



Etheridge

Shire Council

2018-23

CORPORATE PLAN



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Message from the Mayor

Cr. Warren Devlin

Phone: 0458 621233

Email: mayor@etheridge.qld.gov.au

.....“ I am pleased to present Etheridge Shire Council’s Corporate Plan for 2018 - 2023. This document plays a vital role in shaping the future of the Shire over the next five to ten years and beyond. It sets out local and regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for our council and community”.....

Of significant concern to Council is the falling population and reducing employment statistics for the Shire (to read more about the Shire metrics, see Appendix 1).

Our community has a great passion and potential and the Council always welcomes contributions to how to solve issues affecting the Shire.

The Corporate Plan is a five year plan with a 30 year outlook. It clearly sets the direction for our journey and focuses our organization on the ultimate destination. As a result, a new vision, mission, values and principles have emerged to give greater clarity to Council operations. Council has created this corporate plan to support the diversification into industries such as irrigated agriculture, renewable energy and tourism while of course still supporting the backbone of our Shire, the mining, beef and grazing industries.

The Plan explains the strategic planning framework Council has used to translate the community’s vision into action. It sets strategic priorities and objectives and builds in measurable checks and balances to gauge success along the way.

I am confident we will achieve the objectives set out in this Plan. This is because of the strong partnership and commitment of elected representatives, Council officers and the community to making Etheridge an even better place to live long into the future. These objectives are translated into “on the ground” action by operational plans and budgets annually. How effectively Council performs against each priority will appear in the Annual Report.

The process also ensures Council takes a good look at the way it conducts its business, encouraging continuous improvement and cost effectiveness. It puts in place an agenda of change necessary for success. The service delivery priorities for the next five years are:

- Transport Infrastructure and connectivity
- Water and energy;
- Environment;
- Social Infrastructure;
- Communication;
- Economic Development; and
- Advocacy.

Successful implementation of the Plan will attract people to the Shire and create economic growth.

I will endeavor to ensure that Council and its workforce have responsive leadership to address the challenges ahead.

Warren Devlin
MAYOR

Elected representatives



Mayor
Warren Devlin

Phone: 0458 621233
Email: mayor@etheridge.qld.gov.au



Deputy Mayor
Tony Gallagher

Phone: 0448 089144
Email: cr.gallagher@etheridge.qld.gov.au



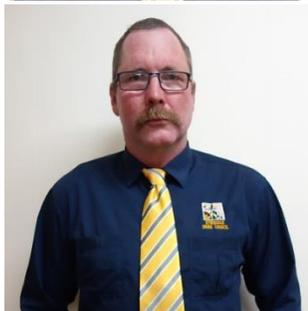
Councillor
Will Attwood

Phone: 0448 089068
Email: cr.attwood@etheridge.qld.gov.au



Councillor
Troy Barnes

Phone: 0448 089047
Email: cr.barnes@etheridge.qld.gov.au



Councillor
Warren Bethel

Phone: 0448 089140
Email: cr.bethel@etheridge.qld.gov.au

.... **“Our Councillors represent the level of government most closely linked to the community.**

Etheridge Shire Council comprises a Mayor and four councillors.

Councillors are elected to serve a four year term and their role is to make decisions and provide democratic leadership on the infrastructure, facilities, services and works programs that are needed for the region.

The next elections are scheduled for March 2020”

Regional Profile



*Etheridge Shire Council – Administration Building
Georgetown*

The early history of the Etheridge Shire is synonymous with famous explorers such as Leichhardt (1844-45), Gregory (1855-56), McKinlay (1862) and Jardine (1864), all of whom traversed the area seeking minerals, timber and good pastoral land.

History also records that in 1869 a young geologist named Richard Daintree explored the area around 41 Mile Creek and the Gilbert and Copperfield rivers, revealing the presence of payable gold. May 1870 saw the establishment of the community of Etheridge, along the banks of the Etheridge River. In November of the same year, this new settlement became known as Georgetown, named after the first gold commissioner in the region, Howard St. George.

The Etheridge Shire Council was first called the “Einasleigh Divisional Board” which then became the Einasleigh Shire Council in 1902 before changing its name to the Etheridge Shire Council in March 1919, because Council’s mail was being sent to Einasleigh instead of Georgetown.

The grazing occupation of the Gulf Savannah originated with Carpentaria Downs, which in the mid 1800’s was partially owned by sea captain Robert Towns, founder of both Burketown and Townsville. The main pastoral settlements appeared in the eastern part of the Shire, where large individual areas were taken up. In many cases these settlements remain some of the largest stations in the Shire today.

Relics of the famous gold rush days can still be found throughout the district and the settlements of Mt Surprise, Einasleigh, and Forsayth, together with Georgetown, remain a fossickers dream. The Etheridge goldfield, the “poor mans” goldfield, has never been worked out, and modern-day prospectors armed with metal detectors still search for specimens such as coloured topaz, agates, sapphires, smoky quartz and other precious stones, as well as nuggets of gold.

The Etheridge Shire covers approximately 39,039 square kilometres of Queensland’s Gulf Savannah Region. The Shire is connected by four main communities being: Mt Surprise, Einasleigh, Forsayth and Georgetown and two smaller communities: Kidston and Oak Park.

Local Government’s role as a third tier of government in Australia is defined in State Government legislation - being the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council comprises of a Mayor and four Councillors elected on an undivided basis every four years.

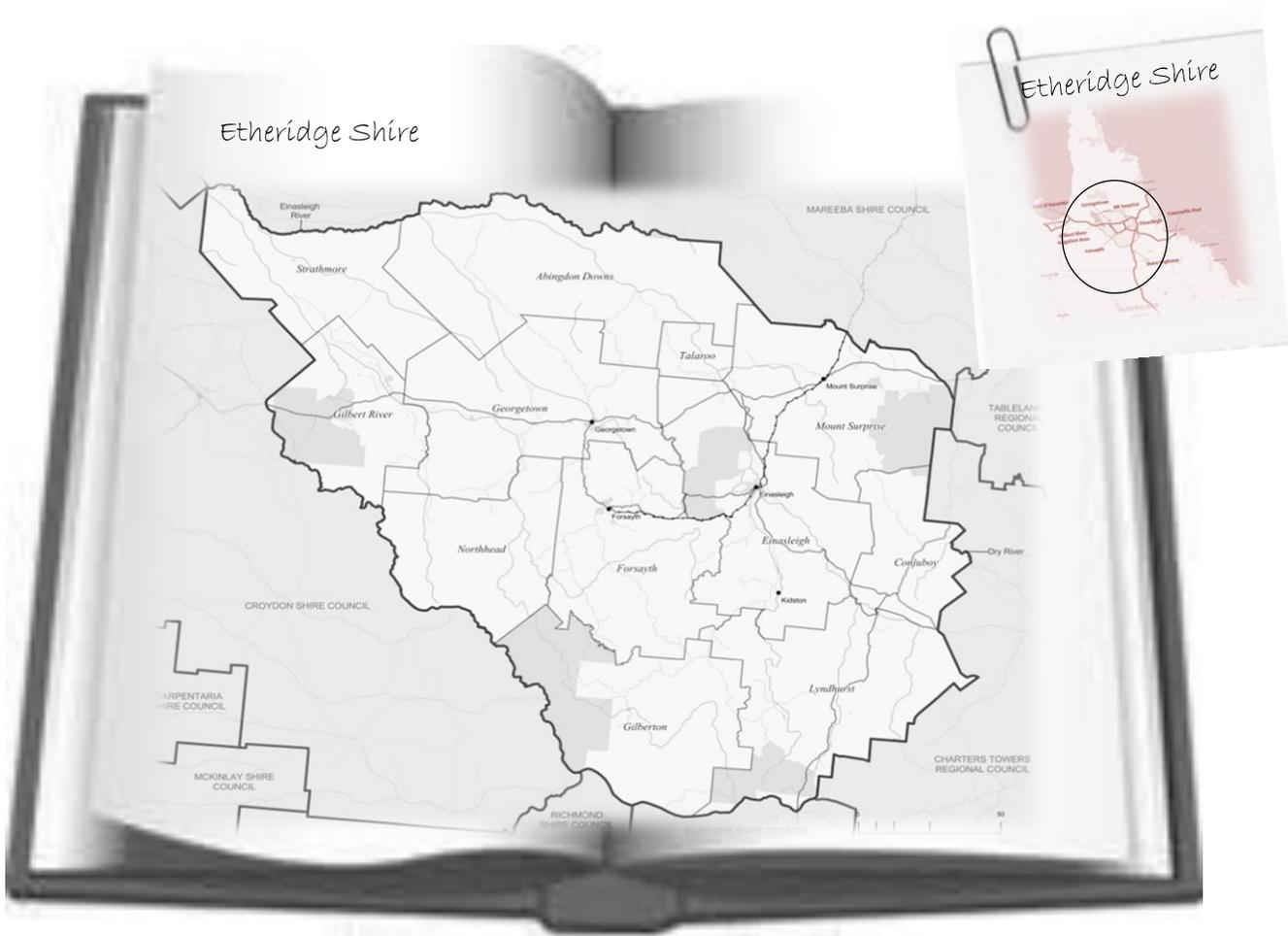
While amalgamations were imposed on Local Government by the State Government in 2008, Etheridge Shire Council was not affected; however, the Shire will be faced with many changes and challenges over the next 5 - 10 years to maintain social, environmental and financial sustainability. It is of concern that the Shire population is diminishing and growing older and that the Shire youth are not returning after leaving for their education.

Assessment of Local Conditions

The Etheridge Shire has experienced a steady decline in population over the last five years, leaving an estimated population of 819 people at 30 June 2016. The decline in population inversely reflects the increase in local unemployment and has caused considerable changes to the local demographics, with a significant aging of the population since 2006. The proportion of residents aged 45+ now make up half of the population and there has been a noticeable drop in the below 45 age groups, most commonly associated with families (for further details, go to <http://profile.id.com.au/fnqroc/population?WebID=160>).

The economy of the Etheridge Shire is associated almost exclusively with agriculture, predominately beef cattle. The area's participation rate of 69% is relatively high for the region and close to the Queensland level of 64%, which tends to indicate that much of the population decrease has been based on people leaving because a loss of employment or deciding to close their business. The difference between 'local employment' and 'employed residents' indicates that approximately 130 (22%) people employed in the Shire live outside the Shire.

Even with the employment statistics, the unemployment rate of 7% is marginally above the regional rate of 5.8% (for further detail, refer to Appendix 1, or go to: <http://economy.id.com.au/fnqroc/about?WebID=160>).



Introduction to the Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is the key strategic business plan for the Council. It provides a focused framework for Council to plan and undertake its business and service delivery over the period of the plan, having regard to various issues, which may have been identified during the planning process, including community engagement. In the plan, Council sets out:

- **What** it would like to achieve over the period of the plan - Outcomes; and
- **How** it intends going about achieving those outcomes - Strategies.

The Annual Operation Plan and Budget then provide the detail of what will be done each year towards achieving these outcomes and strategies and how they will be resourced.

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires Council to prepare and adopt a Corporate Plan for a period of at least five years. The Corporate Plan continues in force for the period of the plan or until the earlier adoption of a new Corporate Plan.

Council must ensure that the Corporate Plan is adopted in enough time to allow for the preparation of a budget, consistent with the plan. The Corporate Plan and any amendment to the plan, which can be made by Council at any time by resolution, must comply with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, i.e. it must:-

- outline the strategic direction of the local government;
- state the performance indicators for measuring the Local Government's progress in achieving its vision for the future of the local government area; and
- include the following information for each commercial business unit—
 - an outline of the objectives of the commercial business unit;
 - an outline of the nature and extent of the significant business activity the commercial business unit will conduct.

*Vision Statement
... "Unearthing
Etheridge's future
to create a future
beyond Rates,
Roads &
Rubbish"...*

Apart from being a legislative requirement, developing a Corporate Plan is good business practice. It provides council with a strategic focus and is a useful tool in unifying and guiding council's elected members and staff. If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail (Benjamin Franklin 1706 – 1790).

The previous Corporate Plan was reviewed and updated to form the basis of community consultation. This involved a number of community meetings throughout the Shire (e.g. Georgetown on 2 August 2017; Forsayth on 6 September and Einasleigh on 4 October). The feedback received from this process has been collated and used to assist in the development of the Corporate Plan.

Council conducted Corporate Plan workshops in August, September and October to draft its new Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles and the development of new Strategies and Outcomes.

At the conclusion of the public consultation period, all feedback was reviewed. The results of the public consultation and proposed changes to the draft plan were submitted to Council for consideration with the final draft.



Community Town Hall - Georgetown

The Corporate Plan was considered by Council on 20th December 2017 and will take effect from 1 January 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of Council's Financial Management Systems, Council is required (S 104 (5) *Local Government Act 2009*) to prepare a 5 year corporate plan that incorporates community engagement. Council's Meeting of 15 November 2017 approved some changes to the draft Corporate Plan. These changes have been incorporated into the current version and the statistical information moved from the Plan to an attachment, to make the document easier to read.

The draft Corporate Plan has been available on Council's website since community consultation commenced and only a few people have provided feedback (which has been incorporated into the document).

RESOLUTION

That Council:

- *Adopt the attached document as its 2018-2023 Corporate Plan, pursuant to S 104 (5) Local Government Act 2009.*
- *Use the Corporate Plan as the basis for the preparation of the 2018-19 budget and Operational Plan.*

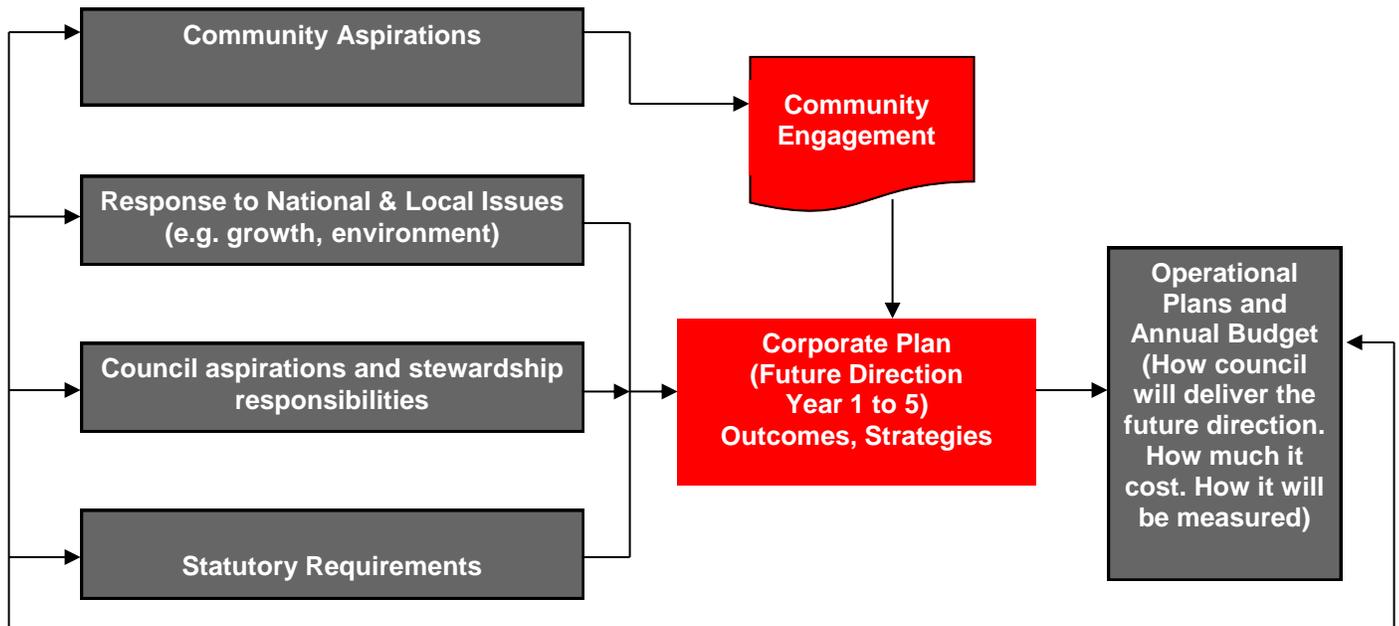
MOVED: Cr Barnes

SECONDED: Cr Gallagher

CARRIED
RESOLUTION NO.2017/GM2214
5/0

Corporate Plan Roadmap

The diagram below explains how the Corporate Plan, together with its Outcomes and Strategies, are central to providing direction in responding to key regional issues through operational plans and budgets.



Performance Reporting

Reporting on the Corporate Plan performance is formally completed on a yearly basis through council's Annual Report and Community Report Card and through quarterly performance reporting. The Annual Report presents the results achieved for that particular year with clear references back to the major Corporate Plan goals and strategies. A copy of the Annual Report and Community Report Card are made available on Council's website www.etheridge.qld.gov.au.

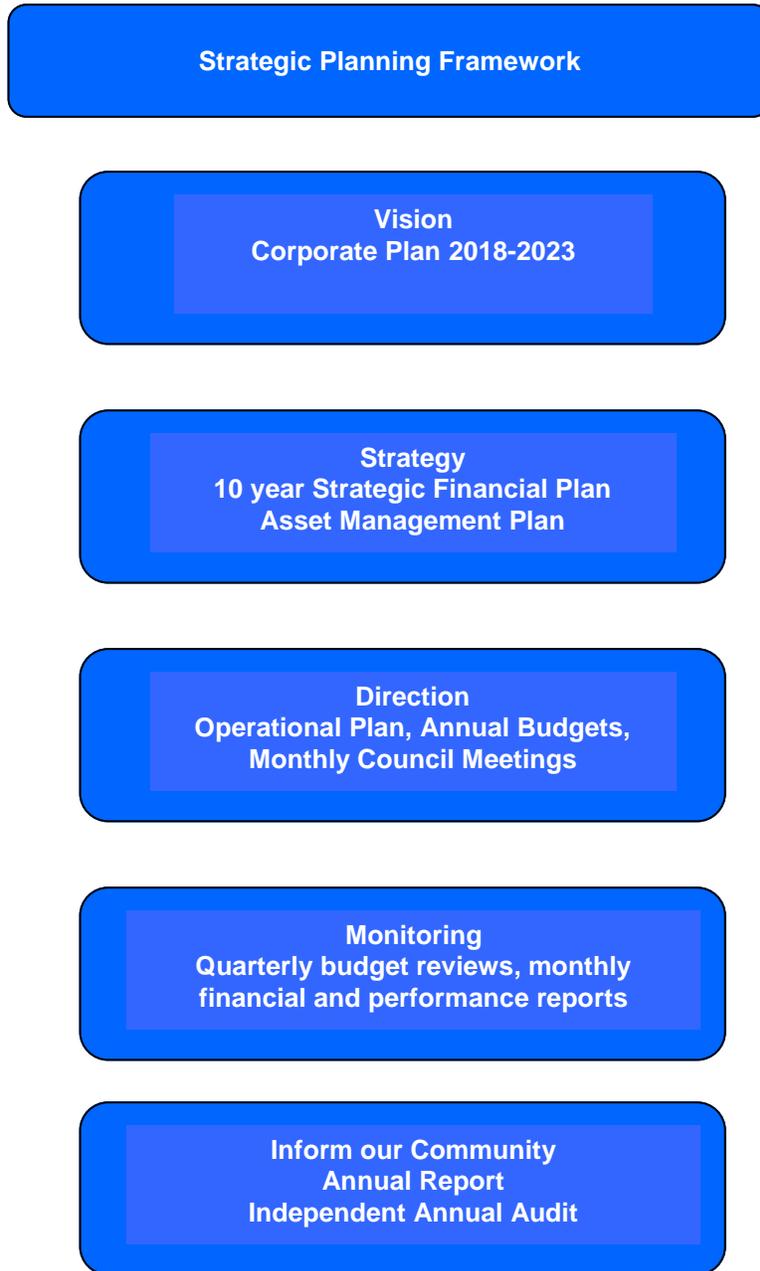


Elements of Council's Financial Planning Hierarchy

Corporate Plan Roadmap

Corporate Plan Review

Council is required to prepare a Corporate Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*.



Corporate Plan Roadmap

A **SWOT analysis** is a structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of an organization, project or business venture. A SWOT (an acronym for *strengths*, *weaknesses*, *opportunities*, and *threats*) analysis can be carried out for an organisation or community.

It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective. Identification of SWOTs is important because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective.

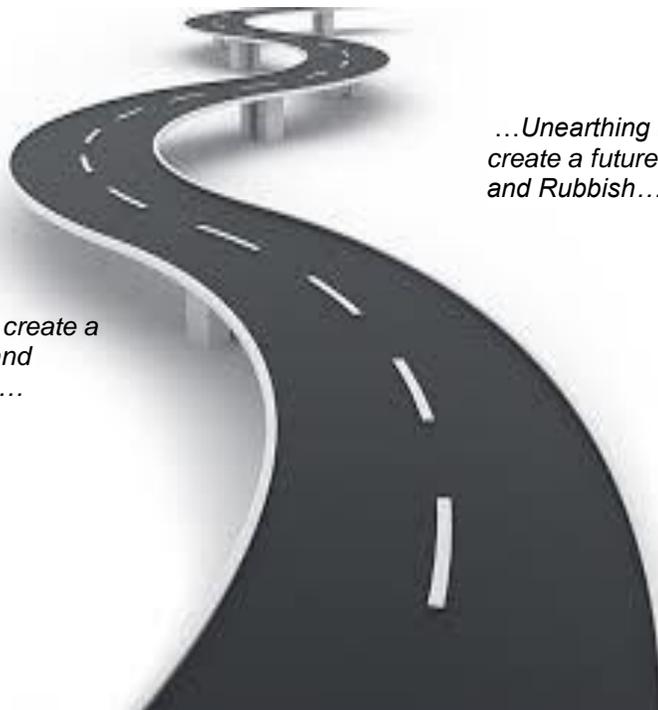
Decision-makers match the objective to the analysis to determine whether the objective is attainable, given the constraints and their competitive advantage.

	Helpful in achieving Council's Objectives	Harmful to achieving Council's objectives
Internal Origin (attributes of the Organisation)	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is in a reasonably healthy financial position; • Council has the responsibility and ability to plan for future generations; • Council has the responsibility and ability to deliver corporate objectives in a timely manner; • The Shire townships have a significant numbers of undeveloped land for future residential and commercial use to accommodate future growth; • Council has the capability to borrow for beneficial long term capital projects; • Council has the capacity to apply for grants and deliver beneficial long term capital projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has limited capacity to renew capital assets, given the limited rate base and revenue stream; • Council has difficulty in recruiting and maintaining a skilled workforce; • Diseconomies of scale makes the provision of services (particularly water and refuse collection) financially marginal; • Council's existing infrastructure is ageing; • Council's revenue stream is being eroded by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the decline in the mining industry (Cyclical); ○ acquisition of ratable land for National Parks; ○ the failure to index grants; ○ cost shifting. • Many employees and contractors do not reside in the Shire.

Corporate Plan Roadmap

	Helpful in achieving Council's Objectives	Harmful to achieving Council's objectives
	Opportunities	Threats
External Origin (attributes of the Environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved political focus on Northern Australia; • Opportunities for development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Irrigated Agriculture and support industries; ○ Tourism activities, based on the unique landscapes and geology or cultural heritage; ○ Retirement / Aged care / assisted Care facilities; ○ Irrigated agriculture and horticulture; ○ Renewable energy projects (e.g. Genex, Infigen); • Council is committed to building a beneficial relationship with the local Traditional Owners of the country; • Integrating further residential growth in existing townships. • The Shire has an attractive rural amenity with unique landscapes (geology and geography); • Appealing small town community; • The Towns are clean and neat, with attractive public spaces; • The communities are acknowledged as being safe, with a low crime rate; • Comfortable winter climate; • Weather (rain and clear skies (UV radiation)) are very predictable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general lack of employment opportunities; • The Community's economic base is not very diverse, being heavily reliant on the grazing industry and a developing tourism sector; • The cyclical nature of the Mining and Cattle industry; • A limited range of recreational facilities and options are available; • Education opportunities are limited within the region (with no secondary or tertiary education provided in the Shire); • The Community has limited shopping options; • The local real estate market and housing options are limited; • There is a general community distrust of Government; • Cost-shifting from other levels of Government; • The volatility of the state and federal political environment; • Availability of Grant and Subsidy funding is irregular and not readily forecastable; • Population demographics are rapidly moving towards an ageing population, living in single member households (Lack of aged care facilities); • A risk-adverse community favouring the preservation of the status quo; • Social disadvantage is significant; • Economic disadvantage is significant; • Changing environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The increasing application of Robotics and software; ○ Bio informatics; ○ Peer to Peer applications; • Spread of invasive pest weed and animals throughout the shire and the region; • Loss of relevance should local businesses seek services from larger metropolitan areas.

Vision Statement & Guiding Principles



our Mission

...Developing the Shire to create a better lifestyle, economy and employment opportunities...

our Vision

...Unearthing Etheridge's future to create a future beyond Rates, Roads and Rubbish...

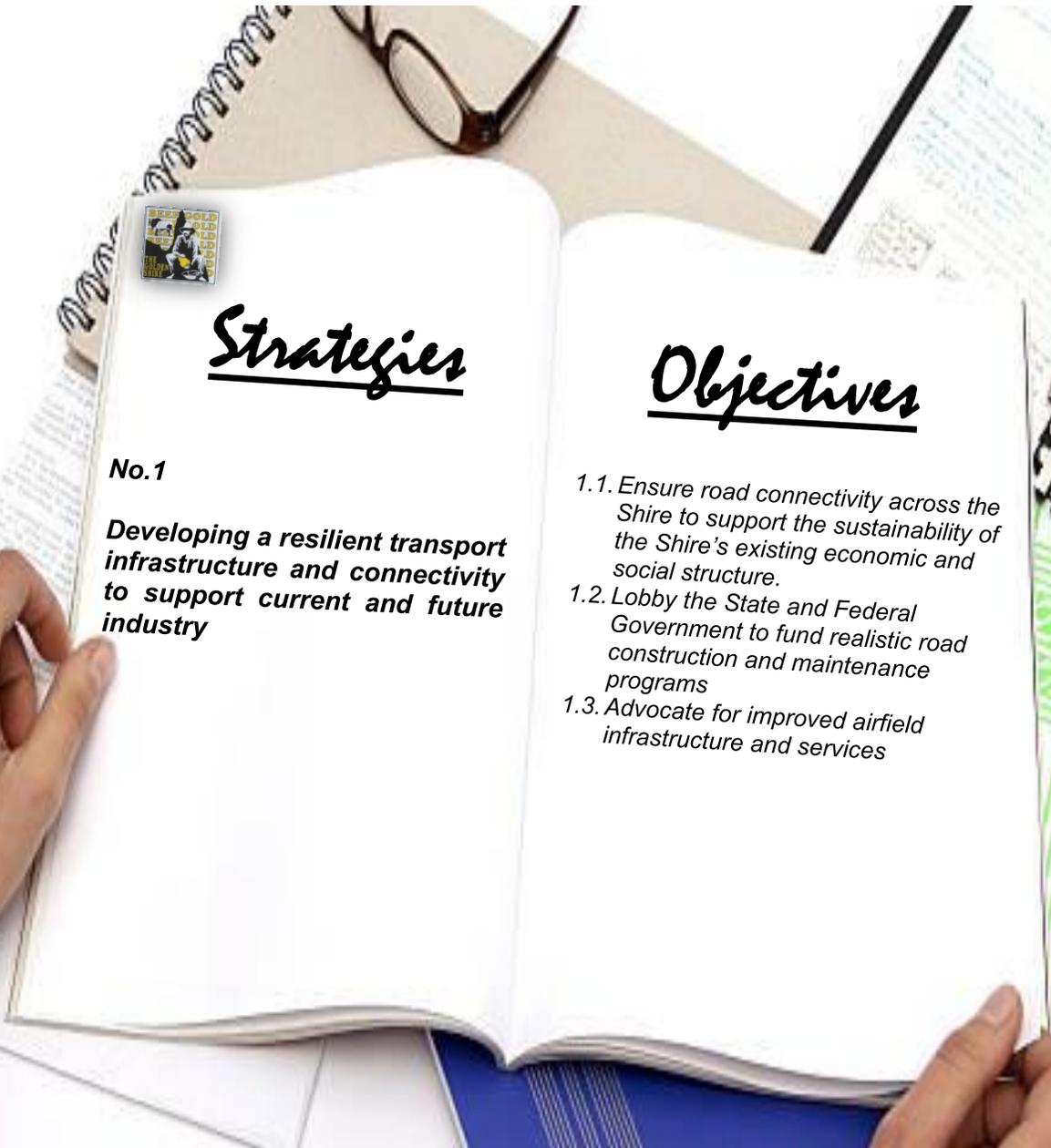
our Guiding Principles

- Safe** - We focus on creating a safe workplace to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and the community;
- Teamwork** - We work together as one council towards shared goals and for the greater good of the community;
- Respect** - We will be inclusive, treat people with courtesy and fairness, and ensure each individual is valued and heard;
- Integrity** - We will behave in a way that is honest, open, and transparent. We will take responsibility for our actions and strive for excellence;
- Value** - We aim to deliver services efficiently, effectively and in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner; and
- Engagement** - We engage with our staff and community to inform our decision making, and create awareness of our activities.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities are those major opportunities and challenges that our community believes need to be addressed in the Etheridge Shire Region. The key strategic priorities and their corresponding corporate objectives identified in the Corporate Plan are:



Strategies

No.1

Developing a resilient transport infrastructure and connectivity to support current and future industry

Objectives

- 1.1. Ensure road connectivity across the Shire to support the sustainability of the Shire's existing economic and social structure.
- 1.2. Lobby the State and Federal Government to fund realistic road construction and maintenance programs
- 1.3. Advocate for improved airfield infrastructure and services

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.2

Developing reliable potable and irrigation water supplies for residential and economic development

Objectives

- 2.1. *Improve water quality and reliability for Georgetown and Forsayth through:*
 - Construction of the Charleston Dam and;*
 - Improvement of the Water Treatment Plants at Georgetown and Forsayth;*
- 2.2. *Improve water quality and reliability for other residential areas.*
- 2.3. *Develop the Gilbert River Irrigation Scheme and secure the necessary approvals and financing.*

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.3

Managing the Natural Assets, Environment and Economy for tourism and economic development

Objectives

- 3.1. Develop a new Planning Scheme to plan for new commercial, industrial and residential development to encourage growth, without imposing significant constraints;
- 3.2. Support development that contributes to economic, social and cultural growth associated (including with the Gilbert River Irrigation Project, Geo-tourism and renewable energy projects);
- 3.3. Develop a Tourism Plan in conjunction with the community to celebrate the Shire's natural (geological) and cultural heritage that will facilitate the creation of innovative local enterprises and jobs and diversify the Shire's economic base (and create additional streams of income for residents and businesses), while conserving the geological resources of the area;

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.3

Managing the Natural Assets, Environment and Economy for tourism and economic development

Objectives

- 3.4. Investigate establishment of a range of recreational activities at Charleston Dam and Copperfield Dam;
- 3.5. Investigate the extension of TerrEstrial VIC to include interactive tourism activities, using Virtual Reality and other technology;
- 3.6. Improve the aesthetic value of community gardens, streetscapes within the Shire Townships;
- 3.7. Effectively plan, prepare and respond to natural disasters.
- 3.8. Effectively manage waste, pests and the natural environment.

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.4

Developing equitable social infrastructure, to make the townships a desirable place to live

Objectives

- 4.1. Engage with and support local indigenous groups and partner state government agencies to improve social conditions and liveability;
- 4.2. Support the development of social profiles and research into social inequity and disadvantage;
- 4.3. Integrate approaches to social and human services planning to address social and economic disadvantage;
- 4.4. Build a variety of social infrastructure and service delivery, in partnership with the State Government and Community;
- 4.5. Provide assistance to the community with respect to child care, youth hostel, aged care and library services;
- 4.6. Advocate to State and Federal Governments to address priority social inequity and disadvantage.
- 4.7. Establish strong networks across the region where people can interact socially and safely through sport, recreation, cultural life and the arts.

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.5

Improving communication infrastructure and mechanisms within the Shire

Objectives

- 5.1. Advocate to State and Federal Governments to provide sustainable communication networks for mobile telecommunications, broadband internet options, together with radio and television services to support existing and future industry and social infrastructure;
- 5.2. Use social media to effectively engage with the community;
- 5.3. Work with existing community groups, teams, and network to deliver community benefits.

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.6

**Undertaking selective
Commercial Services**

Objectives

6.1. Council will build appropriate infrastructure and conduct commercial services aligned to local and regional priorities, e.g. Road Construction; Road maintenance; Irrigable Water Supplies; Swimming Pool operations; Refuse collection; Student Hostel; Child Care and Tourist services.

Strategic Priorities

Strategies

No.7

**Delivering organisational
excellence & governance**

Objectives

- 7.1. Council will look at ways to reduce costs, without diminishing service levels;
- 7.2. Council will embrace exceptional customer service, valuing staff and promoting ethical standards of practice, supported by clear policies and strategies;
- 7.3. Manage the Council's Human Resources to attract and retain qualified, experienced and committed staff;
- 7.4. Improve Council's financial and organisational sustainability;
- 7.5. Develop Staff and Culture Strategy 2018-2023 to focus on strategies designed to address workforce challenges.
- 7.6. Implemented a renewed staff recognition program to reinforce Council values.
- 7.7. Realigned our organisational structure to support the Council's goals
- 7.8. Build the Council's data analytic capability.

Corporate plan objectives & strategies

Resilient Transport Infrastructure and Connectivity

Corporate Objective No. 1

Resilient transport infrastructure that maximises connectivity across the Shire and links us to the major commercial centres is essential if the Shire is to have sustainable economic growth and development. A resilient transport infrastructure would be expected to support a diversity of road users from agriculture (cattle and crops), resource industry and a growing tourism industry. The condition of the state controlled roads is considered a major deterrent for tourists travelling along the Hann Highway, Gulf Developmental Road and the Gregory Developmental Road.

It has been estimated that world food production will need to increase by 70% by 2050 to keep pace with population growth. The Etheridge Shire has untapped potential for an array of irrigated agricultural outputs. Properly constructed, all weather, north-south and east-west road linkages are essential for growth of the Shire and linkages to markets.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
1.1.1	Develop a comprehensive, sustainable and funded, 10-year Capital Works Program for roads and drainage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Plan and Works Program implemented within budget and in specified timeframe, including: Re-seal program; and Re-sheeting program in rural areas.
1.1.2	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's road and air services assets.	Asset management plan reviewed and updated.
1.1.3	Upgrade major road infrastructure and prioritise road train access on appropriate roads.	Engineering programs developed for improvement and approved.
1.1.4	Continue to link our communities with sealed roads along Local Roads of Regional Significance.	Kilometres of sealed road completed.
1.1.5	Manage the region's road network to enable the movement of people and goods in a safe and efficient manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor traffic accidents, increased traffic and through road inspections - maintained within appropriate intervention levels; Maintain the State Road network in accordance with DTMR contracts; Reinstate road network following declared flooding events; and Grant funds (e.g. R2R and TIDS) spent on Council's road networks.
1.1.6	Maintain a fleet of Council owned plant and contractor hire arrangements.	Plant utilisation rates (maximise Council owned plant usage and optimise contractor hire).

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
1.1.7	Develop a Plant Replacement and upgrade schedule and maintain the operational capacity of plant.	Identify measure of plant usage and improve rates.
1.1.8	Manage Contractors and Stores to improve the efficiency of field works.	Reduce 'downtime' resulting from unavailability of plant and materials.
1.1.9	Construct strategically placed water points through the Shire to facilitate road construction and maintenance.	Number of water points constructed for road construction and maintenance.
1.2.1	Maintain relationship with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and capacity to undertake road construction and maintenance.	Sufficient works to maintain and fully engage workforce and contractors.
1.2.2	Continue to lobby to raise the national profile of the Kennedy Development Road (Hann Highway) and for additional funding for high priority widening and sealing.	Kilometres of sealed road completed.
1.2.3	Lobby to raise the profile of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulf Development Road; • Gregory Development Road; and • Georgetown-Forsayth Road. for additional funding for high priority widening and sealing.	Kilometres of sealed road completed.
1.3.1	Advocate for improved airfield infrastructure and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved airport infrastructure standards (lights, surfaces etc.) • Maintain CASA accreditation of airfields; • Maintain capability to allow RFDS access to the current airfields
1.3.2	Maintain airfields and airports throughout the Shire.	Condition of airfields and airports in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgetown; • Forsayth; • Einasleigh; • Mt Surprise; and • Kidston
1.3.3	Strengthen and extend the runway at the Georgetown airfield to 1,500m	Extension of runway at Georgetown.

Developing Reliable Potable and Irrigation Water Supply

Corporate Objective No. 2

To provide service delivery and infrastructure roll out, maintenance and improvement underpins a healthy and growing economy and comfortable lifestyle in the Shire.

Reliable and affordable water and energy is essential for the Shire if it is to have sustainable economic growth and development. COAG policies including Northern Australia White Paper, Regionalisation, Asian Market Access and Indigenous Advancement have identified the strategic importance of water and energy to economic and social development.

The Shire has seasonal over and under water supply. Bulk storage and control via new dams is a key solution and offers the collateral potential benefits of hydroelectric power, tourism and lifestyle opportunities. There are potential opportunities with the Gilbert offering the possibility of irrigation developments exceeding the scale of the current Ord River irrigation area. Investment in new infrastructure to support agricultural growth in this area is required.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
2.1.1	Construct the Charleston Dam and reticulate water to Georgetown and Forsayth for domestic and irrigation purposes (dual supply).	Construction and commissioning of Dam and reticulation works.
2.1.2	Upgrade domestic water treatment and storage facilities.	Construction and commissioning of treatment and storage infrastructure at Georgetown and Forsayth.
2.1.3	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's water assets.	Asset management plan developed and implemented.
2.1.4	Move towards full cost recovery for water provision.	Review the user pays two part tariff approach.
2.1.5	Provide consistent high quality water supply to serviced communities where both practical and viable.	Water quality monitoring to confirm compliance with drinking water standards.
2.2.1	Investigate and provide appropriate support for alternative community owned water supply for the Einasleigh community.	Community consultation, redesign of current extraction to improve efficiencies.
2.3.1	Advocate for expansion of sustainable agriculture developments.	Feasibility studies for new developments completed, more farms, three phase power, water allocation.
2.3.2	Develop the Gilbert River irrigation area, Greenhill dam and provide three phase power.	Feasibility study approved and study completed, funds allocated to commence infrastructure construction.
2.3.3	Advocate for the development of a rural skills centre, agriculture college or Research Station.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake and complete a feasibility study of the Skills Centre and progress findings from the feasibility study. Seek appropriate funding for the Research Station.
2.3.4	Continue to strengthen cross regional partnerships and networks across Northern Australia to manage and maximize opportunity for nation building initiatives and reduce cumulative impacts.	Develop and create new partnerships and alignments to facilitate and improve services.

Managing the Natural Assets and Environment for Tourism and Economic Development

Corporate Objective No. 3

Our Shire's natural assets, natural resources and environment are key factors in the development of a sustainable economic growth of the Shire. The potential economic success of our natural assets can be driven by the growth in tourism and agriculture. This is in addition to the contributions from the region's growing global reputation in primary and mining industries.

Respecting our natural assets and upholding the integrity of the area's unique bioregions is important for the sustainable economic growth and development of the Shire. The Etheridge Shire faces a range of pressures including invasive species, changes in climate, land-clearing and increased areas dedicated to National Parks. Council recognises that healthy, resilient ecosystems are essential for sustainable economic growth and healthy communities. A collaborative approach between local government, the State and Federal governments and industry is essential in ensuring the value of our natural assets and environment is retained now and into the future to support ongoing economic growth.

The Shire is well positioned to supply local and global markets with innovative emerging industries which harness the region's natural assets, knowledge and partnerships including renewable energy, environmental management and Indigenous knowledge. Respecting and managing the region's natural assets and the environment will assist sustainable economic growth and development in the region.

By deploying a combination of strategies to protect natural assets the region will be able to prosper and grow. Strategies such as geo tourism and investment in renewable energy will stimulate employment, innovation and offer a sustainable energy source for future generations.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
3.1.1	Development of a new Planning Scheme in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning that also encourages contemporary urban design and regeneration projects.	Completion of an appropriate new Planning Scheme.
3.1.2	Manage growth and change through local area planning initiatives	Town planning scheme reviewed and amended; investigative reports on availability of reserves for future growth
3.1.3	Actively participate in the regional organisations and statutory supported planning instruments	Attend meetings and lobby for Etheridge priorities, alignment of priorities between various planning instruments
3.1.4	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's Tourism, Parks and Recreation assets.	Asset management plan developed and implemented
3.1.5	Advocating release of State Land for future development across the shire	Land availability, increased rate base
3.1.6	Promote residential and rural residential subdivisions throughout shire as land become available and demand increases.	Increase in residential and rural residential allotments in shire for resale based on demand and need.
3.1.7	Progress industrial subdivisions throughout shire as land become available and demand increases.	Increase in industrial allotments in shire for resale based on demand and need.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
3.1.8	Encourage and support mining developments, both small and large, through advocacy, including reduction of red tape.	Encourage and support mining developments, both small and large, through active participation in mining industry forums and liaison with mining industry organisations such as the North Queensland Miners Association and Queensland Resource Council.
3.1.9	Advocate for the development of renewable energy projects.	Cooperate and assist in developing feasibility studies, by exploration and implementation of alternative energy generation for shire if desirable.
3.2.1	Facilitate the development and marketing of a distinctive regional image.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategies to promote event attendance; • Develop shire promotional tools further; • Establish a Controlled Entity to focus on economic development and marketing.
3.2.2	Support skills development in local businesses to expand and meet the growing needs of the region	Facilitate small business training support where required and provide facilities. Monitor increase in support provided.
3.2.3	Support the rural industries through infrastructure, skills development, income diversification and advocacy	Number of issues advocated, local infrastructure standards improved (complaints and asset management
3.2.4	Improve business and policy outcomes by encouraging local businesses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in Council business activities; • apply a 'local preference' for purchases. 	Support the development of leadership, innovation and partnerships to build economic, social and cultural growth.
3.2.5	Enhance and improve the aesthetics of the entrances to the Shire Towns.	Develop meaningful entrance statements on major entrances and define communities with supporting centre signage and visitor information strategies.
3.3.1	Establish a Geo-tourism strategy and Tourism Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Geo-tourism impact (positive) on businesses and social activities; • Promote tourism venues by installing signage at appropriate road locations; • Develop an 'Unearthed Etheridge Shire' mobile phone app.
3.3.2	Promote growth of the tourism market in partnership with stakeholders	Attend promotional events, increase promotional signage to raise awareness, Terrestrial and other enterprise visitations. To be gauge against increase tourist and visitor numbers
3.3.3	In partnership with regional stakeholders, facilitate economic development opportunities relating to creative and cultural industries	Promote and aim for increase in Indigenous business growth.
3.4.1	Continue our partnership with DEWS to further enhance the visitor experience on the Copperfield Dam, including construction of recreation facilities to encourage activity based tourism.	Monitor increase in additional recreational facilities and visitors.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
3.4.2	Construct recreation facilities at Charleston Dam (e.g. swimming, skiing, boating (sail), canoeing, fishing, picnicking camping, bird watching, bush trails (walking, push bike, motorbike)) to encourage activity based tourism.	Construction of facilities and level of usage.
3.5.1	Review the TerrEstrial Business Plan, with a view to identify latent opportunities and extending the tourist experience to include interactive activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business strategy reviewed and implemented; • Establishment of additional tourism experiences.
3.6.1	Upgrade the 'River Walk' along the Etheridge River in Georgetown.	Establishment of pleasant gardens and walking track along the Etheridge River.
3.6.2	Recognise and promote the value of community gardens, streetscape and properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalise streetscapes to create a positive change in the built environment, attracting tourists, new residents and engaging youth. • Entry and success with tidy town awards maintain and improve infrastructure and monitor tourist remarks.
3.6.3	Maintain the Shire's Cemeteries.	All cemeteries maintained to meet community expectations.
3.7.1.	Advocate for improved weather information infrastructure in the region (stream gauge stations, rainfall gauge stations and radar).	Facilitate funding approval to improve network systems and implement.
3.7.2	Maintain disaster management capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Council's Local Disaster Management Plans provides for a comprehensive response to a range of natural disasters; • Maintain SES Capabilities; • Maintain active participation in District Disaster Management Groups; • Provide staff with training opportunities.
3.8.1	Develop Council's Biosecurity Plan in consultation with landowners and other stakeholders to reduce the impact of existing and potential pests.	Approval of Council's Biosecurity Plan by 30 June 2018.
3.8.2	In partnership with the community and external agencies, promote and support best practice management of the natural environment.	Continued improvement of resource condition in correlation with NGRMG.
3.8.3	Work in partnership with stakeholders (including NGRMG) to promote attitudinal and practice change that maintains healthy ecosystem services	Lower costs spent in maintaining resource condition.
3.8.4	Work in partnership with stakeholders (including NGRMG) to implement research and technology developments that support sustainable planning and decision making.	Number of appropriate research and technology initiative accepted and working.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
3.8.5	Encourage improved efficiency and use of energy through greenhouse gas reduction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in work practices and educate to reduce council's carbon footprint. • Explore use of solar energy at various Council buildings
3.8.6	Maintain waste management facilities throughout shire	Operate waste facilities in accordance with environmental license requirements.
3.8.7	Effective education program and encourage recycling, reuse and reduction of community waste	Education products developed and delivered.
3.8.8	Maintain the environment to minimise disease outbreaks through implementation of an integrated mosquito management program.	Reduced incidence of mosquitos.



Heritage Park, Georgetown

Developing Equitable Social Infrastructure: Corporate Objective No. 4

There is universal agreement that strong, resilient and healthy individuals, families and community play a vital role in building the ongoing prosperity, wellbeing and economic development of a region. It has been demonstrated that long term economic growth in the regions occurs through investment in human capital development.

The population of Etheridge Shire is currently 819 persons and little growth is expected over the next few years. The region covers a large area of 39,039 square kilometres, encompassing over 2.0% of the state. The Shire is defined as being rural and remote with minor centres of population at Georgetown (250), Forsayth (140), Mt Surprise (140) and Einasleigh (80).

The connection between disadvantage, demography and geography are well established. The Socio-economic Indicators for Areas (SEIFA) –an overall measure of disadvantage – shows that Etheridge Shire has a comparatively large proportion of its population in the most disadvantaged quintile.

A number of factors influence welfare spending including population growth: the cost of providing services; rates of service use; and the capacity to pay, which in the Etheridge Shire is limited (CSSA 2014) are reflected by the relatively small private sector in human service delivery. It is well established that investments in people yield multiple returns to society in both social and economic terms. As noted by the Minerals Council of Australia, in its submission to a Parliamentary Inquiry into Northern Australia “research suggests that communities that do not have sufficient infrastructure, social amenity and economic diversity will not attract new residents and this will in turn constrain the industry’s recruitment capacity”.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
4.1.1	Engage with and support local indigenous groups.	Increased level of understanding and engagement in a range of activities, including geo-tourism, agriculture, arts and cultural projects.
4.1.2	Partner with state government agencies to improve social conditions and liveability.	Improved social conditions and livability.
4.2.1	Acknowledge and support local indigenous cultural heritage, practices and protocols, to build economic social and cultural capital.	Number of agreements with the Traditional Owner groups, representative bodies and aboriginal corporations so as to professionally cover the whole spectrum of possibilities.
4.2.2	Encourage local historians to preserve and promote local history and heritage.	Number of historical activities happening/ or recorded.
4.2.3	Advocate to State and Federal Governments to address social inequity and disadvantage.	Programs introduced by State and Federal Governments.

4.2.4	Integrate approaches to social and human services planning to address social and economic disadvantage.	Reduction of the level of social and economic disadvantage.
4.2.5	Seek funding to build aged care facilities to retain senior citizens in the community.	Upon successful application, new facilities to commence construction within 4 months of approved funding.
4.2.6	Celebrate the important social milestones on appropriate anniversary dates.	Conduct community celebrations to mark the 100 th anniversary of the Etheridge Shire Council (15 March 2019).
4.2.7	Enhance the life of seniors within the region through transport, encouraging a doctor to the region, aged care and respite and palliative care support.	Actively lobby the State and Federal Governments and Private Industry to support the placement of Rural Doctors to the region and provide additional aged care assistance and facilities
4.2.8	Advocate and facilitate the provision and improvement of central and remote health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake regular food inspections program to ensure compliance with food safety requirements. Get annual reports from health care services themselves and lobby governments to aim for increased services.
4.2.9	Advocate and facilitate a feasibility study of secondary school services to be provided within the shire	Completion of feasibility report.
4.2.10	Build a variety of social infrastructure and service delivery, in partnership with the State Government and Community.	Establishment of aged care services in the community.
4.2.11	Provide assistance to the community with respect to child care, youth hostel and aged care services.	Increased participation levels in child care, youth hostel and aged care services.
4.2.12	Provide libraries, as learning and information centres	Record the number of visitors to the information and library to monitor usage rates.
4.2.13	Develop a strategy to encourage a more effective use of 'Little Gems' Childcare centre (including investigating after school care).	Development of Strategy and usage metrics.
4.3.1	Provide incentive for establishment of youth programs for leadership, recreation, entertainment and healthy socialization	Aim to increase the number of youth programs.
4.3.2	Provide support to volunteers, community groups and events	Monitor number of successful applications to council for support.
4.3.3	Encourage the establishment of strong networks across the region where people can interact socially and safely through sport, recreation, cultural life and the arts.	Promotion of sporting, social recreation and arts activities (RADF) and other events.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
4.3.4	Build and strengthen the Shire's identity through the support and provision of a variety of events and branding our corporate image.	Collaborate with the community to establish Community events in the Shire that reinforce the sense of community and attract tourists, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia Day Activities; • Peace Day Picnic; • Country race meetings; • Camp drafts; • Rodeos; and • Agricultural shows.
4.3.5	Ensure a preparedness to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies and engage in planning activities aimed at minimising the impact of such disasters on the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop approved Disaster Management Plan in accordance with legislative guidelines; • Continue developing Local Disaster Management Committee capabilities; • Support and maintain S.E.S capability sufficient to respond to emergency situations.
4.3.6	Support residents to participate in and influence key government policies that impact upon livelihoods and general well-being.	Invitations made to politicians, meetings held.
4.3.7	Seek funding to build sport and recreation infrastructure.	Successful application for new multi-sports facility.
4.3.8	Maintain public buildings to meet resident's expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Halls in Georgetown, Mt Surprise and Einasleigh are maintained. • Medical Centres in Mt Surprise and Einasleigh are maintained. • Council's Office, Depot, Terrestrial (VIC) Centre, Hostel, Childcare Centre are maintained. • Swimming Pool in Georgetown is maintained. • Public amenities are maintained in a serviceable state throughout the Shire.

Improving Communication Infrastructure and Mechanisms within the Shire

Corporate Objective No. 5

An equitable communication network for the Shire is essential if the community is to have sustainable growth and development. The size and remoteness of Etheridge Shire means we are reliant on our communication networks whether this is mobile, broadband, fixed, Wi-Fi or satellite.

To be competitive in current marketplaces (national and international) and drive increased productivity and access to greater economic opportunities through a global marketplace our communication network is essential. Etheridge has vast untapped potential for the development of an array of 'Agri-Business' and tourism products which can be exported from the region. An equitable communication network will also support social networking and infrastructure (education, health, workplace health and safety and social wellbeing) and commercial services.

There is also considerable concern that, while satellite services will deliver broadband to many areas that currently don't have it, and that it should improve speeds significantly, the network will remain far inferior to that covered by the fibre footprint.

Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Plan identifies that in terms of mobile coverage, services in regional Australia are not as accessible as in our capital cities. Without better mobile services, regional Australia will not fully benefit from new technologies and the associated business opportunities and better service delivery. For example, mobiles (and other technology) enable remote control of agricultural tasks including monitoring soil moisture, supplying water to drinking troughs for cattle and opening and closing gates. Mobile coverage also means a quicker response to motor vehicle accidents and greatly assists in fighting bushfires, floods and other natural disasters.

Mobile access is also important for regional tourism because visitors expect to have mobile services wherever they go. More people are choosing to forego fixed voice services and rely on mobile services alone. Only 16 per cent of people have a preference for fixed-line telephone.

As Infrastructure Australia aptly puts it, technological improvements and innovation can transform industries and open up opportunities for regional business. Providing equitable communication networks will create innovations that will help overcome geographic challenges and are particularly relevant to Etheridge Shire. This will also greatly assist in closing the gap on access to health, education, training and employment opportunities for many socially disadvantaged groups, including people in indigenous communities and people with disabilities.

Council's key focus areas will be to advocate to State and Federal Governments to provide sustainable communication networks for mobile telecommunications, broadband internet options, together with radio and television services to support existing and future industry and social infrastructure.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
5.1.1	Improve co-operation and communication with relevant stakeholders and all levels of government in the strategic planning of future community infrastructure.	Increased access to Mobile phone coverage, data and new technology in the Shire.
5.1.2	Develop and maintain a current advocacy plan.	Advocacy Plan implemented and adopted with successes reported and recorded within the Annual Report
5.1.3	Advocate and facilitate the provision of telecommunication services, telemetry and media.	Improved access to telecommunication services, telemetry and media in the Shire.

5.1.4	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's communication assets.	Asset management plan developed and implemented.
5.1.5	Maintain radio re-transmission services for Mt Surprise, Forsayth and Einasleigh. Assist 4KZ to introduce local radio services.	Access to 4KZ radio within the townships.
5.2.1	Maintain Council's internet and internal technology capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain current Information Technology capabilities.
5.2.2	Using appropriate social media, promote civil and respectful discussion and participation in relevant issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Facebook posts; • Hits on webpage.
5.3.1	Actively participate in the membership of regional development and other organisations in order to achieve mutual regional priorities.	Membership active and maintained with priorities implemented and developed

Viewing Platform at Cumberland Chimney - Georgetown



Commercial Services

Corporate Objective No. 6

It is a feature that Local Government is often put in a position to take-on commercial services that are not in a profit making environment (otherwise private enterprise would have invested in the service delivery) as a result of a lack of scale, insufficient customer base or remoteness, despite changing demographics, the services not being core business of local government and the risk that it may impact of the Council's financial viability.

Services that communities need but may not be economically viable for alternate providers, leading to Council to undertake unprofitable commercial services.

Such services include:

- Student Hostels;
- Child Care Services;
- Tourist Information services;
- Aged care services and programs;
- Entertainment infrastructure;
- Airports; and
- Cemeteries.

These services tend to run at a loss and are generally subsidised by the council and community. Although this impacts on the capacity of the council to provide core services, without this support the community would be-come less and less viable.

Council will:

- Identify local service and infrastructure priorities through consultation with the community;
- Balance community expectations with available resources;
- Work closely with Commonwealth, State and regional agencies to deliver services to the community; and
- Lobby for services to address unmet needs.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
6.1.1	Establishment of a general purpose economic development entity to manage Gilbert River Irrigation Scheme.	Attain necessary approvals and establishment of entity.
6.1.2	Maintain Swimming Pool as a safe and attractive venue.	Number of pool users.
6.1.3	Review the Refuse collection and disposal activities.	Optimisation of activities.
6.1.4	Continue to promote and provide hostel services for primary aged school children with support from grant funding.	Hostel attendance.
6.1.5	Review operation of childcare to improve viability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review complete; • Changes implemented.
6.1.6	Develop a strategy to encourage a more effective use of 'Georgetown Hostel'.	Development of Strategy and usage metrics.

Organisational Excellence and Governance

Corporate Objective No. 7

To deliver excellence as an organisation, embracing exceptional customer service, valuing staff and promoting ethical standards of practice supported by clear policies and strategies.

Service delivery. Council is responsible for managing and delivering a range of services to its communities, such as road construction and maintenance, public health and recreational facilities, advocacy and public libraries.

Good governance is about the appropriate processes for making and implementing decisions. Having good processes generally leads to better outcomes for local governments and their communities and has the following characteristics:

- **Accountability** is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Local government has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.
- **Transparency.** People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice and consultation council considered and which legislative requirements (when relevant) council followed.
- Follows the **rule of law.** This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of council. Relevant legislation includes the Local Government Act 2009 and other legislation such as the Public Health Act 2005, and the Planning Act 2016.
- **Responsiveness.** Council should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.
- **Equitable and inclusive.** A community's wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by council in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.
- **Effective and efficient.** Council should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community.
- **Participatory.** Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways – community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process.
- **Informed by good information and data,** by stakeholder views, and by open and honest debate will generally reflect the broad interests of the community. This does not assume that everyone will think each decision is the right one. But members of the community are more likely to accept the outcomes if the process has been good, even if they don't agree with the decision. They will also be less tempted to continue fighting or attempting to overturn the decision. So even the most difficult and controversial decisions are more likely to stick.
- **Long-term focus.** Examples include council plans, financial plans, strategic statements and other strategic plans. Setting the vision, and then ensuring that it is achieved, is one of the most important roles of local government.

- **Advocacy.** Local governments have a role in advocating on behalf of their constituencies to state and federal levels of government, statutory authorities and other sectors. An important good governance issue relating to advocacy is that the responsibility and accountability for advocacy needs to be clear. In its formal decision-making role, council can officially advocate to external bodies or levels of government on behalf of the community and municipality. Public statements are usually made by the mayor.

One of the roles of individual councillors as representatives is to advocate to council on behalf of their constituents. This is legitimate, as long as it's done within the framework of good governance in terms of language, using appropriate forums and focusing on issues rather than personalities.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
7.1.1	Provide professional, responsible, timely and accessible services to external and internal customers that reflect the values of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in complaints, and record of compliments. • Audit Committee meetings held and internal audits undertaken.
7.1.2	Maximise grants and external income.	Monitor the level of grants applications submitted and record success rate against lodgement.
7.1.3	Pursue and nurture an environment of honesty and integrity in which elected members, managers and staff work together in a spirit of trust and teamwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annual staff turnover rates and conduct exit interviews to gauge reasons for leaving employer. • Adopt zero tolerance for fraud, corruption and drug use.
7.2.1	Disseminate accurate and relevant information within the organization, the community and other relevant audiences.	Number of products such as website, newsletters, and consultative events, reduced complaints, record of compliments.
7.2.2	Ensure the administration of the region is governed through open and transparent decision-making and reporting processes.	Continue to publish the Minutes of Council on council's website, and hard copies placed at public offices.
7.2.3	Ensure the transparency of council's financial operations and performance and promote awareness within the community of council's financial management and other strategies.	Community Financial Report provided to Council and the Community on a monthly basis.
7.3.1	Promote and support a safe and healthy work environment in which the importance of family and work/life balance is recognised.	Maintain Workplace Health and Safety accreditations, staff retention, Enterprise Bargaining.
7.3.2	Promote a drug free environment.	Continue to implement an internal Drug and Alcohol Policy and undertake random drug and alcohol testing.
7.3.3	Maintain compliance with legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council's compliance at least annually.
7.3.4	Adopt appropriate governance structures and make appropriate delegations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council's delegations at least annually.
7.4.1	Councillors take a leadership role in the community and serve as a role model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors fulfil their obligations under the LGA. • Meet expectations of the Code of Conduct.

Strategy No.	Objective	Performance Measure
7.5.1	Provide strategic direction for the continued growth and development of the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage economic growth. Establish a controlled entity¹ to foster and facilitate economic development.
7.6.1	Implement effective reward and recognition programs to promote innovative thinking.	Successful negotiations through the development of Enterprise Bargaining Agreements.
7.6.2	Support innovation by implementing technologies that improve the way council conducts its business and manages its information and data.	Reduction of running and project costs.
7.6.3	Develop a standard of excellence in council's financial systems to monitor and control the viability of council's operations.	Ensure that all statutory requirements are met and conduct transparent benchmarking and other objective evaluations of internal services and ensure that Council receives an Unqualified Audit Report.
7.6.4	Effective works program to better utilize alignments between all funding.	Operational plan (including NDRRA).
7.7.1	Review the current practice of holding consultation meetings throughout the Shire and distribution of 'Inform' to maximise effective community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at consultative events; Feedback from 'Inform'.
7.8.1	Develop and implement proactive risk management strategies to reduce risk to the council and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement risk strategies and ensure that council maintains adequate levels of insurance cover to protect assets and to protect the community, council and employees. Align Corporate and Disaster risk registers. Review Council's Risk profile and register at least annually.
7.8.2	Ensure councillors and staff are provided with relevant learning and personal development opportunities to achieve stated strategic priorities and corporate objectives.	Continue to provide adequate budget allocations to ensure that training opportunities are available for both staff and councillors.

¹ The objects for which Etheridge Enterprise is established are to promote the advancement of economic growth and development in Etheridge Shire, and specifically to:

3.1.1. promote sustainable economic growth and development in Etheridge Shire;

3.1.2. promote the development of the Gilbert River Irrigation Project;

3.1.3. encourage and facilitate longer term strategic and sustainable development planning for Etheridge Shire;

3.1.4. work with businesses and governments at all levels to attract targeted industries to Etheridge Shire and to help further develop existing industries in the region;

3.1.5. develop links between business leaders, governments, the greater public sector and regional organisations in Etheridge Shire and as appropriate beyond that region;

3.1.6. recognise and support new and existing organisations and groups attending to specific needs of their members where that would be consistent with and in furtherance of these objects.

Financial Capability to implement this Corporate Plan

Financing the infrastructure and services required to support the strategies and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan, while improving services and public facilities remains a significant challenge.

The limited revenue base of the Council continues to result in high reliance on State and Federal Government funding for major projects. The implementation of a number of strategies identified within the plan is therefore subject to obtaining this funding.

Etheridge Shire Council maintains a 10 - year Strategic Financial Plan and is in the process of developing a 10 - year Asset Management Plan that will cover the life of the Corporate Plan and beyond. In simple terms, these plans identify planned expenditure and management of assets on council's activities and facilities over the 10 - years from where the funds have come and what the cumulative financial impacts of this will be on the shire as a whole. It is council's financial blueprint for the future and a living document that is required to be regularly reviewed.

The Corporate Plan encapsulates significant infrastructure improvements necessary to facilitate desired growth over the forthcoming five to ten years. The financial plan identifies the use of significant own - source revenue raised through rates and charges as well as external grants and borrowings as being necessary to implement these requirements.

The extension of the timeframe for the Financial Plan beyond that of the Corporate Plan ensures that council is aware of the ongoing impact of maintenance and debt servicing relating to new and improved facilities. Care is taken to ensure that debt relating to specific assets is extinguished well in advance of the end of the useful life of the asset.

Councillors and the Executive Management Team will ensure that council remains in a sustainable financial position.

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires all local governments to prepare and adopt a Corporate Plan covering a period of at least five years. Under the terms of the Act, the Corporate Plan is to be the basis for council's operational plans and budgets in each year.

Council discussed the development of this Corporate Plan at its regular community consultation meetings through-out the Shire, through articles in the 'Inform' newsletter and through its social media sites.

Council is required to make assessments of progress towards implementing its corporate and operational plans. Those assessments are contained in formal written reports and must be presented to a meeting of council at regular intervals of not more than three months.

The key threat to the sustainability of the Shire is the economic decline of its community. Council will continue to lobby for grants and subsidies to fund its operations, but will also seek to exploit opportunities and innovative ways to create jobs, economic growth and prosperity and address social and economic disadvantage.

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