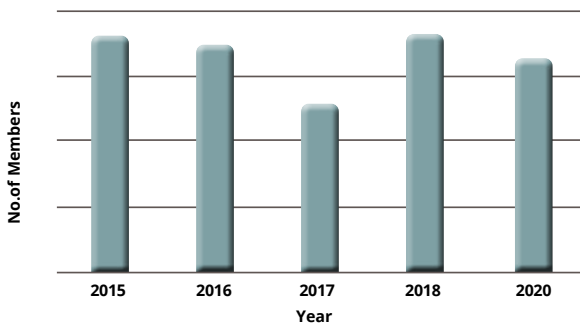
Operating Ratio >0 and Debt Servicing Ratio >2x

Focus Area 5. Strong leadership and civic participation cont.

Reference	Our goals and strategies to achieve them	Who might contribute
L 5.6	We demonstrate leadership in the face of disaster	
5.6.1	<p>Provide effective disaster prevention/mitigation, emergency management and disaster recovery services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeton Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and Federal Governments Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd Rural Fire Service NSW Fire Brigade Resilience NSW NSW Police NSW Health and Murrumbidgee Local Health District Rapid Relief Team

Measuring our progress: What we will measure

Community Perception - Leeton Shire Council Helps our Community Face Challenges



Source: Regional Wellbeing Survey

The aim was to increase the percentage of residents who agree that Council helps our community face challenges. The percentage remained relatively stable.

Our target for 2035: 75% perceive Council helps the community to face challenges



What can we, as individuals, do to help?

- **Volunteer your time**
- **Join a committee or community group**
- **Prepare our homes and businesses for flood and fire emergencies**



5 State and Regional plans

This Plan was prepared taking into account State and regional plans and priorities that influence what happens locally. In particular, the following documents were considered in the development of this plan:

NSW Premier's Priorities

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/engage-us/waratah-research-network/priorities-and-collaboration>

NSW Government agencies have strategic plans designed to help achieve the NSW Government's Priorities. Links to these plans are listed below.

Customer Service

- [NSW Information and Privacy Commission Strategic Plan](#)
- [NSW Fair Trading Roadmap 2019-2022](#)
- [Revenue NSW Strategic plan](#)
- [icare strategic plan Education](#)

Education

- [NSW Education Strategic Plan](#)
- [NSW Higher Education Strategy 2021-2025](#)
- [TAFE Strategic Plan Enterprise, Investment and Trade](#)

Enterprise, Investment and Trade

- [Shaping the future of NSW in science and technology: NSW 20-Year R&D Roadmap](#)
- [The NSW Industry Development Framework](#)
- [Net Zero: a seismic investment opportunity Health](#)

Health

- [Government priorities in health](#)
- [NSW Health Strategic Priorities](#)
- [NSW State Health Plan](#)
- [NSW Bureau of Health Information Planning and Environment](#)

Planning and Environment

- [Science, Economics and Insights Strategic Plan 2023-26](#)
- [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – NSW Planning Portal](#)
- [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Environment, Energy and Science](#)
- [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Special Activation Precincts](#)
- [Environment Protection Authority Strategic Plan](#)
- [A Metropolis of Three Cities – The Greater Sydney Region Plan](#)
- [Natural Resources Commission Strategic Plan](#)
- [Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030](#)
- [NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap Premier's Department](#)

State and Regional plans cont.

Premier's Department

- [Aboriginal Affairs Research Agenda](#)
- [Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+](#)
- [State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042 Regional NSW](#)

Regional NSW

- [Making it Happen in the Regions: Regional development framework](#)
- [Regional plans Communities and Justice](#)

Communities and Justice

- [Department of Communities and Justice Research Strategy 2020-2022](#)
- [Department of Communities and Justice Strategies and Frameworks](#)
- [Family and Community Services Insights Analysis and Research \(FACSIAR\)](#)
- [Department of Communities and Justice Strategic Direction 2020-2024 Transport](#)

Transport

- [Future Transport Strategy](#)
- [The Future of Electric Aviation](#)
- [Future Transport Technology Roadmap 2021 - 24](#)
- [NSW Freight and Ports Plan Treasury](#)

Treasury

- [NSW Treasury Strategic plan](#)
- [NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint](#)

Other State plans:

Draft State Significant Agricultural Land Map

<https://nswdpi.mysocialpinpoint.com/ssal/map#/>

Adapt NSW Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2025-2029

<https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/about-adaptnsw/nsw-government-action-climate-change/Adaptation-Action-Plan-2025-2029>

NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/recycling/nsw-waste-and-sustainable-materials-strategy-2041.pdf>

NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/en/home/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/rural-and-distance-education/rural-and-remote-education/rural-and-remote-education-strategy-2021-2024.pdf>

NSW Police Force Statement of Strategic Intent (2022)

https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/806464/v12_Corporate_Plan_-_Our_Focus_Our_Future_OP2.pdf

State and Regional plans cont.

Regional plans:

Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/regional-plans/riverina-murray-regional-plan-2041>

Western Riverina Economic Development Strategy (2023 update)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/Western-Riverina-REDS-2023-Update.pdf>

[Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation \(RAMJO\) Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2018–2022](#)

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/regional-priorities/>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Regional Energy Strategy 2022-2032

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/RAMJO-Regional-Energy-Strategy-November-22-Web-Version.pdf>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Water Position Paper June 2020

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Riverina-And-Murray-Joint-Organisation-Water-Position-Paper.pdf>

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation 'Improving Transport Connectivity' Regional Freight Transport Plan November 2020

<https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020.11.12-RAMJO-Regional-Freight-Transport-Plan-min.pdf>

Murrumbidgee Local Health District – Health Atlas 2019

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/MLHD-Health-Atlas-2019.pdf>

6 References

A variety of data sources was used to inform the development of *Leeton On The Go - towards 2035*. These include:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics: *Data by region and Census Quick Stats*
- NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority ('My School')
- Leeton Shire Council: community satisfaction surveys
- National Institute of Economic and Industry Research via .id (Informed Decisions)
- National Skills Commission Small Area Labour Market data
- NSW Department of Planning population projections
- University of Canberra: *Regional Wellbeing Survey*

7

Photo Captions and Credits

Cover page

Virtual mural located on the water tower in Chelmsford Place

Page 4

Flower display down Pine Avenue, main street of Leeton

Page 4/5

Community members enjoying the local farmers markets at Mountford Park

Page 6

Photo 1 The twin slides at the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre and photo 2 Participants in the Leeton Bowls competition at the Leeton and District Bowling Club

Page 13

Community members enjoying Fiesta La Leeton

Page 14

Hot air balloon taking off as part of the SunRice Festival

Page 16

Emergency Department at the Leeton Hospital

Page 17

Entrance to the Leeton Hospital

Page 18

Medical students Allanah Kenchington (left) and Anna Ryan (right) who were hosted in Leeton as part of the Bush Bursary Program

Page 19

Photo 1 Community members at the opening of the new slides at the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre and photo 2 Junior members of the Leeton Galloping Greens Football Club

Page 19/20

Young residents enjoying the Leeton Regional Aquatic Centre

Page 20

Photo 1 Community members participating in lawn bowls at the Leeton and District Bowling Club and photo 2 Local school children participating in Gamechanger, an innovative Sports and Wellbeing Program

Page 22

Tony Reneker with Inspector Jason Clarke

Page 25

Photo 1 Aerial view of Leeton and photo 2 Residents of Eventide Homes with former Mayor Tony Reneker, Mayor George Weston and Cr Krystal Maytom

Page 26

Residential home in Leeton Shire

Page 27

Photo 1 and 2 – Residential homes in Leeton Shire

Page 28

Children from Leeton Early Learning Centre

Page 30

Photo 1 Yanco Public School artwork displayed at the Leeton Museum and Art Gallery and photo 2 Leeton Pride Festival parade

Page 32

Photo 1 Dancers participating in Fiesta La Leeton and Photo 2 Art Deco mural completed at the Whitton Community Hall by artist, Carla Gottgens

Page 35

Aerial view of a farming area that illustrates the diversity of agriculture

Page 36

One of the many channels that provide valuable water to our farms

Page 39

Vance Industrial Estate Expansion Project

Page 40

WR Connect – Freight intermodal located at Wombolgal

Page 40/41

Aerial view of Leeton CBD

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Manager of Environment Sustainability inspecting solar panels

Page 41

WR Connect

Page 42

Photo 1 Community members enjoying Chill and Grill in Mountford Park and photo 2 – Flapper dancer in Mountford Park as part of Art Deco Festival

Page 44

Community members enjoying the Murrumbidgee River

Page 44/45

Vintage car in front of the Leeton Roxy Community Theatre during the Art Deco Festival

Page 45

Metal silo art in Whitton created by artist, Carla Gottgens

Page 46

Photo 1 Chelmsford Place and Photo 2 Roadworks underway on Corner of Sycamore and Myrtle Street

Page 49

Photo 1 Entrance gates to the Whitton Cemetery and Photo 2 Community member walking through Rotary Park

Page 50

Fivebough Wetlands at sunset

Page 52

Pelican at Fivebough Wetlands

Page 54

Rapid Relief Team volunteering at the Leeton Skate Championships

Page 54

Newly inducted volunteers at the Leeton Roxy Community Theatre

Page 56

Chelmsford Place CBD Enhancement Project

Page 103

Sculptures at Fivebough Wetlands

Back page

Hot air balloons mid flight as part of SunRice Festival





Leeton On The Go – towards 2035 was developed by Leeton Shire Council on behalf of the Leeton Shire community, with the assistance of Karen Legge Consulting. Endorsed by Leeton Shire Council on 25 March 2025.



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

Leeton Shire Council

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