



# TAMWORTH TOMORROW

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2022-2026





# CONTENTS

|                                   |           |   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|
| Foreword                          | <b>3</b>  | Strategies and Actions                                    | <b>26</b> |
| Strategy on a Page                | <b>4</b>  | Water Security  | <b>27</b> |
| Economic Blueprint                | <b>6</b>  | Housing Affordability and Availability                    | <b>28</b> |
| Tamworth region in Lights         | <b>8</b>  | Education, Skills, and Training                           | <b>29</b> |
| Opportunities                     | <b>10</b> | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Priorities | <b>30</b> |
| Strategic Context                 | <b>12</b> | Infrastructure and Transport Connection                   | <b>31</b> |
| Strategic Structure               | <b>14</b> | Technology and Digital Connectivity                       | <b>32</b> |
| Investment in the Tamworth region | <b>16</b> | Innovation and Future Industries                          | <b>33</b> |
| Regional Scan                     | <b>18</b> | The Renewable Economy                                     | <b>34</b> |
| Engagement Findings               | <b>22</b> | Economic Principles                                       | <b>36</b> |
| Strategic Framework               | <b>24</b> | Implementation Summary                                    | <b>38</b> |

## Acknowledgement of Country

Tamworth Regional Council acknowledges the Kamilaroi People, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands in our region. We would like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in and visiting our region.

# FOREWORD

Council is proud to present the *Tamworth Tomorrow Economic Development and Investment Strategy*, and the accompanying *Invest Tamworth Prospectus*.

The Tamworth region has a strong and thriving economy, with business and investment across all 9,893km<sup>2</sup> contributing to our identity as a regional hub. Over the last decade, we have seen our Gross Regional Product (GRP) increase alongside our population, creating an attractive environment for locals, and for those on the outside, looking in.

The adoption of this Strategy by Council outlines a clear path forward to enhance the work already being done in this space and in line with the community's priorities. It recognises opportunities for investment through existing infrastructure, whilst addressing current challenges and facilitating new opportunities.

Investment is the avenue through which we can continue to develop our economy, making investment attraction across diverse industries a key priority over the next few years. I'm excited about the potential for even greater progress in this space through this Strategy, the new partnerships, industries and innovations it facilitates, and benefits it delivers for the people of our region.

**Russell Webb**  
Mayor



The development of the *Tamworth Tomorrow Economic Development and Investment Strategy*, and the accompanying *Invest Tamworth Prospectus*, is an exciting milestone for Tamworth Regional Council as an organisation.

Following extensive engagement with the community and key stakeholders across the region, this strategy drills down to enhance the work already underway through Blueprint 100, Our Community Plan and other existing Council, NSW and Australian Government strategies. By recognising how economic development in the Tamworth region fits into the broader national picture, Council can not only work strategically and responsibly on the community's behalf, but also leverage unique opportunities.

After a challenging few years for everyone, we know that the Tamworth region has a resilient economy and is headed towards a prosperous future.

We are thrilled to present an updated strategy recognising this, identifying and formalising key objectives and success indicators, and ultimately providing Council with a robust framework to implement over the next four years in order to deliver on the economic priorities and values of our community.

**Paul Bennett**  
General Manager



# STRATEGY ON A PAGE

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* charts the course to continued economic development, and champions the many strengths of the Tamworth region.

Key elements of the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* are noted below, including vision, objectives, priorities and principles. Economic indicators are noted on page 25.

## VISION

Tamworth is a thriving regional hub, serving residents of the City and the region.

Our economy is robust, productive, and laden with opportunities. It celebrates diversity, sustainability and inclusivity.

The region's economy is resilient and ready for a prosperous future.



## OBJECTIVES

### 1 People, Employment and Participation

- 1.1 Increasing regional population
- 1.2 Increasing economic participation
- 1.3 Increasing employment
- 1.4 Improving economic equity and inclusion

### 4 Housing, Transport and Infrastructure

- 4.1 Improving regional housing outcomes
- 4.2 Enhancing regional transport connectivity and efficiency
- 4.3 Enhancing regional infrastructure

### 2 Productivity and Stability

- 2.1 Increasing economic productivity and innovation
- 2.2 Increasing economic diversity, whilst retaining and developing existing industries
- 2.3 Enhancing Tamworth's economic profile and reputation

### 5 Education, Skills, and Training

- 5.1 Increasing educational and skills attainment
- 5.2 Broadening the range of education and skill development opportunities in the region

### 3 Environment and Water

- 3.1 Increasing economic sustainability
- 3.2 Improving regional water security
- 3.3 Reducing and mitigating the impacts of climate change and natural disasters across the region

### 6 Digital Connectivity and Future Industry









- 6.1 Improving regional digital connectivity and smart technology use
- 6.2 Attracting innovation and future industries to the region







## ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

This *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* identifies eight priorities to focus our economic policies and actions over the next four years.

-  Water Security
-  Housing Affordability and Availability
-  Education, Skills, and Training
-  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Priorities
-  Infrastructure and Transport Connection
-  Technology and Digital Connectivity
-  Innovation and Future Industries
-  The Renewable Economy

## ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

Whatever the future brings, this *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* will be guided by six key principles, reflecting the values and unique identity of our region.

-  Inclusive Opportunities
-  Sustainable
-  Liveable
-  Diverse and Resilient
-  Connected and Collaborative
-  Confident and Driven

# ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT

## PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

The Tamworth region has a strong and thriving economy, which we will continue to develop into the future. The *Tamworth Tomorrow Economic Development and Investment Strategy* (the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*) will drive economic development to foster a more diverse, resilient, and sustainable regional economy.

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* will leverage our growing population and strong industry base. It will enhance water security, support future industries and leverage the renewable economy to build on our traditional economic strengths.

The accompanying *Invest Tamworth Prospectus* (the Prospectus) highlights some of the major investment opportunities across the region and will serve to boost jobs and support new and existing industries.

## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Economic development is more than the delivery of projects and infrastructure. It relies on community collaboration to develop clear strategic priorities that address real-world challenges and opportunities.

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* was derived from extensive engagement with the community and key stakeholders. This is a crucial process in developing an inclusive economic strategy that encompasses the needs, priorities, and expectations of the region. The engagement process gathered critical insights on how Council can drive positive economic outcomes across the region to enhance all elements of liveability in Tamworth.

Engagement insights were leveraged in conjunction with consideration of external economic forces and factors to develop a strategy that leverages regional strengths and entrepreneurship.







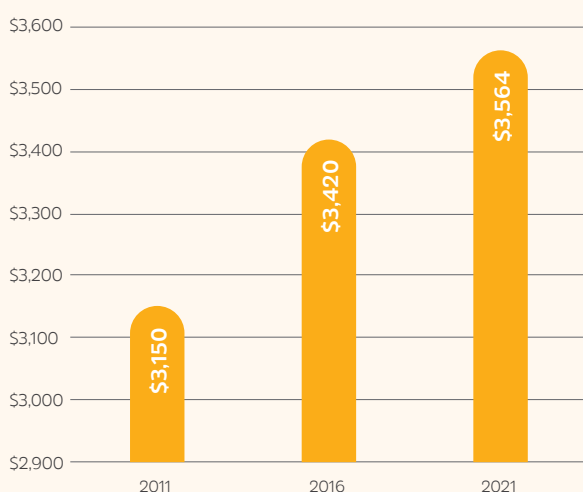
*The Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy  
is the economic blueprint that guides  
the sustainable growth and  
development of our region*



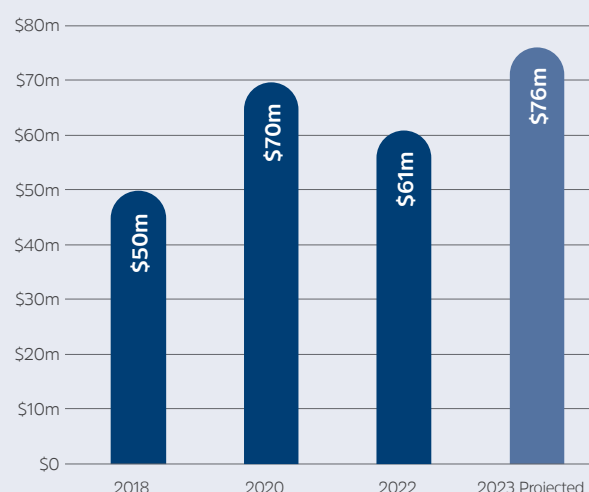
# TAMWORTH REGION IN LIGHTS

Our region has a strong and growing economy. Our Gross Regional Product (GRP) has continued to increase over the last decade, as has our population. Unemployment has decreased over the last decade, and Council has committed \$354 million of capital investment in the region from 2019 to 2023 (inclusive). These are all signs of a dynamic and thriving economy.

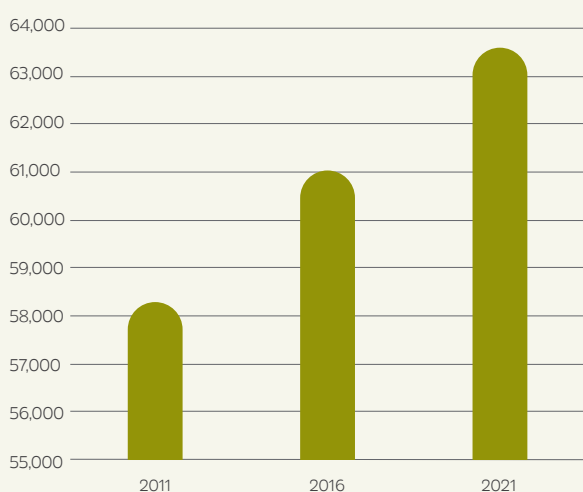
**FIGURE 1. Tamworth Region Headline Gross Regional Product, in Millions**



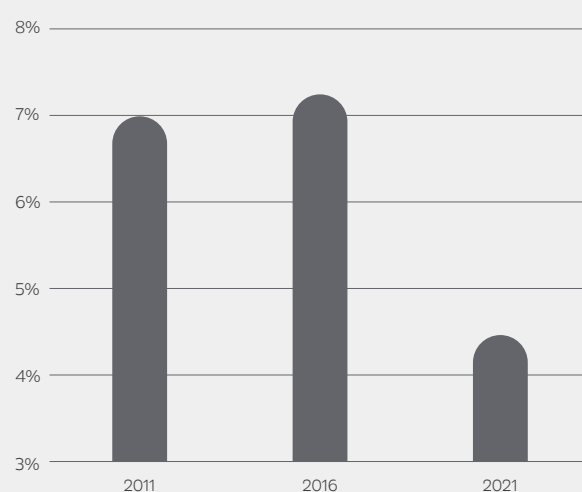
**FIGURE 2. Council Capital Investment 2018-22 and 2023 Projected**



**FIGURE 3. Region Estimated Total Population**



**FIGURE 4. Tamworth Region Unemployment Rate**





## Our traditional strengths will continue to enable economic development in the region.



### AGRICULTURE

The Tamworth region is a powerhouse of agricultural production and innovation. We are national leaders in food production and stand to benefit as Australian agriculture aims to become a \$100 billion industry by 2030.



### HEALTH SERVICES

As the capital of northern New South Wales, Tamworth is a vital health services hub for the broader region. Health services are a major, and growing employer, and continue to be a critical element of our economy.



### CONSTRUCTION

Our growing population and economy have driven significant demand for construction over a sustained period. This will continue to be an economic linchpin for the region.



### MANUFACTURING

Tamworth's long-standing strength in manufacturing has come into its own over the last decade, and now makes up approximately 20% of our regional product.

## Emerging opportunities for our region will propel development in the future.



### PROTEIN PROCESSING AND PRODUCTION

Leveraging our primary production capability, protein processing will continue to expand as a critical employer in our region. Increases in protein demand, driven by population growth, will create new economic opportunities and new markets.



### REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION

Our region is better connected than ever. Our regional airport, Tamworth Global Gateway Park, and improving digital connectivity make Tamworth and the surrounding region a more productive and easier place to live, work and do business.



### RENEWABLE ENERGY

As the world transitions away from traditional fuel bases, our region is well positioned, both strategically and geographically, to capitalise on growing demand for renewable energy.



### EDUCATION

Tamworth will continue work to become a regional educational hub, recognised nationally for excellence in teaching, learning, and research. Multiple universities are exploring additional campus opportunities in Tamworth city to augment our already impressive offering.



# OPPORTUNITIES

The Tamworth region is located on the eastern side of Australia, in the north-east of New South Wales.

It is a region that has been inhabited by the Kamilaroi/Gomeroi people of the Kamilaroi Nation for more than 40,000 years. Ours is a region rich in agricultural assets, natural resources, and beauty.

Tamworth is a world class investment destination. Our region's infrastructure and industrial strengths are key to driving a diverse range of opportunities. A small sample of the of the economic development projects and investment precincts in Tamworth are highlighted below.



## PRECINCTS



### Aviation Precinct

The Tamworth Regional Airport and surrounding Aviation Precinct is home to one of the most active airport hubs in Regional NSW, with some of the best pilot training and aeroplane maintenance facilities. Offering domestic flights to Sydney, Brisbane and soon Melbourne, the Aviation Precinct positions Tamworth as the ideal regional centre to live, work and grow thanks to these connections.



### Tourism, Entertainment & Sporting Precinct

The Tourism, Entertainment and Sporting Precinct is a one-stop-shop for major sporting, presentation, and conference events. The Precinct is already home to several diverse entertainment and conference centres, including leading sporting and equine events facilities, which have hosted a combined total of over 200 events across a 12-month period.



### Stratheden Housing Precinct

The 'Stratheden' Housing Precinct will facilitate future residential growth in North Tamworth. Adjacent to Manilla Road, Stratheden sits less than 5 minutes away from the nearest shops, schools, and Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital, and is located less 10 minutes from the city centre.



### Arcadia Housing Precinct

The newly zoned 'Arcadia' Housing Precinct will facilitate the next stage of residential growth in the Tamworth region. Arcadia's idyllic location, alongside its proximity to South Tamworth's shops and services, make it an ideal location to buy or build your next home.



### University of Newcastle Education Precinct

The University of Newcastle's Department of Rural Health provides hands-on experience for upcoming health professionals in a rural setting. Sitting adjacent to the Tamworth's Health Precinct, this facility offers unmatched skill development and growth for all students.



### Glen Artney Investment Precinct

Now home to the Tamworth Global Gateway Park (TGGP), the Glen Artney Industrial Estate offers the ideal location for new and existing businesses to develop and expand in this regional centre with direct links to the Port of Newcastle and Port Botany via the reactivated Intermodal Freight Facility.



### Health Precinct

Home to the Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital, Tamara Private Hospital, and Smith Street General Practice, the North Tamworth Health Precinct is the ideal location for health practitioners, new and existing, to join a medical service or open their own.



### Taminda Investment Precinct

Tamworth's original industrial park, the Taminda Precinct features over 400 commercial and industrial businesses. This diversity makes Taminda the ideal location for new and existing businesses to develop long term commercial connections which ensure business success and enhance the local economy.



### Tamworth CBD

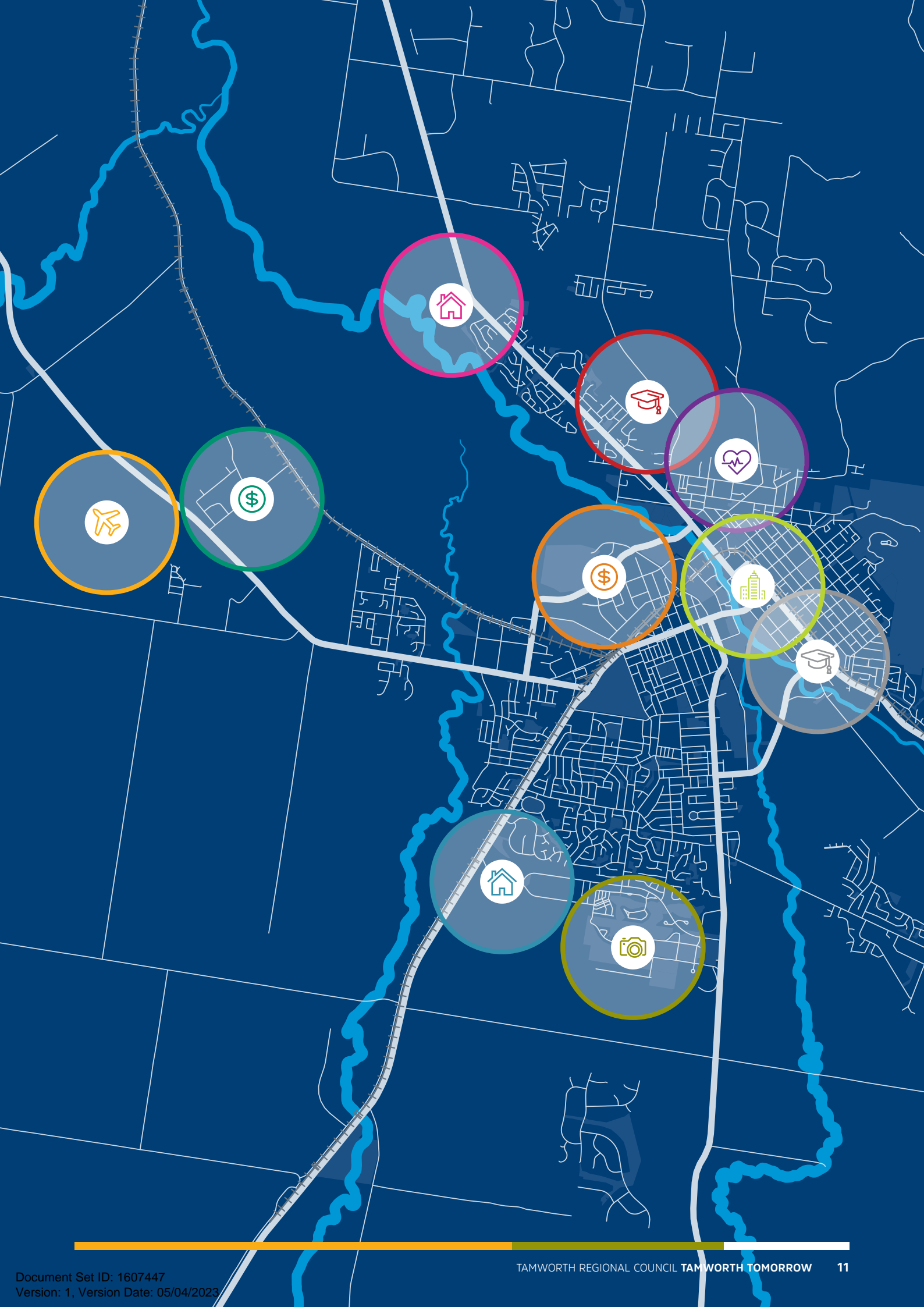
Featuring more than 200 specialty stores, restaurants, pubs and cafes, Tamworth's central business district caters for every need. Offering the perfect place to gather with friends and family, start a small business or fulfil all your shopping requirements in one convenient location.



### University of New England Education Precinct

The University of New England has begun construction of a new campus facility only a short walk away from the Tamworth CBD. This facility will provide students with easy access to local work experience and employment opportunities relevant to their studies.







# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* is informed by, and aligns with a broader set of strategies and plans (at the national, state and local level), a selection of which are noted in the table below.

Locally, Blueprint 100, the Community Strategic Plan, the Sustainability Plan, and the Annual Operating Plan, are key complements and references for the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*.



| NATIONAL   | STATE  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Australian Government forward budgets</b></p> <p>Upcoming Australian Government budgets will impact funding and investment opportunities. The Strategy accounts for current opportunities, and can be revised, along with the Prospectus, to best leverage future budgetary conditions.</p> <p><b>Economic Recovery Plan (2020 onwards)</b></p> <p>The Australian Government's response to the economic impacts of COVID-19.</p> | <p><b>20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW (2021)</b></p> <p>The Economic Vision aims to drive economic recovery and rebound after drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic that have disrupted regional economies since 2018.</p> <p><b>Agriculture Industry Action Plan</b></p> <p>Developed by NSW Government with industry stakeholders to drive growth in primary industries.</p> <p><b>Smart Places Strategy</b></p> <p>Charts the future of our communities, leveraging digital technology, data and innovation to drive economic, social and environmental benefits for NSW.</p> <p><b>Regional Water Statement</b></p> <p>The NSW Government's plan to secure access to water resources into the future and support vibrant regional communities.</p> |



## LOCAL

### NSW Renewable Energy Zones

The NSW Government has identified a number of Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) across the State, including the nearby New England REZ, which in turn present a range of economic opportunities to the Tamworth region itself.

### COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy

Outlines the NSW Government's forward response to the economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Blueprint 100 Parts 1 and 2 (Blueprint)

Blueprint 100 is the preeminent, long-term plan for the region, guiding investment, service-delivery, and infrastructure provision. Blueprint has a direct impact on the region's economic development, via its objectives and priorities, and is a key reference for the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*.

### Our Community Plan 2023 - 2033

This Plan guides the delivery of services and infrastructure for the region, reflecting the needs and priorities of our local communities.

### Visitor Economy Plan

This *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* has been developed in conjunction with, and is aligned to, the Visitor Economy Plan. This Plan outlines the future direction of the visitor economy in the region as a key driver of economic development.

### Sustainability Strategy (Under Development)

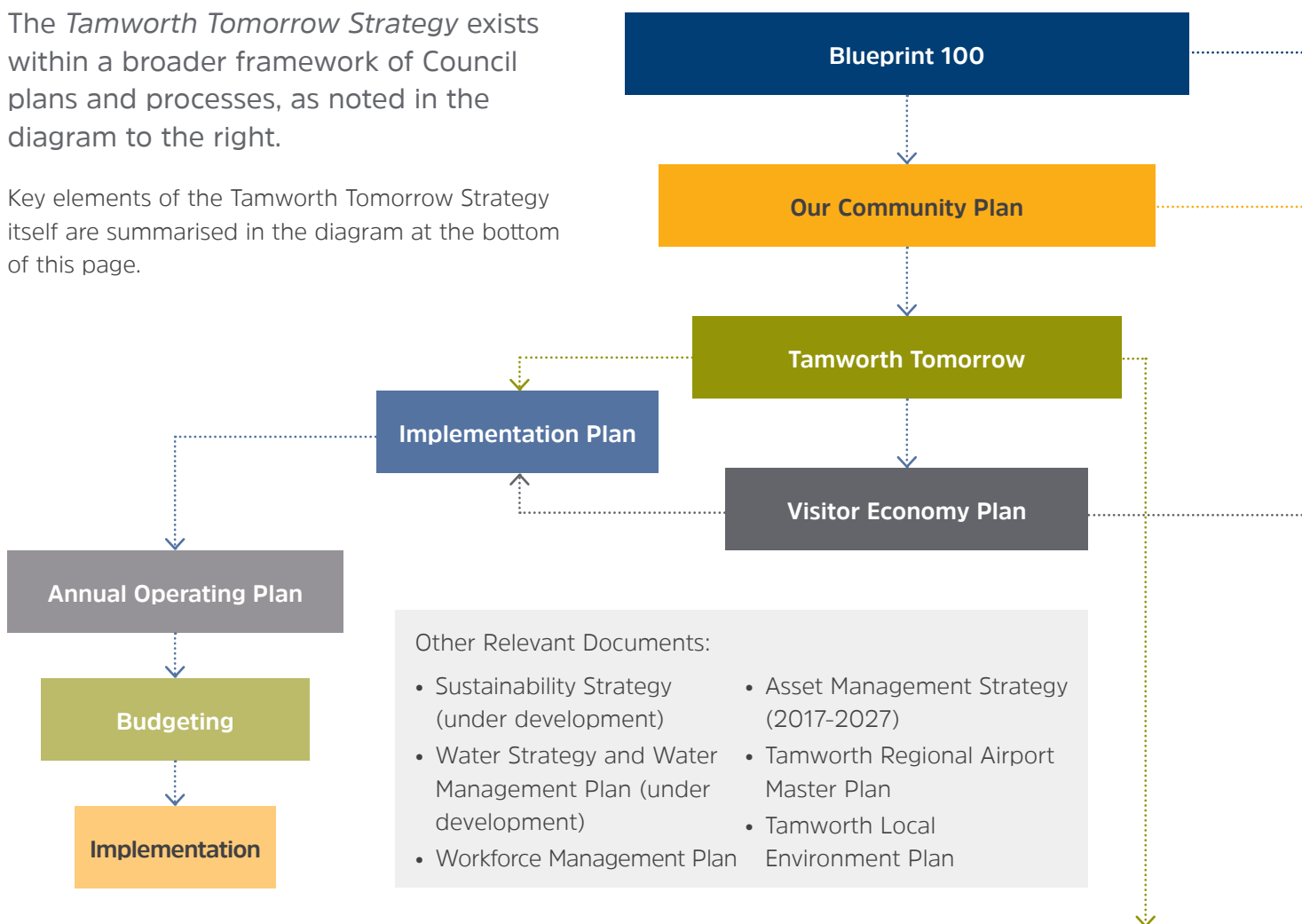
Currently under development, this Strategy will build on Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and sustainable economic development.



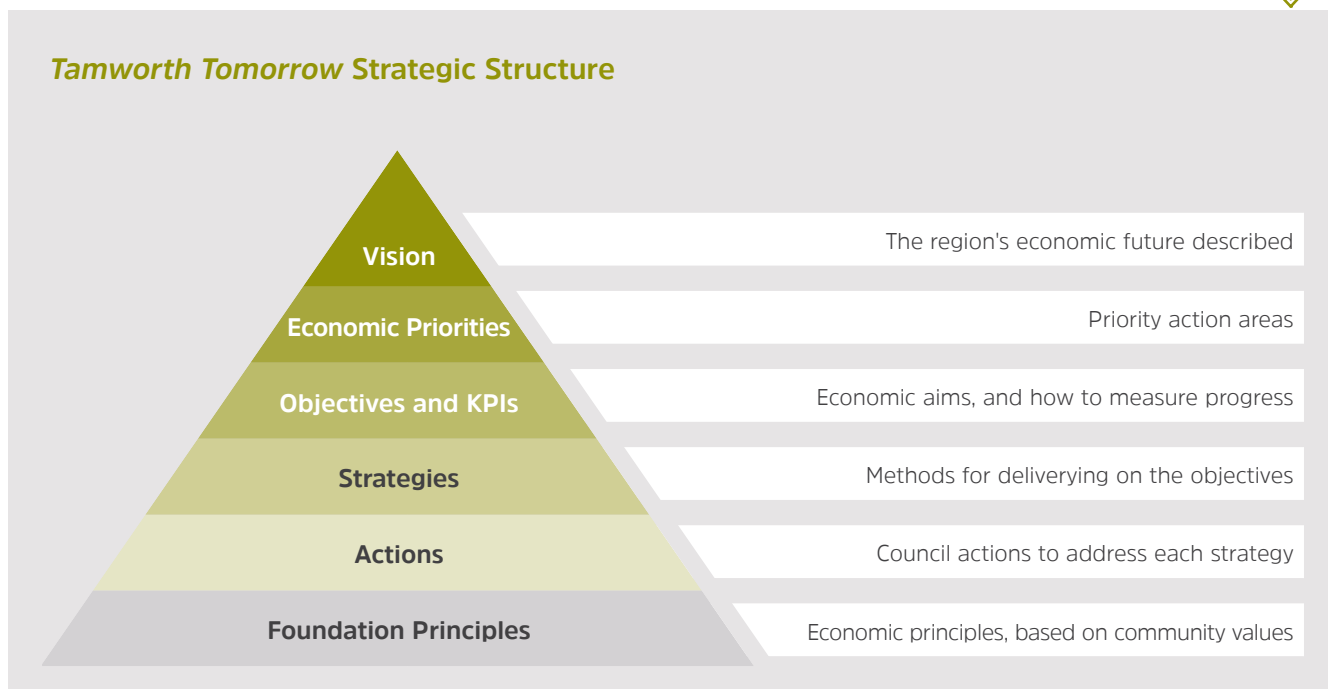
# STRATEGIC STRUCTURE

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* exists within a broader framework of Council plans and processes, as noted in the diagram to the right.

Key elements of the Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy itself are summarised in the diagram at the bottom of this page.



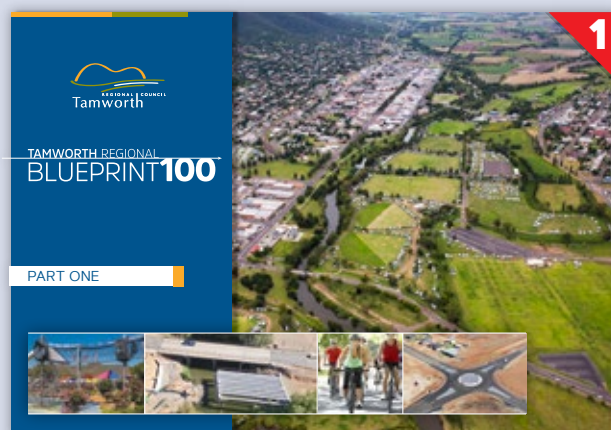
## Tamworth Tomorrow Strategic Structure



## Blueprint 100

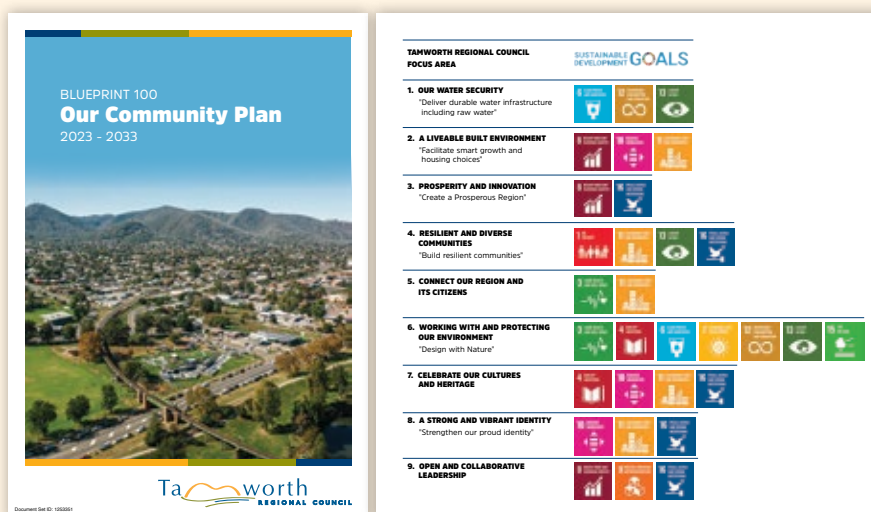
Blueprint 100 is Council's vision for the future. It outlines our ambitions for growth and development in the Tamworth region.

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* is informed by, and closely aligned with Blueprint 100.



## Our Community Plan (CP) 2023 - 2033

The CP guides Council in making the Tamworth region an even better place to live, work, and play. It encompasses all of the priorities of our community and Council, and is aligned closely to the United Nation's *Sustainable Development Goals*. The CP for 2023 to 2033 was adopted in June 2022.



## Visitor Economy Plan (VEP)

Our VEP has been designed and developed in conjunction with the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*. The VEP outlines how the visitor economy can be grown and leveraged as an important component of our region's economy.

Highlights of the VEP include:

- The Tamworth region visitor economy is worth close to \$300 million annually
- \$6 million per day is contributed to the visitor economy during the Tamworth Country Music Festival
- 30% of visitors are adult couples
- 1,200 people are directly employed by the visitor economy in our region





# INVESTMENT IN THE TAMWORTH REGION

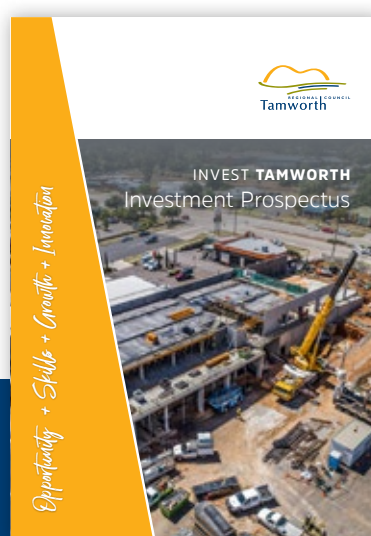
The Tamworth region is abundant with investment opportunities, including:

- In traditional sectors such as agriculture, health, and manufacturing
- In emerging sectors such as renewable energy, education, and technology
- In housing, commercial zones and industrial parks
- In cultural and sporting infrastructure,
- In aviation precincts, transport, and logistics

Tamworth Regional Council welcomes this investment as a driver of growth, jobs, diversification, innovation, and prosperity. More than this, Council will actively promote the region as an investment destination, and will facilitate and accelerate high-value local investment, by both public and private sector investors.

Current investment highlights are presented on the next page, with more detail in the Invest Tamworth Prospectus.

Council is committed to a continuing pipeline of investment opportunities in the region, and will work to plan, prioritise, and promote these opportunities (as illustrated in the diagram below).



Council's *Invest Tamworth* website contains the most up-to-date information about investing in the region. Visit [www.investtamworth.com.au](http://www.investtamworth.com.au) for further information.



## CURRENT INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

**Tamworth Global  
Gateway Park**



**Nearby New England  
Renewable Energy Zone**



**Tamworth Regional Aviation  
Precinct**



**Old Athletics Track and New  
Tourism Precinct**



**Tamworth Regional Arts  
and Cultural Precinct**



**Housing Development:  
Acadia & Stratheden**



[www.investtamworth.com.au](http://www.investtamworth.com.au)



# REGIONAL SCAN

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* draws on research relating to economic statistics, local conditions (SWOT), and macro economic trends, as summarised in this section.

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

Key economic statistics for the Tamworth region, and various comparisons, are presented below.



### THE COMMUNITY

#### POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

**63,070**

Tamworth region

#### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER<sup>1</sup>

**12.7%**

Tamworth region

**3.4%**

NSW

#### BORN OVERSEAS<sup>1</sup>

**15.7%**

Tamworth region

**34.6%**

NSW

#### AGED 45+<sup>1</sup>

**43.8%**

Tamworth region

**42.2%**

NSW

#### MEDIAN RENTAL PRICE<sup>1</sup>

**\$300/w**

Tamworth region

**\$420/w**

NSW



### THE ECONOMY

#### GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT<sup>2</sup>

**\$3.56 billion**

Tamworth region

#### WORKFORCE AND LABOUR FORCE<sup>2</sup>

**49.7%**

Male

**50.3%**

Female

#### UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>2</sup>

**4.3%**

Tamworth region

**4.5%** Regional NSW

**5%** NSW

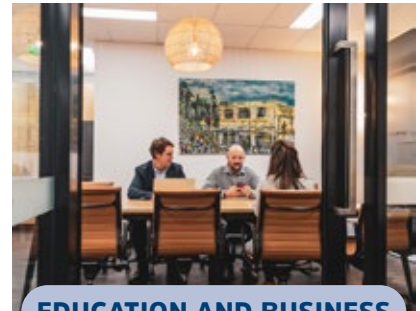
#### PARTICIPATION RATE<sup>2</sup>

**58.1%**

Tamworth region

**54.8%**

Regional NSW



### EDUCATION AND BUSINESS

#### UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION<sup>2</sup>

**12.5%**

Tamworth region

**14.5%** Regional NSW

**23.4%** NSW

#### VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION<sup>2</sup>

**23.8%**

Tamworth region

**23.6%** Regional NSW

**18.1%** NSW

#### REGISTERED BUSINESSES<sup>2</sup>

**5,696**

Tamworth region

#### AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERY BUSINESSES<sup>2</sup>

**25.8%**

Tamworth region

**6.5%**

NSW

#### CONSTRUCTION RELATED BUSINESSES<sup>2</sup>

**17.1%**

Tamworth region

**16.9%**

NSW

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021)

2. profile.id (2021, 2016)

## SUMMARY SWOT

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* seeks to leverage our economic strengths, address challenges, realise opportunities, and mitigate risks, as presented in the summary SWOT analysis below.

|               |  |   |            |
|---------------|--|---|------------|
| STRENGTHS     | <p><b>Robust Economic Base</b><br/>Long-standing industries of agriculture, food production, and health services</p> <p><b>Existing Brand</b><br/>Well-known regional brand anchored in country music</p> <p><b>Liveability</b><br/>Excellence in local amenity, services, and lifestyle</p> <p><b>Regional Centre</b><br/>Hub for services and economic activity in the broader region</p> <p><b>Identity and Purpose</b><br/>Strength of community identity and purposeful development</p>   | <p><b>Housing Availability</b><br/>Increasing cost of housing and limited diversity of options</p> <p><b>Digital Connectivity</b><br/>Limited connectivity to critical digital networks across the region</p> <p><b>Education and Skills Attainment</b><br/>Continuing to enhance local education pathways, attainment levels, and economic impacts</p> <p><b>Ageing Population</b><br/>Increasing proportion of older residents and retirees</p> <p><b>Water Security</b><br/>Managing and continuing to enhance regional water security</p> | CHALLENGES |
| OPPORTUNITIES | <p><b>Renewable Economy</b><br/>Taking advantage of global growth in the renewable, green, and sustainability sectors</p> <p><b>Digital Revolution</b><br/>Creating new digital industries, jobs, and productivity</p> <p><b>Expanded Visitor Offerings</b><br/>Exploring ways to expand visitation, across the region, and throughout the year</p> <p><b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Leadership</b><br/>Advancing and showcasing the economic leadership of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</p> <p><b>Protein Markets</b><br/>The Tamworth region will see its local protein processing facilities expand through \$250 million of private sector investment</p> | <p><b>Digital Literacy and Inclusion</b><br/>The risk of some people, or certain economic sectors, not keeping pace with technological change and digital transformation</p> <p><b>Climate Change</b><br/>The local and regional economic impact of climate variation, extreme weather events, and associated natural disasters</p>   | THREATS    |



## MEGA TRENDS

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* has considered and accounted for a range of economic trends – global, national, and local. This section notes a selection of these trends.



Increases in greenhouse gases due to human activities are having an impact on the global climate, including our region. Recent drought and flood events across eastern Australia have demonstrated the impact that this can have on businesses, households and the economy. The region must adapt to the challenges of climate change and play a role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.



Asia continues to grow in economic, political, and cultural influence. This trend presents the Tamworth region with new opportunities for trade, investment, commerce, and collaboration.



The nature of employment in agriculture is changing, due largely to digital technology, mechanisation and shifting productivity capabilities<sup>3</sup>. As a leading agricultural producer, our region must be conscious of this shift both in order to remain competitive and to maintain employment within the agricultural sector. With over \$250 million of upcoming private sector investment in the region's protein processing facilities, Tamworth, nevertheless, stands to benefit as demand for protein increases worldwide.



Regional centres, such as Tamworth, have seen strong population growth as new residents relocate from smaller towns (to access services), and bigger cities (for lifestyle, per movements during the COVID-19 upheavals). Tamworth is positioning itself to take advantage of this trend, which includes the rise of digital nomads and remote/digital working.

3. Productivity Commission, 2017.



The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption to economies and communities the world over. Coupled with other factors, Australia is now managing a new set of economic conditions including higher public debt, increasing interest rates, inflation risk, and very low unemployment rates.



As life expectancy in Australia increases, the proportion of the population over the age of 65 increases. This changes demand for services across the community and impacts the participation rate and labour market. Tamworth has an opportunity to expand its role as a health care hub for the wider region.



The digital revolution – including the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, big data, and automation – continue to disrupt and drive the global economy. For the Tamworth region, this brings a host of new economic opportunities (new jobs, new industries, increased productivity, etc) and risks too (such as digital exclusion and sectoral disruption).



Technology and sustainability are transforming transport networks, modes, and behaviours around the world. The rise of Electric Vehicles (EVs), ride-sharing, micro-mobility, Autonomous Vehicles (AVs), and new public transport models, will have a profound impact on economic development into the future.



# ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* is based on deep consultation and engagement with the community, local industry, and other economic stakeholders. The aim of this engagement was to tailor the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* to the needs and priorities of the community, and to invest in strong economic partnerships that will help drive our economy forward.

## WHO AND HOW WE ENGAGED

Various engagement processes taking place in 2021 and 2022 informed the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*, with the most intensive engagement period running from October to December 2021. This included:



### Online Surveys

Three online surveys were conducted, one each for:

- Community
- Council staff
- Key external stakeholders

These surveys sought stakeholder views relating to economic aspirations, strengths, opportunities, challenges, and possible initiatives.

### In-Depth Interviews

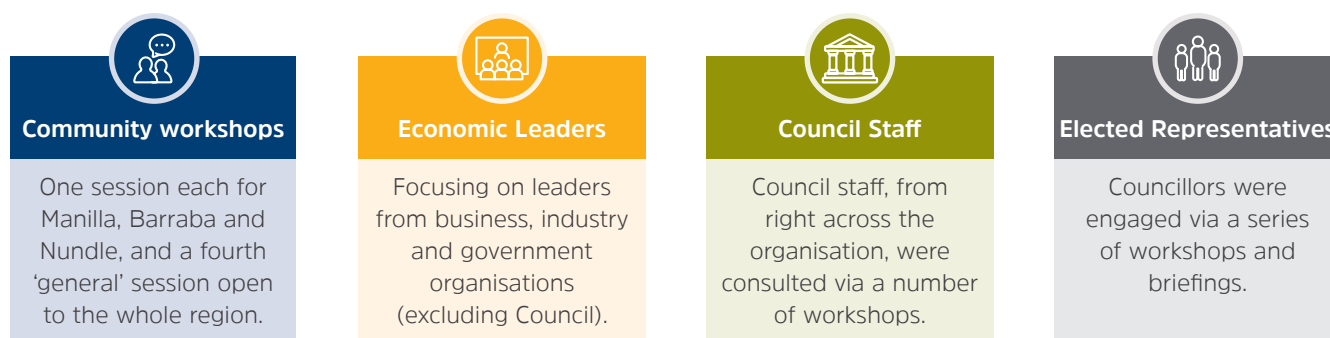
Council also coordinated in-depth interviews with a range of key stakeholders to get a more detailed understanding of the economy and its various sectors and actors. Interviewees included industry leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, not for profit and community groups, and members of the education sector.

### Telephone Survey

Council conducted a telephone survey sampling 600 residents to help develop Our Community Plan 2023 – 2033. The insights of this engagement helped to inform the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*.

## Roundtable discussions, workshops and briefings

Roundtable discussions and workshops brought together a wide range of stakeholders allowing breadth and depth of economic discussion. Session details and participants are summarised below.



## WHAT WE HEARD

Key insights from community and stakeholder consultation are summarised below.

### SURVEY KEY STATISTICS

**55%**

of community survey respondents identified **WATER SECURITY** as one of the top economic challenges for the region

#### **AGRICULTURE, LOCATION and TOURISM**

were identified as the top economic strengths of the region by community survey respondents

**33%**

of community respondents identified **REGIONAL LIFESTYLE** as a major economic attraction of the region

**60%**

of key stakeholders are 'optimistic' or 'very optimistic' about the region's **ECONOMIC FUTURE**

**44%**

of community survey respondents identified **SUSTAINABILITY** as one of the key economic priorities for the region

**94%**

of telephone survey respondents rate their **QUALITY OF LIFE** as good, very good, or excellent.

**80%**

of telephone survey respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with **COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE** over the last 12 months

### ROUNDTABLE AND INTERVIEW INSIGHTS

#### **Economic Diversification**

Stakeholders highlighted the opportunities of diversifying the local economy, while also leveraging and evolving areas of traditional economic strength.

#### **Water Security**

Recent droughts in the region and global climate change made water security a key economic issue for stakeholders.

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

Stakeholders placed a high value on the region's natural environment, and emphasised the need for sustainable economic development.

#### **Housing**

Housing was a key topic of stakeholder discussion, with identified opportunities to enhance housing choice, access, affordability, and equity.

#### **Education and Skills**

Stakeholders noted various opportunities to improve education pathways and outcomes for the Tamworth region, recognising that skills are a critical driver of economic development.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Priorities**

Continuing economic leadership and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were recognised as key priorities for the Tamworth region, with ongoing opportunities for collaboration.



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Our economic vision (noted below) presents a long-term view of a stronger, more vibrant, and more prosperous Tamworth regional economy.

Progress will be measured over the short to medium-term against a range of more specific objectives and indicators (on the next page).

## VISION

Tamworth is a thriving regional hub, serving residents of the City and the region.

Our economy is robust, productive, and laden with opportunities. It celebrates diversity, sustainability and inclusivity.

The region's economy is resilient and ready for a prosperous future.



## OBJECTIVES AND KPIS

Key objectives and success indicators of the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* include:

| CATEGORY  | OBJECTIVE  | SELECT INDICATORS   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>1</b><br><b>People, Employment and Participation</b>     | <b>1.1</b> Increasing regional population  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional population</li> </ul>   |
|   | <b>1.2</b> Increasing economic participation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation rate</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>1.3</b> Increasing employment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment rate</li> </ul>   |
|   | <b>1.4</b> Improving economic equity and inclusion   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income distribution</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2</b><br><b>Productivity and Stability</b>               | <b>2.1</b> Increasing economic productivity and innovation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GRP per capita and local labour productivity</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>2.2</b> Increasing economic diversity   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry diversity indices</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>2.3</b> Enhancing Tamworth's economic profile and reputation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume and type of investment enquiries to Council</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3</b><br><b>Environment and Water</b>                    | <b>3.1</b> Increasing economic sustainability  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Magnitude and distribution of 'renewable/sustainable economy' activity</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>3.2</b> Improving regional water security   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency and severity of water restrictions</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>3.3</b> Reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disaster across the region      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact of natural disasters on GRP and employment</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4</b><br><b>Housing, Transport and Infrastructure</b>    | <b>4.1</b> Improving regional housing outcomes   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median weekly rent</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>4.2</b> Enhancing regional transport connectivity and efficiency                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume of freight moved through Tamworth Global Gateway Park</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>4.3</b> Enhancing regional infrastructure   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level and distribution of infrastructure investment across the region</li> </ul>   |
| <b>5</b><br><b>Education, Skills and Training</b>           | <b>5.1</b> Increasing educational and skills attainment  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of community finishing high school</li> <li>Proportion of the community with post high-school qualifications</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>5.2</b> Broadening the range of education and skill development opportunities available in the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of tertiary and vocational courses on offer in the region</li> </ul>  |
| <b>6</b><br><b>Digital Connectivity and Future Industry</b> | <b>6.1</b> Improving regional digital connectivity and smart technology use                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital connectivity coverage, reliability, and performance</li> </ul>   |
|   | <b>6.2</b> Attracting innovation and future industries to the region                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business entries/exits, high-tech production and exports</li> </ul>  |





# STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* is based around eight economic priorities, identified via stakeholder engagement and economic research.

These economic priorities, and supporting strategies, are presented in turn on the following pages.

Over time, enacting these priorities and strategies will help achieve our longer-term economic aspirations and objectives for the Tamworth region.







## WATER SECURITY

The ongoing security of water supply was identified as a critical enabler of future economic activity and regional prosperity, especially in the context of a changing climate.

Council is committed to enhancing regional water security, supporting investment, production, liveability and economic confidence. This is a complex issue, depending on collaboration with multiple governments and stakeholders, and long term policies and programs relating to both water supply and demand.

### STRATEGIES

Finalising the long-term water strategy, once a final decision is made relating to the proposed new Dungowan Dam

Promoting water efficiency measures for community, business and government

Facilitating innovation in water management and usage

Building the region's water management profile to showcase leadership, collaboration, innovation, and confidence

Developing water infrastructure to ensure supply, promote sustainable usage, and reduce water losses

Encouraging equitable and productive water allocations





## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

The liveability and lifestyle of the Tamworth region, including housing choice and affordability, has long been a point of attraction and competitive advantage.

Changing market dynamics, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted regional housing affordability right across NSW, and this was a key issue identified by local stakeholders. Council is committed to collaboration and action that supports housing availability, choice, and affordability right across the Tamworth region. Attracting and retaining workers, families, and businesses to the region will be a key determinant of our ongoing economic success.

### STRATEGIES

Promoting housing policies and regulations which enable effective housing market activity and outcomes

Repurposing under utilised facilities to address housing shortages

Promoting a diversity of housing alternatives, including medium density living

Exploring options to reduce whole-of-life housing costs and manage cost of living pressures (e.g. energy consumption and maintenance costs)

Encouraging new, innovative, and appropriate housing solutions to meet current and future demands

Partnering with key stakeholders (public, private, and community) to address various types of housing demand, e.g., social, worker, or emergency housing

Promoting the Tamworth region as being development ready for appropriate housing



## EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND TRAINING

Education and skills are key drivers of labour force participation and productivity, as well as entrepreneurship, innovation, and business creation.

For the Tamworth region, this is an obvious focal point, to increase local attainment levels and accelerate the regional economy. Council is committed to increasing the local supply and demand for education and skills as the foundation of a future-oriented, dynamic, and productive regional labour market and economy.

### STRATEGIES

Fostering local educational ambitions and the demand for education, skills, and training services

Encouraging growth and development of the education and skills sector in the Tamworth region

Facilitating cross-sector and multi-lateral collaboration to advance education and skills programs and outcomes

Developing skills locally and enhancing employment pathways to retain skilled people (within local enterprises or Council itself)

Positioning Tamworth as a regional hub for education and skills

Promoting life-long learning and continual up-skilling across the community





# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

The Tamworth region has been home to the Kamilaroi People for thousands of years, and they – along with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – continue to play a significant role in the region's economic, social, and cultural development.

Council is committed to working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to identify and advance key economic opportunities and priorities.

## STRATEGIES

Establishing and pursuing the most appropriate mechanism for ongoing economic collaboration

Supporting Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences, in alignment with the Visitor Economy Plan

Supporting access to country for Indigenous owned and operated ventures

Showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic leadership

Elevating the Tamworth region as a national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic leadership, participation, and outcomes

Promoting and facilitating the targets of the *Closing the Gap* Agreement



# INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT CONNECTION

Tamworth's strategic location affords access to growing markets in Sydney and south-east Queensland, with local industry and trade enabled by strong regional infrastructure and transport connections.

Ongoing enhancement of these assets remains a priority for economic development across the region. Council is committed to collaborating with the NSW and Australian Governments to attract investment to the region and improve the extent and quality of the region's infrastructure and transportation assets.

## STRATEGIES

Embedding a long-term, integrated approach to infrastructure and transport planning for the region

Enacting an infrastructure and transport advocacy strategy

Encouraging integrated transport and spatial planning to deliver enhanced mobility, infrastructure, and land development outcomes

Facilitating innovative transport solutions and market competition to advance regional transportation outcomes

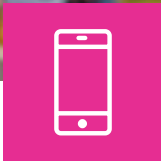
Continuing to enhance planning and delivery of Council's own infrastructure program

Exploring and enabling high-value air connections for the region

Promoting Tamworth Regional Airport as a hub for transport, tourism, investment, logistics and business

Supporting efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of freight networks and transport logistics for the region





## TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Digital connectivity and technology adoption are pillars of the modern economy, and were identified by local stakeholders as an ongoing economic priority for the Tamworth region.

Council is committed to supporting the deployment and adoption of digital connectivity and technology, right across the Tamworth region, to drive new industry, job creation, productivity, and economic resilience.

### STRATEGIES

Advocating for enhanced coverage and quality of digital connectivity, including addressing gaps and 'black-spots'

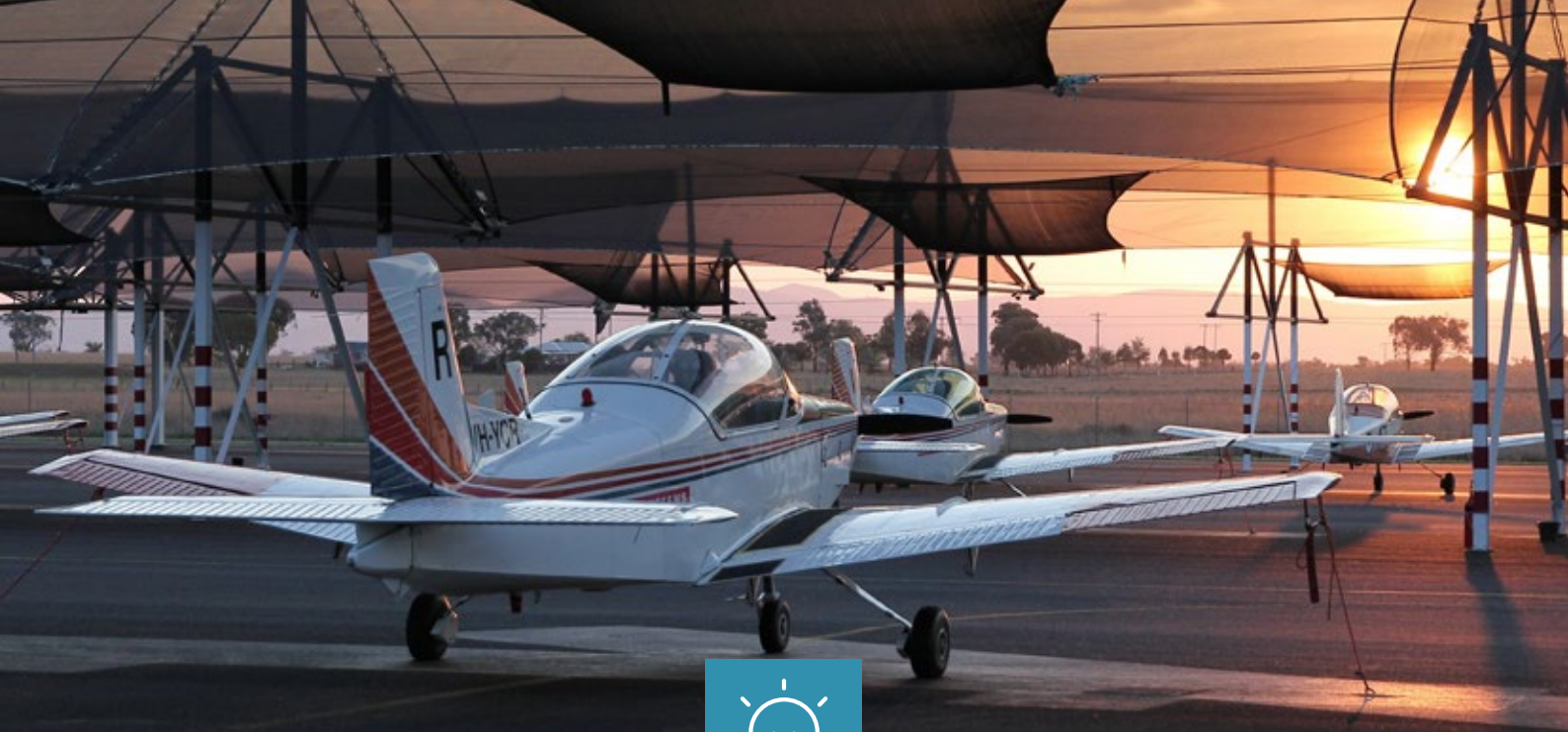
Fostering digital skills, digital literacy, and access to technology, for community members and local enterprises

Future-proofing new developments by integrating high-value digital connectivity and technology

Encouraging private sector investment in the region to accelerate the roll-out of critical digital infrastructure (such as 5G)

Collaborating with other governments and stakeholders to promote future-oriented digital and technology policies and investments for the region

Developing a consolidated approach to digital uplift and expanding the use of 'smart technology' across the region



## INNOVATION AND FUTURE INDUSTRIES

The Tamworth region has always looked to the future, innovating and diversifying to maintain economic competitiveness and create new economic opportunities.

This remains a priority for the Tamworth community, recognising the significant economic value of innovation, commercial dynamism, and industry diversification. Council is committed to fostering regional innovation and facilitating the growth of new local industries to drive economic prosperity and resilience into the future.

### STRATEGIES

Promoting the Tamworth region as a destination for new industry, new investment and new jobs

Building on current strengths in protein processing and food manufacturing to develop new technologies, processes, products, and exports

Fostering the region's innovation ecosystem

Collaborating with other governments and partners to support industry attraction and development programs

Encouraging innovation in service delivery across Council in alignment with Blueprint 100

Leveraging local events and cultural activities to promote and drive regional innovation and industry development

Leveraging emerging trends, such as remote working and 'digital nomads', to drive local economic activity (aligning with the Visitor Economy Plan)





## THE RENEWABLE ECONOMY

Renewable energy and the broader 'green economy' are two of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy, presenting a host of new economic and sustainability opportunities for the Tamworth region.

Council is committed to supporting growth of the region's 'renewable economy', creating new industries and jobs, and enhancing our natural assets and local lifestyle.

### STRATEGIES

Promoting engagement with emerging 'renewable economy' trends, to facilitate local economic growth and diversification

Facilitating the growth of renewable energy production and consumption in appropriate locations around the region

Collaborating with other governments and the private sector to attract 'renewable economy' investment and jobs to the region

Supporting growth and development of the region's 'circular economy'





*A strategy built  
on collaboration*



# ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

Six economic principles underpin the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*. These principles represent broad community values, nominated as important guideposts for economic development in the region.

Aligned with the *Strategy for Growth* in Blueprint 100, these principles aim to promote local economic growth and development, while also considering and balancing broader community objectives and values.



## INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

We will ensure the Tamworth region is a place for people of all cultures, backgrounds and abilities. No one will be left behind as inclusivity, accessibility and equity are built into the economy. Our approach aims to increase economic opportunities for everyone.



## SUSTAINABLE

We will promote environmentally sustainable practices to ensure the economy is resilient and enduring. We will protect and enhance our natural assets to maintain local amenity and lifestyle, and create new economic opportunities. We will encourage sustainability adoption and leadership, by community, industry, and government.



## LIVEABLE

We will continue to develop Tamworth as an attractive and liveable region for all current and future residents. We will continue to attract and retain residents, offer opportunities for community involvement, and enable people at all stages of life to enjoy the culture and amenities we have to offer.



## DIVERSE AND RESILIENT

We will strive for an economy that supports and celebrates local diversity, of peoples, cultures, industries, ideas, and businesses. Our economy itself will become more diverse - in sectors, skills, and production - aiming to strengthen regional resilience, creativity, and innovation.



## CONNECTED AND COLLABORATIVE

We value strong community connections, linking people, places, organisations, commerce, and opportunities. We will work to expand and strengthen these networks, including our many connections via trade, transport, digital technology, culture, and business. And we will promote and foster productive economic partnerships, collaborating with governments, industry, and our community.



## CONFIDENT AND DRIVEN

Our economic identity is vibrant, intrepid, and ambitious, and we are confident in this identity. Our mission to attract investment and business to Tamworth is purposeful and aligns with the community vision of economic development. The journey of economic development for the Tamworth region will leverage our traditional strengths, while attracting new economic opportunities that complement and reinforce our unique identity and vision.



# IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

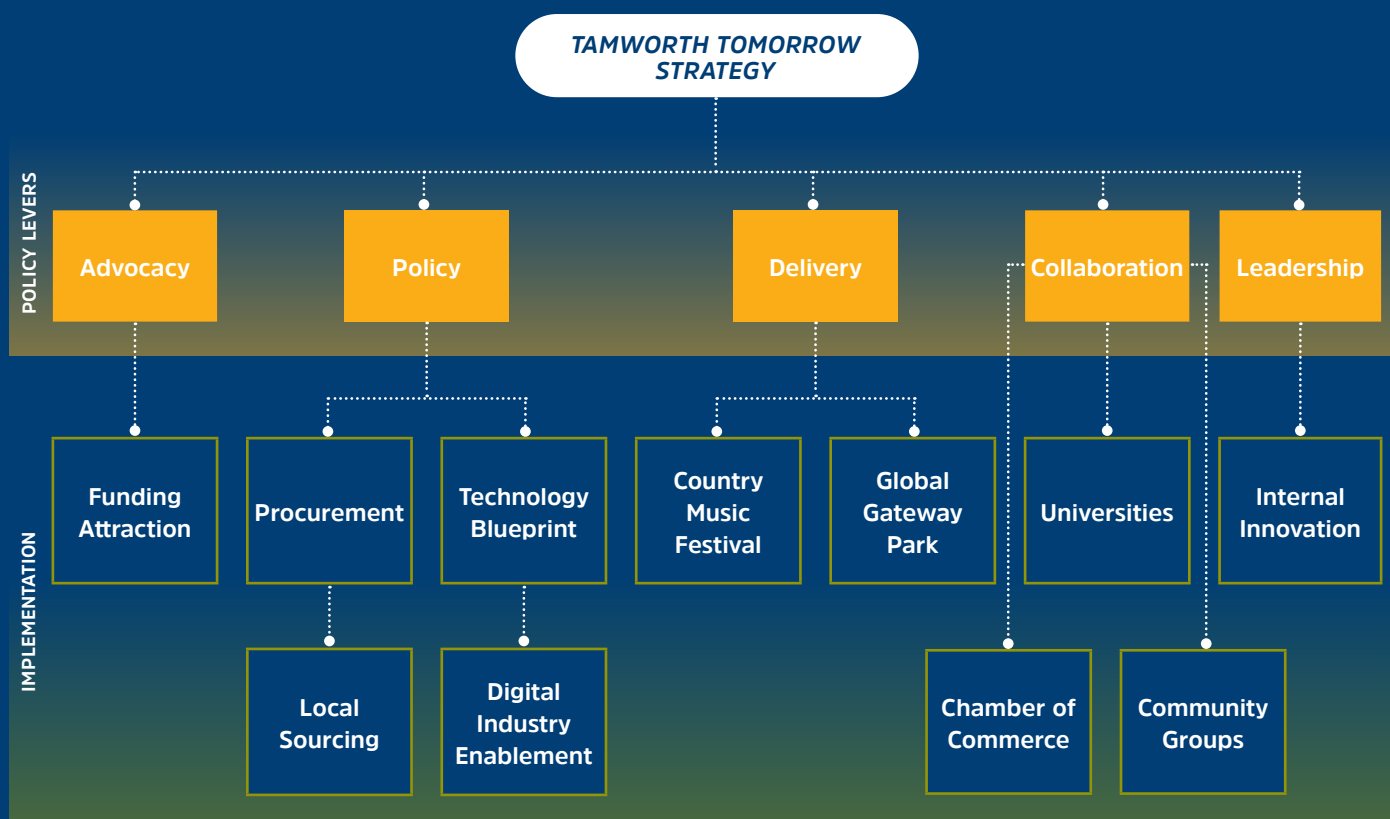
The *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy* has a four-year horizon, from 2022 to 2026. During this period, Council, in collaboration with the community and other partners, will coordinate a range of economic programs, policies, and investments to advance this economic agenda.

There are five main mechanisms, or levers, by which Council can implement this *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*. These levers, and a few examples of relevant implementation activities, are noted in the diagram below.

Council has prepared a detailed Action Plan to enact the *Tamworth Tomorrow Strategy*. This document identifies key initiatives, partnerships, policies, and programs to drive economic development for the Tamworth region.

The Action Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated to account for emerging opportunities and risks, ensuring our economic program remains efficient and effective.

Delivery of the Action Plan, including budgeting and reporting, will occur through usual Council processes. More information about the Action Plan can be found on Council's website.





# DESIGNER NAILS & Beauty

TAMWORTH

Manicure • Pedicure • Acrylic • Gel Shellac • SNS • Eyelash & Brow • Unise

SIZES 12 - 24 

1

## Coastal Farmhouse

HOME • WARES • GIFTS

[www.coastalfarmhouse.com.au](http://www.coastalfarmhouse.com.au)







**Tamworth Regional Council**

Ray Walsh House (02) 6767 5555  
437 Peel Street 1300 733 625  
Tamworth NSW 2340 [trc@tamworth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trc@tamworth.nsw.gov.au)

**[tamworth.nsw.gov.au](http://tamworth.nsw.gov.au)**