

A wooden display stand is shown, holding several glass jars with labels, a stack of papers, a small potted plant, and a sign. The jars are arranged on the shelves, and the sign on the right reads 'COONAMBLE SHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN'. The background shows a window with some posters.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

COONAMBLE
SHIRE COUNCIL

**Coonamble Shire Council
Community Strategic Plan
Community Engagement
Report
15 June 2022**

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

Coonamble Shire Council acknowledges the Kamilaroi and Weilwan people as the traditional custodians of the land on which it meets and operates, respecting Elders past, present and emerging. We seek at all times to show respect to all people and cultures whose privilege they have to serve within and beyond the Local Government Area.

Thank you to our community

Coonamble Shire Council acknowledges the community's contribution and input into the development of our Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032.

COONAMBLE
SHIRE COUNCIL





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coonamble Shire Council is required under the Local Government Act 1993 to prepare a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) on behalf of the community. Council's previous CSP was prepared originally in 2012 and was updated in 2016 making it a nine-year-old plan. Following the December 2021 election, the newly elected Council adopted to develop a new CSP acknowledging the community aspirations and priorities have changed over this time. To prepare an entirely new CSP is a large undertaking requiring effective and well thought out community engagement.

Council needs to adopt the new CSP by June 2022, less than six months after the swearing in of the new Council which occurred in January 2022. Council Officers started preparations in late 2021 for a new CSP, rethinking how we could engage with the community to drive high levels of engagement which would also elicit quality responses.

This was achieved through digital focused engagement activities supported by traditional face-to-face engagement activities. We achieved a 10.6 percent level of engagement with the community aged 15 and over engaged. Our online survey was filled out by 156 participants which produced 714 comments. Our goals and aspirations were verified with the community. For the first time measurable baseline data was gathered during the engagement activities which will improve the quality and measurability of the CSP.

Five themes are supported with nine function areas. They were created to improve the engagement and quality of responses, and to improve the readability of the CSP. The nine function areas being:

OUR PEOPLE

- Community Services and Wellbeing
- Arts and Culture
- Recreation and Sporting Spaces

OUR ECONOMY

- Economic Development and Growth

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Infrastructure and Assets

OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Planning and Development
- Sustainable Environment
- Sustainable Waste

OUR LEADERSHIP

- People, Risk and Improvement, Corporate Performance, and Strategic Planning

Participants could choose to opt in and out of function areas base upon their priorities and interests. Participants were provided with background information on each function area to help increase their knowledge before responding to the engagement activities, ultimately improving the quality of their responses. 92 percent of survey participants said they valued the background information.

A wide variety of engagement activities, both digital and non-digital, were employed. The engagement activities which had the highest level of participation was the online community survey and the drop-in chats.

Marketing of the engagement activities was also critical to the success of the community consultation. Over 10,000 interactions were achieved via 18 marketing Facebook posts and every resident received a promotional magnet. Coonamble Cash prize money for survey participants also helped to increase engagement.

Some of the strongest issues to emerge from the engagement were:

Community Services and Wellbeing

- Over 60% of survey participants don't believe we are a community which is connected, cohesive and vibrant.
- 63% of survey participants believe crime is holding us back from being connected, cohesive and vibrant.
- Greater coordination and strategic direction between community and youth services was identified as an opportunity to improve engagement with the young people.
- Only 50% of survey participants are satisfied with their level of access to health care locally.
- Pediatrics services and specifically Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy, mental health services, pregnancy services, and access to health services in Gulargambone and Quambone were all identified as areas of need.
- There was a 48% satisfaction rating with domestic animal control.

Arts and Culture

- The library service is highly valued and received a high satisfaction rating.
- 64% of people were satisfied with the public art, creativity and artistic opportunities available in the Coonamble LGA.

Recreation and Sporting Spaces

- Both the sporting and recreational spaces and opportunities received a 50% or better satisfaction rating.
- The community felt there are still a number of projects and upgrades needed to improve facilities and access to sport and recreation including MacDonald Park upgrade, Gulargambone sportsground lack of suitable changeroom facilities, upgrades to the river walk at Smith Park including

lighting and water fountains, canteen and toilet block upgrades at Coonamble sportsground

Economic Development and Growth

- 86 percent of business owners/operators rated workforce challenges as their greatest challenge to grow and sustain their business.
- The Coonamble CBD's vibrancy, vacancy rates and quality of commercial premises is an ongoing issue.
- Early childhood education services continue to experience high demand with all four service providers in Coonamble having waitlists.
- The community felt that there were initiatives that could support early childhood education services to better cope with the demand including initiatives to increase the number of qualified staff.

Infrastructure and Assets

- The Infrastructure and Asset function was rated as the highest priority via the drop-in chat sessions.
- The road network had the lowest satisfaction rating with 82% of survey participants rating the rural road network as below expectation, and 75% of town roads below expectations.
- 67% rated the urban water services below expectation.
- Issues with water quality include odour, chlorinated taste, appearance, calcium and lime build up and associated appliance damage, water pressure and Quambone's water quality.
- There is frustration with the limitation of Coonamble's sewerage network with people within the town limits not connected to the sewerage network and having to use septic systems.
- The Coonamble saleyards was identified as a valuable asset/service but requires additional resourcing for upgrades.
- There is a desire to see greater efficiencies at Council's quarry.

Planning and Development

- There are low levels of confidence in the land use planning framework to deal with conflicting land use, objectives and interests.
- Over half of survey participants were not satisfied with their experience with securing affordable and suitable residential land and/or housing.

Sustainable Environment

- Only 13 percent of survey participants felt we are an environmentally sustainable LGA but 95% of participants want our LGA to be more sustainable and contribute to the bigger environmental picture.

Sustainable Waste

- Only 20% of survey participants are satisfied with the waste collection services and waste management facilities.
- Sustainable Waste received the highest number of individual comments (60 comments) mostly relating to the lack of recycling and absence of a

bulky item kerb side pickup service. Some comments related to our waste management facilities.

People, Risk and Improvement, Corporate Performance, and Strategic Planning

- Overall satisfaction with Council's facilities and services was 2.3/5, or 58% of survey participants rating below or well below expectation.
- Some comments related to poor customer service and lack of response from Council complaints and enquiries.
- Concerns were expressed about the current Council including decision making and conduct.



SNAPSHOTS

- **331** people engaged in Council's Community Strategic Plan's engagement activities.
- **10.6%** of the 15 year old and over population engaged. (based on 2016 census population data).
- **714** additional comments were received via the community survey.
- The online survey's average completion time was **14 minutes** – fantastic participation and engagement levels.
- There was a **65%** completion rate of the **85 question** community survey which allowed participants to opt in and out of answering each function.
- **Quality** of responses from survey participants was high and reflected in the survey's high average completion time, high completion rate and high volume of additional comments made.
- **90%** of participants agreed with the 15 draft CSP goals.
- Overall, more than **92%** of survey participants found the background information provided on each function was helpful.
- **Qualitative baseline data was gathered** for each and every function area to support the measuring of the CSP's success into the future.
- The **greatest community satisfaction** is with:
 - Library services
 - Public art, creative and artistic opportunities
 - Events and array of events
- The **greatest community dissatisfaction** is with:
 - Rural road network 1.9/5
 - Waste services and facilities 1.9/5
 - Town road network 2.1/5
 - Urban water services 2/5
 - Planning and development 2.2/5
 - Overall satisfaction with Council's services and facilities 2.3/5
 - Crime – 63%** identified this as a factor which is holding our community back from being vibrant, cohesive and connected.
 - 83%** of business owners and operators identified workforce challenges as the greatest challenge to be able to sustain and grow their business. *

**percentage based upon the number of community survey participants who responded to that specific survey question.

- Via the drop-in chats the community rated **Infrastructure, Community Services and Wellbeing, and the Economy** as the highest priority functions.
- **111** people came and had a chat with us at our drop-in chats and voted in our **voting system**.
- Every resident was reached by the marketing campaign including through circulation of a marketing magnet to **every household** and almost **10,000 interactions** were achieved via promotional posts on Facebook.

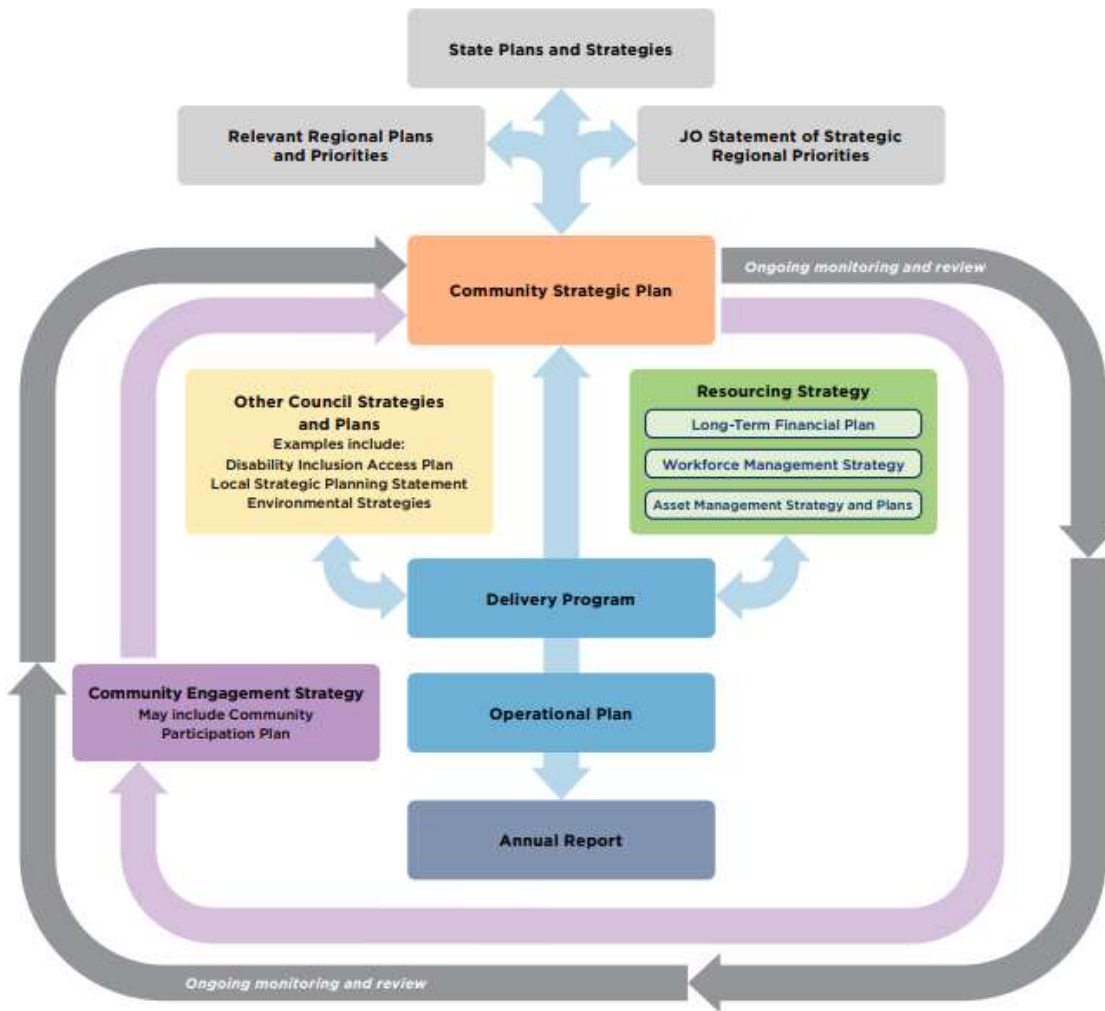
Quality of responses from survey participants was high and reflected in the survey's high average completion time, high completion rate and high volume of additional comments made.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Engagement context and purpose

Councils are required to develop a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) as part of their Integrated Planning and Reporting Requirement (IP&R). The CSP is the highest-level plan that a council will prepare.

Figure 1: The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework



The purpose of the CSP is to identify the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these goals. It guides all remaining strategies and plans and must be developed by council with and on behalf of the community.

The process of identifying the community’s main priorities and aspirations is achieved through community engagement through community consultation. This report outlines in

detail the process by which community engagement occurred and the finding from the consultation in terms of community priorities and aspirations.

1.2. Limitations

The election cycle was disrupted by COVID-19 which caused the Council elections to be deferred on two occasions. The Council election was held in December 2021 with all Councils required to adopt their Community Strategic Plan, along with all other Integrated Planning and Reporting plans and programs, by 30 June 2022. This is a reduced timeframe by approximately three months compared to normal Council terms - or in other words nine months' worth of work needed to be completed in just six months.

This meant that the time in which engagement activities were delivered was potentially shortened and marketing of the engagement activities also had to be shortened which may have impacted upon the level of engagement.

The Office of Local Government recommends that more than 10% of the community should be engaged. 10.6% of the Coonamble LGA's population aged 15 years and older were engaged which was a fantastic outcome considering the timeline was decreased by three months.



2. HOW COUNCIL ENGAGED

2.1 Engagement Objectives

Identifying the community's priorities and aspirations was the first objective of the engagement. This was achieved through the verification of draft goals with the community. The draft goals had been formulated using information and data from the End of Term Report prepared in late 2021, and included consideration of the community's sentiment and comments made via previous other consultation work undertaken by Council.

In addition to identifying priorities and aspirations, the second objective of the CSP's community consultation process was to gather baseline data, quantitative where possible, using measures and indicators. Establishing measurable targets of where the community wants to be in 10 years time was also important. Gathering baseline data was gathered in either of two ways:

- Measuring community satisfaction and sentiment which was collated via specific baseline questions in the community survey.
- By using existing data such as financial data which was not part of this community engagement process.

From a resourcing perspective it was effective for Council to achieve both CSP objectives at the one time.

2.2 Engagement Activities

Community engagement and consultation including communications and promotion of the consultation occurred from Phase 1: 1 February to 15 March 2022 and Phase 2: Public Exhibition between 14 April 2022 to 18 May 2022 in a variety of formats.

2.2.1 Phase 1: 1 February to 15 March 2022

The primary method of engagement was via digital platforms, in an effort to increase engagement by allowing people to engage at a time and place that suited them, allowing people with maximum opportunity to express their individual sentiments and comments, and to participate in engagement in a Covid safe way. The digital engagement tools consisted of the following:

Table 1: Engagement Information

ENGAGEMENT TOOL	DETAILS	PARTICIPATION LEVELS
Online community survey	<p>A Survey Monkey survey which was accessible via Council’s Facebook page, website, and QR code which was published on marketing material and redirected the community to Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting website landing page and included the community survey link.</p> <p>www.surveymonkey.com/r/haveyoursaycoonamblelga</p>	<p>155 people, 65% survey completion rate of 85 question survey, av survey completion time 14 min, 714 additional comments made.</p>
Digital community forums	<p>Online community forums were hosted and the recordings made available via Council’s website. Four sessions were held with each session focusing on different groups of functions so that discussions and content could be more focused on specific topics as opposed to open unstructured discussions. The sessions were as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure including Roads, Water, Sewerage and Essential Assets and Infrastructure. 2. Community Services and Wellbeing, Arts and Culture, and Sport and Recreation. 3. Environment including Planning, Sustainable Waste and Sustainable Environment. 4. Economic Development and Growth, People, Risk And Improvement, Corporate Performance And Strategic Planning. 	<p>4 people</p>
Digital forum with State and Fed Gov Dept.	<p>Council Officers participated in an online forum with State and Federal Government Departments to consider the relevant Department’s strategic plans and objectives, and reflection and alignment of these with our CSP.</p>	<p>12 departments.</p>
Hardcopy community survey	<p>A hardcopy version of the online community survey was available at key locations across the LGA including Gulargambone RTC, Gulargambone Library, Quambone General Store, Coonamble Post Office, Coonamble Library and Council’s administration building in Coonamble.</p>	<p>2 people</p>

Testament to the enhanced ability of participants to express their sentiments and views via digital engagement platforms were the 714 additional comments received via the online community survey, and the high average survey completion time of 14 minutes.

This level and quality of engagement could not be achieved by more traditional engagement tools like community meetings. Our community is increasingly time poor which impacts on people’s ability to engage via face-to-face traditional methods. The community survey was designed to achieve maximum levels of engagement and quality responses. The survey design elements which helped achieve this result included:

- Allowing survey participants to participate and respond to function areas which were a priority to them by allowing participants to opt in and out of each of the nine function areas relevant survey section.
- Providing background information and context for each of the nine function areas which participants could opt in and out of. The provision of previously gathered community data and status of each function was conveyed to build survey participants’ knowledge on the function before they completed the relevant survey questions.
 - 92 percent of survey participants said that they valued the background information.
- Using visually appealing rating style baseline questions which required less time to complete and were visually appealing. Examples include using star and smiley face rating icons.
- Where survey participants rated their satisfaction “below satisfactory” or less, they were subsequently given the opportunity to express why they felt that way.
- The 15 draft CSP goals were well researched and based upon previous consultation and existing Council intelligence and testament to this was that 90 percent of survey participants agreed with the draft goals.

2.2.2 Phase 2: Public Exhibition and face-to-face

Council endorsed the public consultation of the Community Strategic Plan on 13 April 2022. The CSP was placed on public exhibition to 18 May 2022. The digital tools were also complimented by more traditional forms of engagement including face-to-face engagement. The non-digital engagement tools consisted of the following:

ENGAGEMENT TOOL	DETAILS	PARTICIPATION LEVELS
Face-to-face drop-in chat sessions	Drop-in chat sessions with Council staff across the LGA including Gulargambone, Quambone and Coonamble. Participants were asked to identify their top three priority function areas out of a total of nine function areas. Participants also had the opportunity to provide additional	111 people

ENGAGEMENT TOOL	DETAILS	PARTICIPATION LEVELS
	comments and feedback fielded by Council staff.	
Direct engagement	Direct engagement with existing networks and key stakeholders including the Coonamble Interagency meeting, and the Coonamble Youth Forum held in April 2022.	47 people

In addition to the above mentioned digital and non-digital engagement opportunities the community could provide feedback and comment on the Draft Community Strategic Plan via the Act’s required 28 day public exhibition period which was held from 14 April 2022 – 18 May 2022.

Comments could be submitted directly to Council in hardcopy or via email. No submissions were received during the exhibition period. However, during our face-to-face drop ins, our engagement highlighted positive consultation with the broader community who did not understand what a CSP was and then had the opportunity to look at the themes and function areas that the plan was addressing. The interactions with the customers were positive and engaging.

A total of 10.6 percent of the LGA’s population aged over 15 were engaged which is a great outcome considering the condensed timeline because of the Council election timing. Refer to above section, “Limitation of community engagement” for further information.

2.3 Engagement communication and marketing

Promotion of the engagement tools and opportunities were via a variety of marketing methods which are outlined below:

1. A series of 18 Facebook posts reaching almost 10,000 interactions including 946 engagements, shares and reactions.
2. A purpose designed promotional magnet which was mailed to every resident promoting the Integrated Planning and Reporting process including the Community Strategic Plan’s development and engagement opportunities.
3. Running a \$1,200 (total prize pool) Coonamble Cash competition for those who participated in the community survey.
4. QR code directing the community to Council’s Integrated, Planning and Reporting landing page so that they could keep up-to-date and engage.
5. Direct email to stakeholder groups, networks and individuals.
6. Advertisement and promotion via Coonamble Times including adverts and Council’s Weekly Connect section.
7. Hardcopy posters distributed around the LGA.
8. Information on Council’s website.

3. ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

3.1 Vision Findings

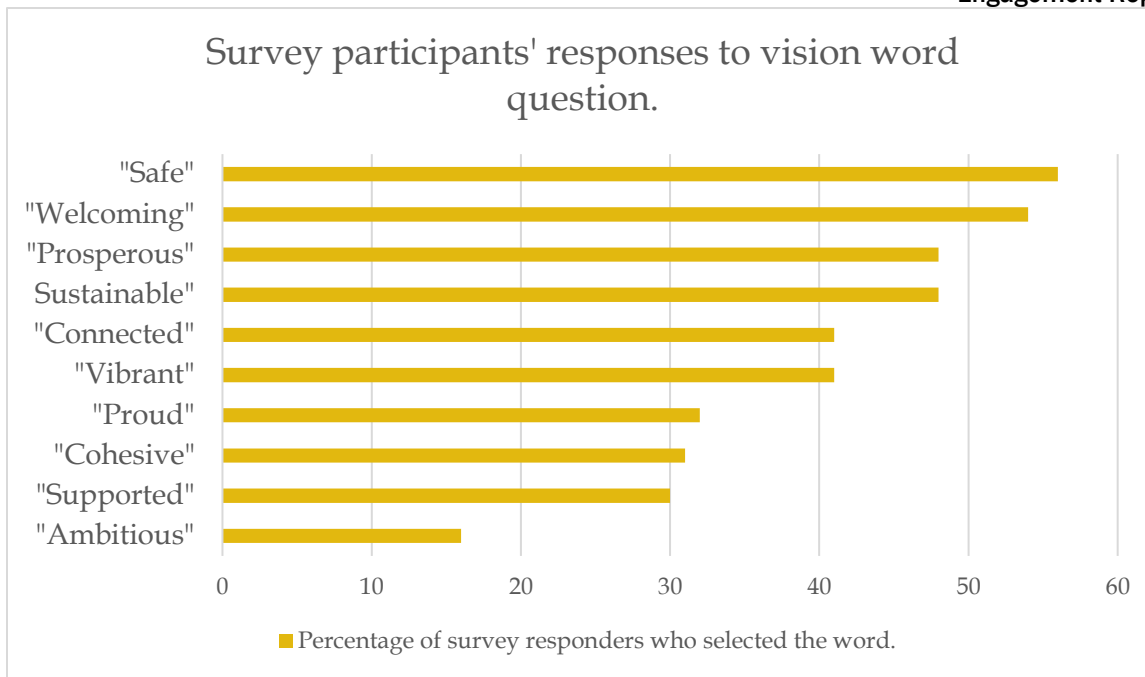
Creating a community vision for the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is one of the most important outcomes from the community engagement process. It is aspirational and sets the tone for the CSP. A vision supports a sense of shared ownership and purpose. A statement that clearly articulates the community's vision and priorities can be used by council and other stakeholders as an advocacy tool, to support funding or grant applications, or influence policy development and resources allocation at State and Federal levels of government.

The community was asked via the community survey to select words that reflected what they hoped our community and the Coonamble LGA looks and feels like. These words were then used to create a vision statement. Responses to the vision words were as follows and are expressed as a percentage of survey participants who selected that word:

- Safe 56%
- Welcoming 54%
- Prosperous 48%
- Sustainable 48%
- Connected 41%
- Vibrant 41%
- Proud 32%
- Cohesive 31%
- Supported 30%
- Ambitious 16%

Based upon the above survey responses a vision statement was created.

“We are a prosperous, safe and welcoming community where we connect with each other, with our culture and our sustainable environment.”



3.2 Our Findings

Coonamble Shire Council established nine function areas under five themes which helped guide participants during the engagement. These nine function areas will improve the readability of Council's strategic plans including the Community Strategic Plan and support the more effective implementation by Council on an operational level. The function areas were as follows:

OUR PEOPLE

- Community Services and Wellbeing
- Arts and Culture
- Recreation and Sporting Spaces

OUR ECONOMY

- Economic Development and Growth

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Infrastructure and Assets

OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Planning and Development
- Sustainable Environment
- Sustainable Waste

OUR LEADERSHIP

- People, Risk and Improvement, Corporate Performance, and Strategic Planning

The drop in chats conducted throughout the Coonamble LGA during the public exhibition period allowed the community to identify their top three priority function areas.

The community's sentiments and satisfaction levels with each function area were captured through the community survey and further defined through the face-to-face engagements. This was achieved by seeking community feedback on the draft goals, and using the sentiments and satisfaction levels, baselines could be established. The community could also articulate their issues and opportunities related to each function area.

The community were additionally able to have their say on the functions via the four online community forums and during the exhibition period of the draft Community Strategic Plan.

The findings are presented below under each function area.



3.2.1 Function 1: Community Services and Wellbeing

GOAL 1: WE ARE CONNECTION, COHESIVE AND VIBRANT

95% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Community Services and Wellbeing was rated as the second highest priority via the drop-in chats. Less than 40 percent of survey participants believe our community is connected, cohesive and vibrant.

Our community identified crime, the lack of opportunities to come together across generations/cultures/interests, and lack of things to do generally as the main factors holding our community back from being connected, cohesive and vibrant. This was also supported at the Youth Forum whereby 28% of participants felt there was nothing to do on weekends or after school activities.

Comments consistently raised in this section regarding community connectedness, cohesion and vibrancy include:

- Division and segmentation within the community between town versus rural, socio-economic status, and cultural backgrounds.
- Our elected members contribution to the division within the community.
- Lack of resourcing of community services and facilities.
- The need for community services to collaborate and work strategically together.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Community Services and Wellbeing	3 rd of 9	47 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Do you believe we are connected, cohesive and vibrant?	1.8/5	119

Related Issues and Opportunities

Factors holding the community back from being connected, cohesive and vibrant.

- Crime – 63%
- Lack of opportunities to come together across gen/culture/interests – 58%
- Lack of things to do generally – 57%
- Lack of services and fac young ppl – 51%
- Lack of services for vulnerable, elderly, disabled – 33%

What the community said:

- “Services need to come together a lot more”
- “A proportion of the community can not engage with council activities as they lack the functional literacy to get the information”
- “There needs to be a culturally safe Aboriginal group for the 0-5 yr old”
- “There is a divide in the community”
- “There seems to be two clear segments of society split by socio-economic status”
- “I believe some of the smaller communities in the shire lack facilities or funding to create a connected and vibrant community.”
- “If Gulargambone decides to do something it gets done but this does not seem to be the way with things in Coonamble.”
- “The spectacle that was the lead up to the council elections shows how divided we are.”
- “The recent riff in council elections has divided an already insufficient community.”
- “Each new political period there is new red tape and objection to the previous political direction. An agreed plan that is followed through is key.”

GOAL 2: WE ARE HEALTHIER

93% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Overall the community is satisfied with their access to adequate health services in the Coonamble LGA. Key issues and factors raised in regard to health services were:

- Lack of speech and occupational therapy services, particularly for children.
- Lack of pediatric services generally.
- Insufficient pregnancy services.
- Lack of ultrasound services.
- Insufficient mental health services.
- Lack of access to medical services in Gulargambone and Quambone

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Rate your experience with accessing adequate health services in Coonamble LGA	2.5/5	109

What the community said?

- "More needs to be done to attract and retain allied services such as OT and Speech therapists in the community."
- "Desperately need to address shortage in pediatric speech & OT services."
- "I am finding it difficult to get sustained services for children's needs in regards to speech and OT."
- "Lack of access to relevant pediatric services."
- "Not enough maternity services."
- "Very little support through my last pregnancy."
- "Mental health access is nearly non existent."
- "Simple medical procedures such as an ultra sound are no longer available in town"
- "Have to travel to dubbo all time for doctors and different ultrasounds."
- "With an aging community in Gulargambone, and the lack of health services now, it puts our community at risk."
- "Some health services do not promote themselves very well, especially preventative/support services."
- "The shire is lacking health professionals and access. Especially to the communities of Quambone and Gulargambone. It is extremely hard for people of those communities to access these services."
- "Visiting services are not known by the community and only access here on mainly a fortnightly basis."
- "Lots of doctors and a great hospital."

GOAL 3: WE FEEL SAFE, SECURE AND SUPPORTED

80%** SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

The Survey proposed the goal "We Feel Safer"**. Based upon community comments via the survey the wording of the goal was expanded further to "**We feel safe, secure and supported**". The intent for expanding the wording of the goal is to reflect supporting our community, particularly the vulnerable to feel safer and more secure, but also to reflect those within our community who are contributing to the demise of our community's safety and supporting them to change their actions and attitudes towards their community. We cannot achieve the goal without addressing the cause.

Background (Crime)

A proportion of our community don't feel safe with 25% responding that they don't feel safe and 47% feeling only somewhat safe. Contributing factors raised by the community were:

- Greater support required for people with drug and alcohol dependency.
- Young people needing to be better engaged to deter them from offending.
- Businesses and residents have taken their own steps to improve their security.
- The justice system's role in helping to minimise offending and reoffending.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Do you feel safe in our Coonamble LGA?	Yes – 28% Somewhat – 47% No – 25%	106

What the community said? (Crime)

- "Not enough is being done to help people with drug and alcohol dependency issues."
- "Unless something is done about youth crime, how can the community be safer."
- "Nothing for youth to do especially on weekends. Open up the old youth centre in the main st."
- "Things have improved in Gulargambone since the school has improved."
- "Justice system can do only do much in regard to offenders and crime in the community."
- "I feel safe to walk the streets through the day time but would never walk the streets at night anymore."
- "I feel safe in my home because of the area it is in. My business are well protected because there are barriers to entry."
- "Crime rate is what makes the LGA feel unsafe, there needs to be more done about the crime in the LGA."

Background (Domestic Animal Control)

The community's satisfaction with domestic animal control is slightly below satisfactory. Suggestions raised by the community to improve the control of domestic animals included:

- The need for the desexing program and expanding access to the program.
- The appointment of the Council's compliance officer (ranger) is integral to the success of animal control in our community.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction with domestic animal control	2.4/5	104

What the community said? (Domestic Animal Control)

- "The shire ranger has been great in the past."
- "I believe a more widespread desexing program for all residents would help alleviate this issue. More people may be willing to rehouse stray animals in our community if the cost of desexing wasn't so high."
- "Number of dogs roaming the streets are far less now than before."
- "Way too many wandering dogs on our streets."
- "I would like to see more subsidised desexing - the last programme was 2 years ago."
- "Council should consider making the conditions of surrender that they have to desex the mother."

Background (Disaster Preparedness)

Disaster preparedness was around natural disasters and the community's response and preparedness to such events.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Do you feel our community is supported, prepared and equipped to cope with a disaster?	No – 19% Unsure – 42% Yes – 39%	107

What the community said? (Disaster preparedness)

- "Flood information is not readily available easily online."
- "Council and Fire brigade do a good job. SES has been lacking volunteers in recent times."
- "Need more volunteer for the ses and rfs to help the community"
- "Good emergency service support. Community can come together in an emergency."

3.2.2 Function 2: Arts and Culture

GOAL 4: OUR CONNECTION TO OUR CULTURE IS STRONGER THAN EVER

89% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

The arts and culture function rated the highest with the community across all function areas. Overall people were satisfied or better with the public art, creative and artistic opportunity available, the events and array of events, and the library service. Notably, the community identified that things are and have improved with regards to arts and culture, and the community have a desire for this trajectory to continue.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Arts and Culture	7 th of 9	26 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction with public art, creative and artistic opportunities available	3/5 64% meeting expectation or above	66
Satisfaction with events and array of events	2.7/5 56% meeting expectation or above	66
Library service satisfaction	3.4/5 90% meeting expectation or above	66

What the community said?

- "There needs to be a more strategic approach to delivering arts and culture in the community."
- "Would like to see Coonamble come together as one regardless of background ie: colour, race, religion, gender identity etc."
- "I would love to see more functional public art like sculptures that are seats or support vines that shade seats or walkways."

- "The school holiday programs are excellent - well done. Needs to be backed up by ongoing term-time activities that link into existing resources."
- "Our public art is improving!"
- "Unless they are sporting events, there are not really a lot of events on here in Coonamble."
- "Need more cultural events to get town, tourism etc"
- "My children visit the Library every week, the staff are amazing. A credit to our community."
- "The library is small and out of date in Gulargambone."
- "Library have been very helpful and inclusive to Quambone."
- "Could hours be reviewed or assistance provided to allow the library to stay open during lunch."



3.2.3 Function 3: Recreation and Sporting Spaces

GOAL 5: WE ARE A COMMUNITY OF GOOD SPORTS

84% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

The community are satisfied with the sport and recreational facilities and opportunities available. There are improvements that the community would like to see including:

- Improvements to the canteen and toilet facilities at the Coonamble Sportsground.
- Improvement to the MacDonald Park precinct.
- Changeroom improvements at Gulargambone Sportsground.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Recreation and Sporting Spaces	4 th of 9	40 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction with sport and rec opportunities avail	2.6/5 56% meeting expectation or above	77
Satisfaction with sport and rec facilities avail	2.6/5 50% meeting expectation or above	77

What the community said?

- "Not enough being put into recreation for older people."
- "Would be great to see Weir upgraded & expanded."
- "Sporting facilities are excellent Recreating facilities such as parks can be improved and make to feel safer. especially Macdonald Park"
- "Gular has a very strong female rugby team with non-existent change rooms as the mens' change rooms are not even large enough to hold half a team at a time."
- "The river walk at Smith Park is used extensively by those exercising in the morning and after work and is not safe at all when daylight savings ends. Lighting on the riverside needs to be installed as well as water fountains."

- "Playgrounds need attention. McDonald Park needs sunshade over the younger children's portion on the eastern side."
- "The canteen/toilet block at sports ground is unsatisfactory. Needs to be rodent proof, professionally cleaned several times a year & upgraded."
- "Updating the canteen facilities is a must as well as maybe building a club house for the football clubs, even to share."
- "Sporting clubs and groups are on the whole very active in furthering their own plans."
- "Coonamble needs better facilities, cleaner, more lights. Where are the walking tracks. Coonamble shire needs to look at other communities, such as Tamworth."
- "Longer pool opening hours would better suit young families trying to cool off outside of swimming club times."

3.2.4 Function 4: Economic Development and Growth

GOAL 6: OUR ECONOMY IS SUSTAINABLE, PROSPEROUS AND DIVERSIFIED

90% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Via the drop-in chats, participants rated our economy as the third highest priority function area of the nine functions. The community aspires to be sustainable, prosperous and diversified but have overwhelmingly identified workforce challenges as the greatest barrier to sustain and grow their businesses. Suitable and quality retail spaces are in short supply and the high vacancy rates in the Coonamble main street is an ongoing issue.

Due to the “baby boom” in Coonamble LGA early childhood services in particular are at capacity with waitlist and the community have identified this as an issue and expressed the need for innovative solutions to be explored. Solutions suggested by the community include:

- Initiatives to encourage and support an increase in qualified early childhood educators.
- Initiatives to encourage more family daycare operators as is done in Orange.
- Support and collaboration to expand the current early childhood services and their facilities.

Drop-in Chats’ results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Economic Development and Growth	2 nd of 9	49 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Greatest challenge to sustain and/or grow your business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workforce challenges - 83% - Competition outside LGA - 28% - Staff expertise and knowledge - 21% 	80

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply chain issues - 15% - Covid-19 - 15% 	
Education needs/expectations met in Coonamble LGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - 60% - Somewhat - 30% - No – 10% 	80

What the community said?

- “Lack of support for emerging new businesses.”
- “Because the main street has lost much of it business and there need to be better initiatives to encourage business back to the main street.”
- “Finding suitable real estate opportunities. Our main street is falling down and pigeon infested, with a high risk of break and enter. I'd love a storefront for my business but need a bit more quality.”
- “The fact that council does not want to work with businesses.”
- “There is a shortage of qualified early childhood educators in rural and remote communities. This makes it difficult to maintain the required regulations and standards that are set by state government.”
- “I am not sure how council can be involved, but with the knowledge of baby boom and future impacts, lack of qualified staff, there could be the potential for a scholarship in Early Childhood Education that could assist to increase the number of local people”
- “There needs to be more groups for families with 0-5 year old children and culturally safe groups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait families.”
- “The preschools and daycares are amazing in Coonamble. However, with the baby boom there may be lack of access to some children if spaces are filled.”
- “Great options in Coonamble however there are no daycare options in Gulargambone or Quambone which is impacting a number of families in getting back to working full time.”
- “I found it hard accessing childcare for the desirable number of days.”



3.2.5 Function 5: Infrastructure and Assets

GOAL 7: OUR ROAD NETWORK MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR OUR ECONOMY, INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITY TO PROSPER

84% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Roads was the area which had the lowest satisfaction rating. In particular, 82 percent of rural road survey participants either rated the rural roads as below or well below expectation, and this is having a detrimental effect on the productivity of the economy. With regards to the town roads, 75 percent of survey participants rated the roads as either below or well below expectations.

Overall, there was frustration expressed with regards to the condition of the rural road network and the frustration with the lack of response when a complaint is made to Council. Within town there is frustration with storm water drainage which is covered in the Urban Water section below. The Combara rail crossing and safety associated with it was raised.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Infrastructure	1 st of 9	65 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction rural road network	1.9/5	78
Satisfaction town roads	2.1/5	78

What the community said? (Roads)

- "We need to be planning to ensure our roads can meet the evolving requirements of agriculture in particular. The future of the town depends on agriculture and the ability for the industry to thrive. Presently our roads are forcing growers to send their products to other areas."
- "Roads in disrepair."
- "If we don't start spending money on our roads it will not prosper."
- "Maintenance of unsealed roads in the shire, at times, is non-existent. There appears to be no attempt to improve unsealed roads by adding materials, such as gravel dust or overburden rock from the crusher."

- “Railway crossing at combara needs attention.”
- “I can only imagine how expensive and time consuming it would be to service all the roads in the shire, but this needs to be dealt with. From either grant funding or digging into the reserve.”
- “The roads do not get grader enough for the rates we pay when they do its only a quick grade which makes the roads worse.”
- “When information is provided to the Shire about the poor status of a road there is no acknowledgement, feedback , follow up or communication regarding the information.”

GOAL 8: OUR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES ARE FIT FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR FUTURE

93% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Urban water services and infrastructure are not meeting the expectation of the community and 67% of survey participants rating the urban water services as below or well below expectations.

A significant proportion of comments and issues relate to water quality – odour, chlorinated taste, appearance and calcium and lime build up causing damage to household appliances. Water pressure was also an issue which was raised as was frustration with Quambone’s water quality in the recent past.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction urban water services and infrastructure	2/5 67% below or well below expectation	58

What the community said?

- “I do not drink the water from the tap (bottled water instead), the calcium build up is ridiculous, water pressure, and the taste is nothing to write home about.”
- “The water at present is at sometimes undrinkable.....The water pressure is not good at all. If i have a sprinkler on I cant put a load of washing on. That is not acceptable.”
- “Poor water pressure. Expensive Barely drinkable.”
- “Water tastes awful with often cloudy appearance.”
- “The water smells and has a bad taste. We have to filter our drinking water. Too Much lime and calcium.

- “The water pressure is ridiculous at times. The water smells strongly of chlorine - as if you have been swimming, but you have just had a shower.”
- “The water is hugely chlorinated and not pleasant.”
- “Quambone bore water ok, except for the 2 weeks it took to have water pass drinkable test. Also, when I rang about it initially, staff were unaware of the problem in Quambone. Making sure all council customer service staff are aware of major issues like this should be a priority for council management.”
- “For weeks the community of Quambone did not have access to safe drinking water which is a basic necessity!”
- “I’ve always had terrible water. For years it came out of taps brown. Now it is in drinkable due to the taste. Our family has to buy drinking water and I’ve had to buy rain water tanks just to have quality water.”
- “The water is terrible, it damages kettles, filters, washing machine, hot water systems and I worry about my children and I drinking it. Water pressure is poor to at times.”

GOAL 9: OUR SEWERAGE AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES ARE FIT FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR FUTURE

92% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL**

Background

The goal** was expanded from “Our sewerage and services are fit for our community and our future” and added in urban drainage services”.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction sewerage services	2/5 37% below or well below expectation	38

- What the community said? (Sewerage)**
- “We still have places in town where there is no sewerage and some of the places are close to the sewerage farm in these time all places in town should be sewerage.”
 - “we still have street on septic. if the whole town was on the sewerage line then yes the services would be fit.”
 - “We live in the town and STILL have no sewage.”
 - “Some people still have septic and can let off bad odours.”
 - “I am 2 km from the post office and have no access to sewerage services.”

What the community said? (Drainage)

- "Storm water drainage is poor."
- "The culverts need attention. Council dont respond to emails and flooding continually occurs around town because they aren't cleaned our repaired."
- "There appears to be no strategic plans, master plans, audits or assessments that rate the condition of each road, its kerb and guttering and storm water drainage so that improvements can be prioritised systematically, especially in the towns and villages. This leaves it to the whim of Councillors and Council officers. It needs to be far more systematic and objectively assessed."
- "South eastern corner of township has terrible drainage, road surfaces higher than guttering results in many many properties being inundated with storm water run off."
- "There's no drainage and no kerbs on a lot of residential streets in Gulargambone, water sits for weeks causing an inundation of mosquitoes and smells bad."
- "Storm water drainage needs to be main priority in this process.."
- "There are still street that are not tarred, streets they don't drain off well after a decent rain, potholes."
- "After storm water sits on streets for weeks."
- "What storm water drainage, water constantly sits in town streets, can not park near the public school due to water."

GOAL 10: OUR ESSENTIAL ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ENABLES OUR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY TO PROSPER

92% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL**

Background

The goal** was changed from "Our essential assets and infrastructure makes it possible for our community and economy to prosper" and added the word enable to improve readability.

Satisfaction with assets and essential infrastructure was marginally below the satisfaction rating. The main issues raised were:

- The need for improved sale yard facilities.
- Desire for increased efficiency as the Council quarry.
- Need for improved telecommunication.

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction with assets and essential infrastructure	2.4/5 50% below or well below expectation	52

What the community said?

- "Council needs to manage our Quarry much more efficiently. It be more competitive with pricing. Council should put more thought into making our airport viable. Our sale yards should be more competitive with pricing as well."
- "Phone service in Coonamble is terrible. The saleyards are a great asset to the town and the council want to close them down why is this the case. Cemeteries are not well maintained. Council quarries are not used at full capacity sometimes you can not even get the product you require."
- "mobile phone and internet is 3rd world....stock yard need refurbish"
- "Each asset site requires a Masterplan that spells out what that asset will look like at the end of the next 10 years, with rationale about how it is adequate to deliver its intended service. It also needs an Asset Management Plan. Do these documents exist, if so, how are they being used to guide development of each asset? If not, why don't they exist? Prioritise use of Council funds on these and this clarity will convince funding agencies that Council and the community are in agreement about what they want and what is needed to deliver."
- "Saleyards is in great need of repairs and ongoing maintenance. Completely renew kitchen and facilities-opportunity for training hub for hospitality students on sale days and during harvest??"
- "Dangerous railway crossing at Combara of a night trains have no side lights and there are no lights at the stop sign the warning sign for the railway tracks is to close and not enough time for trucks to stop."
- "Meets my expectations for the remote area we are in."
- "It's believed in the community that council want to close the saleyards closing facilities will end the town."

3.2.6 Function 6: Planning and Environment

GOAL 11: OUR COMMUNITY HAS CONFIDENCE IN OUR STRATEGIC LAND USE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

93% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

The goal was supported in the survey with a statement "because of changes made to our planning system and the new opportunities that these create".

Planning and development had some of the lowest community satisfaction levels, as did our community's experience with secure affordable and suitable residential land and housing. Frustration was expressed with the lack of availability and quality of housing for both sales and rentals, and lack of residential land including rural residential.

Drop-in Chat results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Planning and Environment	9 th of 9	22 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Degree of confidence in land use planning framework, and in balance between land use interests and risks	2.2/5 42% sufficient or above sufficient confidence level	54
Rate experience in securing affordable and suitable residential land and/or housing	2.3/5 43% meeting expectation or above	53

What the community said?

- "More homes/Units need to be constructed through government funding. There is a great need for rentals but no housing."
- "Council should apply for grants to acquire and demolish damaged and substandard houses in the towns. Then demolish these houses and give the land away FREE on the proviso that building a residence on the land is commenced with 12 months."
- "Standards seem to have been thrown out the window by residents, builders and developers in the LGA, and they have seem to have little regard and respect for the standards imposed by the State. There seems to be no masterplan for expansion of the area's housing capacity."
- "Out of town investors buying all available property and housing and then asking unrealistic rental pricing."
- "There are plenty of housing and vacant blokes in town. It is not council's responsibility to find or make new estates in the district. Example is the Yatton estate which was purchased apparently for council bosses and that council were going to spend an obscene amount of money to benefit a very few."
- "Housing in Coonamble is dismal and it scares off potential growth."
- "Prices are over inflated for realestate and people and families have trouble finding rentals."
- "Can't buy any small blocks out of town, or build on the small ones. Why can't this be done?? Gilgandra shire has houses being built on small blocks out of their town everywhere. If they can do this Coonamble Should able too as well."
- "I haven't needed to but when looking for family members there is no vacant land. There is also a lack of rentals in town, with a lot of empty houses that people want too much money for that need a lot of repairs."
- "Development applications are too costly."

- "Minimum lot size definitely needs amending."
- "I have a business and residence on a block of land and have been told I have no hope of subdividing them. This is essentially untenable going forward."



3.2.7 Function 7: Sustainable Environment

GOAL 12: WE ARE MORE SUSTAINABLE AND WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE BIGGER ENVIRONMENTAL PICTURE

95% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Only 13 percent of the community survey participants felt that we are an environmentally sustainable LGA and that we are doing our part for the environment. Most of the comments made in the Sustainable Environment section pertained to waste services and recycling which is discussed and considered in the relevant section below. Overall, the sentiment expressed by the community via the community survey was that we needed to become a more environmentally sustainable LGA.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Sustainable Environment	5th of 9	32 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
We are an environmentally sustainable LGA and that as a community we are doing our part for the environment	No – 40% Somewhat – 43% Yes – 13% Not priority – 4%	61

What the community said?

- "Work should be done on our local river system with the removal of the overgrown bamboo, and rubbish, Inspection of trees that have become a hazard to community and power lines."
- "We should aim & promote for a more sustainable LGA."
- "The amount of chemicals being poured onto the land in and around Coonamble appears to be excessive. The mountains of chemicals stored at the local businesses servicing local farming activities is astounding. Is there any testing done of the water in the weir and river to determine if there is any contamination."
- "Should be doing much more to become an environmentally sustainable LGA- be leaders of the central West."

3.2.8 Function 8: Sustainable Waste

GOAL 13: WE ARE WINNING OUR WAR ON OUR WASTE

82%* SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

Based on community feedback and comment regarding the goal, the goal was changed from “We are waging a war on our waste” to be more ambitious and meet the higher, longer-term expectations of our community.

Waste services, along with roads, had the lowest community satisfaction rating. Only 20 percent of the community said that waste services met their expectation and the highest volume of comments received related to waste, with over 60 individual comments made.

The issues and opportunities raised included:

- Desire for recycling, and reduction in our overall waste generation.
- A need for bulky item kerb side pickup service throughout the year.
- Frustration with the landfill site in Coonamble and its condition.

Drop-in Chats’ results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
Sustainable Waste	6th of 9	29 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Satisfaction with waste services and facilities	Meeting/Above expectations – 20% Below/well below expectations – 80%	60

What the community said?

- “Council should be introducing recycling within the community.”
- “The landfill site in Coonamble is an absolutely disgusting, there should not be a fee to take rubbish to the tip then there should be less rubbish dumped around town. The town need to have more recycling places available.”
- “So little opportunity for recycling, large scale composting, better management of waste etc, which is a big concern.”

- "We throw everything into landfill and have no recycling facilities except for the bottles, and don't have a tip shop."
- "I would like to see our garbage collection become a recycling one it upsets me that we are not able to recycle anything in Gulargambone unless we take it to Armatree to the Gilgandra Shire where they do recycle."
- "Littering and waste management is a big problem in our community. We need a recycling plant, as well as massive fines for illegal dumping."
- "I'd like to see more innovative use of our waste."
- "There are no recycling facilities. This must be improved if our council is going to stand up and be sustainable and contribute to the bigger environmental picture."
- "we need better recycle facilities. a decent return and earn venue where all types of can be cashed in (milk and orange juice, poppers etc) that the bigger towns accept"
- "The council should do a large item pick up/clear twice a year. Have residents register with Council so they know where to pick up and have large items only (not garbage) for transport to the tip. Things such as washing machines, beds, fridges, etc. Also, when registering they can say if it will be on the roadside or if they need help moving it from their hose. A lot of residents have no way of moving them and no way of transporting them."
- "Coonamble council has only ever paid lip service to any so called "war on waste". Any such war has long been lost by the Coonamble council. You could start by giving every household a milk crate to leave out bottles and cans for a community organisation to collect and cash in at the local recycling centre."
- "We need to provide recycling bins and green waste bins to each resident. This will decrease general waste bin usage and help the environment. A bulk curbside collection with a maximum of 6m2 of waste per household per calander year would be awesome."
- "Town could benefit with curbside cubic waste once a month like in cities. Not everyone can travel out to the tip, this may have an impact on some yards with larger waste that needs to be taken away."
- "We need to concentrate on creating less waste and ways to recycle. Recycling things locally to make something else to create sustainable jobs ."
- "We should aim to reduce single use plastic in Coonamble LGA. Encourage preschools, schools, retail shops to promote use of less plastics & packaging."
- "This should never have been contracted out. The contractor is trying to do as little as possible for the most money."
- "Free tip entry for those who don't have curbside collection would be a good start. Annual clean-up weeks could be encouraged where it's free entry to the tip for bulky items for a week. And obviously recycling options would be nice."
- "To put it in the too hard basket is disappointing. Recycling, reusing and sustainable practices by reducing household environmental footprint should be a priority as it is a future-focused goal, that can be small steps leading to larger differences to the environmental"

3.2.9 Function 9: People, Risk, Improvement, Corporate Performance and Strategic Planning

GOAL 14: OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS ENRICH AND EMPOWER US

91% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

GOAL 15: OUR COMMUNITY BELIEVES IN THE INTEGRITY OF COUNCIL'S DECISIONS

88% SUPPORTED THIS GOAL

Background

69 percent of community survey participants expressed that they had some degree or did have adequate opportunity to voice their opinions, ideas and feedback regarding Council matters.

Poor customer service and a perception of lack of response from Council to complaints and enquiries were some of the frustrations articulated by community survey participants.

Drop-in Chats' results

Function area	Priority ranking	No. of ppl who identified fct area as a top 3 priority
People, Risk, Improvement, Corporate Performance and Strategic Planning.	8th of 9	24 ppl (out of a possible 111ppl)

Baseline Capturing (Survey)

Survey Question	Rating	Responses
Do you believe you have adequate opportunity to voice opinions, ideas and feedback regarding Council matters	Somewhat 46% No 27% Yes 23% Unsure 4%	57
Overall satisfaction level with Council's services and facilities	2.3/5 42% above expectation 58% below or well below expectation	56

What the community said?

- "The previous council and General manager have made significant headway in improving our town. Driving through and seeing the improvements of the caravan park, water tower and visitor information Center is something for the town to be proud of."
- "Thank you to our new general manager who has started the realisation of this goal. I hope the incumbent mayor/councillors are United- we deserve integrity, confidence & cohesion from our Council."
- "to much reliance is just on facebook and if your not on facebook you miss information. There used to be a regularish email. doesn't seem regular any more. rare if anything. simple quick news could be sent out weekly or fortnightly for some of the information that gets put on facebook. There is still also the newspaper and the flyer that comes out at times. Non of my calls/emails to council get replies. unless i ring the roads person direct I get him."
- "Emails don't get answered. Voices can't be heard. Permission needs to be obtained to speak at meetings. So much for listening to the community."
- While I do, I don't think a lot of our community have an opportunity to have a voice, communications are not gauged to all community, only those who can read. Council involvement with Community Working Parties and Aboriginal organisations to ensure that planning reflects community action plan objectives within the CWP's that are in Coonamble."
- "For far to long, it has felt as if Council was a closed door. This needs to change and our community should have more say on what is happening."
- "I feel we can voice concerns or ideas but know that it's not really been listen to because they have other agendas alrea"
- "Sometimes it feels as though Council is working in isolation from its people."
- "..... ..opinions are often publicly berated."
- "Consultation on matters at times seems limited, unsure how to raise issues. Consultation methods seem to mostly via surveys online and perhaps there should be more points of contact to raise concerns or provide comments."
- "Nobody listens and they do not act on any report actions."
- "I think Council administration does a reasonable job. I worry about the decision making of our mayor & councillors....."

In addition to the above, we also asked our customers the following.

How do you think Council could improve on its customer service?

- "...Communicate with frontline staff - if they don't know what is happening they cannot pass it onto customers and therefore look unknowledgeable. Prompt acknowledgment of concerns or complaints from customers from the appropriate person. Have self-serve options available such as a booth or computer at the front counter at the council so you can pay rates/water etc and if you have trouble then an officer can help."
- "Listening & responding to complaints & Enquiries within a reasonable time!"

- "Reply to people. Not interrogate them for information to get to the next person they need to speak to."
- "Just more systematising of processes and more consistent record-keeping perhaps."
- "Let the whole community know what is going on. Engage in a different way, so that people aren't left behind."
- "Actually listen and take responsibility when taking a phone call from a concerned citizen."
- "Attending to customer request and acknowledgment of said requests in a reasonable timeframe."
- "Training on customer service would be a good start."
- "Perhaps better customer service training. Possibly personality problem. Select right person for roles."
- "Get an App like Tamworth Council for informing and connecting with your community. And PRIORITISE professional and prompt acknowledgment of communication with Council."
- "Many time I have called due to not being able to find the information needed and have been directed to the shire website."
- "The Council needs to represent all who contribute to the community even if their personal view conflicts with this..."

4. Conclusion

The Community Strategic Plan's community engagement successfully engaged the community, eliciting quality responses from a high proportion of the community. The engagement successfully identified the future goals and expectations of the community and simultaneously captured a comprehensive list of tangible and quantifiable baselines including satisfaction levels with Council's current service delivery. These baselines will enable Council and the community to accurately measure the progress of the Coonamble LGA's Community Strategic Plan into the future.

The high levels of engagement demonstrates that the engagement tools and marketing methods chosen by Council were effective and accessible to the broader community. Additionally, the carefully considered and designed community survey and drop-in chats delivered high quality data and information which has been integral to the development of a Community Strategic Plan which can attest to genuinely reflecting the sentiments and aspirations of the community. Council looks forward to working with its community and stakeholders over the next ten years to deliver upon its aspirational Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032.